



For Good

'Fuel the Fire' lets audience decide funding

TUESDAY, APRIL 03, 2012

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In the age of online micro-loan sites like [Kickstarter](#) and [Indiegogo](#), one Cincinnati non-profit is finding innovative ways to add fuel to local initiatives.

[Fuel Cincinnati](#), formerly Ignite Cincinnati, is a non-profit organization launched in 2011. Under the umbrella of [Give Back Cincinnati](#), Fuel connects

projects that benefit the city with people and organizations that can help them with funding.

“We don’t want to fund 5k runs or golf outings, but we want to help people who have projects that help the community,” says Maggie Brennan, grants chair at Fuel Cincinnati.

And sometimes, Fuel cuts out the middleman and brings the community directly to the project. April 12, Fuel will host a benefit at the Moerlein Lager House called “Fuel the Fire,” during which five proposals from groups with existing projects will be funded. Attendees purchase tickets at the door and cast ballots for the projects they want to see come to fruition.

“It’s unique because we’re allowing the audience to decide,” says Brennan. “Whoever gets the most votes at the end of the night can hit the ground running.”

Projects range from fine arts initiatives to the environment. One group seeks funds to create a floating water treatment wetland in the Mill Creek. Another seeks to use a photography installation to change the lens of how young Cincinnatians view their relationship with the city.

“We’re seeing a little bit of everything,” says Brennan. “Our focus is to provide grants between \$500 and \$2,000. If we can’t provide applicants dollars, we’re going to do our best to find them resources.”

Since launching, Fuel has helped launch a local biodiesel initiative along with charitable website that raises funds for other charities. If Fuel can’t offer donations, they try to match organizations with volunteers who can point them in the right direction.

“We want to make sure we can give people a path.”

Do Good:

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• Join the party. [Attend the “Fuel the Fire” event April 12](#) and get a first-hand look at how some Cincinnatians are trying to help change the city for the better.

• Donate. Busy April 12? You can help Fuel Cincinnati by helping them fund other projects. Make your tax-deductible donation [here](#).

• Connect. [Like Fuel on Facebook](#) and follow the group on [Twitter](#).

By Ryan McLendon

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