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Ann Arbor SOUP grants over \$1,000 to student organization



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Art & Design senior Jordan Barse pours herself a bowl of soup at Ann Arbor SOUP at the Blind Pig Sunday night. [Buy this photo](#)

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As a man turns the corner by the Blind Pig and sees the line of people waiting in the cold winter night extending into the alley, he worries aloud to his friend that they might not get in to the exciting even taking place in the club.

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The line of University students, Ann Arbor locals and interested people from cities nearby waited for entrance to the second Ann Arbor SOUP, a micro-granting dinner celebrating creative projects in Ann Arbor. For \$5, attendees received soup and other food donated by local restaurants while listening to presentations from four organizations working in the Ann Arbor community.

After the presentations, the attendees voted and the organizations garnering the most votes won the money gathered from the event.

LSA senior Isabella Morrison, founder of the Ann Arbor SOUP, first brought the event to Ann Arbor last March thanks to a grant from Sharable magazine. After experiencing her first Detroit SOUP last summer, Morrison said she was inspired by the energy, collaboration and creativity of the event.

"I thought Ann Arbor would be a great city for that," Morrison said. "Especially since students have a lot of resources available to them and to collaborate with the city of Ann Arbor as a whole, I thought, would be great".

Food Recovery Network U of M, which won \$1,074 at the end of the night, works to fight food waste on campus by distributing food to Washtenaw County residents who are in need. Student volunteers recover leftover food daily from Mary Markley Dining Hall and West Quad Dining Hall at the University and deliver it to Food Gatherers, which distributes it to food organizations throughout the county.

The final proposal of the night came from Roundtable, an organization that provides crash-course lessons each week in a new skill, hobby, subject or trade taught by a different member. Members were seeking funds to hire professional teachers for a conference.

826 Michigan, a nonprofit organization in Ann Arbor that serves children ages six to 18 with free creative writing and tutoring programs, presented their proposal to keep their Drop-in Writing sessions, and WCBN, a mostly volunteer-staffed, free-form radio station located in the basement of the University Student Activities Building, also presented proposals.

In addition to the funds raised from ticket sales, the University's Central Student Government will reimburse Ann Arbor SOUP for the cost of the event.

At the conclusion of the event, Morrison said she was pleased with the combination of University students and Ann Arbor locals since the first event was mostly students.

This year, Ann Arbor SOUP received 12 proposals, mostly from nonprofits in Ann Arbor and students groups, but also one from an Eastern Michigan University student. Together with the core group of 10 people who helped organize Ann Arbor SOUP, they chose four proposals that would benefit the Ann Arbor community most for the night's event.

"There were a few that we felt just needed to kind of work on their idea a little bit more, it wasn't that clear, so we encouraged them to apply to the next one," Morrison said. "So we'll check in on them again in a few months and encourage them to apply again."

Morrison said she hopes to have two more SOUP events this school year.

ReSource Fun, a student-led organization that provides services in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti for financial literacy, won \$900 at the first event last spring, then named UM SOUP. Since then, it has launched a pilot program, and has been working with clients on budgeting, debt management and credit building.

Morrison said she changed the name from UM SOUP to Ann Arbor SOUP because she wanted to include the whole Ann Arbor community and bridge the divide between students and other community members.