

November 6, 2008

Angels' benefit offers hope to the homeless

By Steve Kowalski
ECCENTRIC STAFF WRITER

The oldest, largest homeless shelter in Oakland County is getting an infusion of new, thanks to a women's group that started in Troy.

Calling All Angels has helped fund the purchase and building of three homes for Grace Centers of Hope in Pontiac. The third-annual black-tie fund-raiser for the non-profit is Friday, Nov. 7, at San Marino Club in Troy.

Pastor Kent Clark, a Troy resident and chief executive officer of Grace Centers of Hope, said the homes are for previously homeless children and their mothers who have shown a commitment to stay off drugs and join the mainstream.

"The children who come to us have not lived in one place for six months their entire life," Clark said. "It's not entitlement, welfare, a flophouse type of thing. It's getting your life back, becoming a good mom, good dad, and getting back into the mainstream of society."

Grace Centers of Hope served 127,000 meals and gave 55,000 nights to homeless people in 2007, Clark said. There are currently 100 men, 55 women and 57 children in the center's lifeskills program, he said.

Laura Bostick, whose husband Ron owns the Troy Sports Center, said she started Calling All Angels four years ago with friends Ingrid DeMarco, Linda Reinhart, Lori Whitman and Mary Ann Stowers.

The women met years earlier when their children were students at Schroeder Elementary School in Troy, Bostick said. The parents and children were long-time volunteers at Grace Centers, and in 2006, Calling All Angels raised \$50,000 to help pay off the mortgage for Gracie House in Pontiac.

"It was an absolute miracle we got Gracie House - the last crack house on Seneca Street, a house of prostitution - and turned it into a children's home," Clark said. "Calling All Angels is directly responsible."

Last year, \$50,000 more was raised to build "House of Hart & Hope," named for the late Rhonda Hart, a Christian radio broadcaster who died in her sleep in June 2007, Bostick said.

"(Hart) was a wonderful woman, great humanitarian," Bostick said. "She'd deliver pizza and pop to people living under bridges, helped children who lived in Detroit in the crack houses. Once I found out she passed away, we knew we wanted the next house to be named for her."

Bostick said it's hoped that this year's fund-raiser will contribute \$50,000 to Angels of Grace home around the corner from the other two homes.

Calling All Angels' membership has grown to nearly two dozen, Bostick said. Its mission couldn't be accomplished without the hard work of co-chairs Kathlyn McDonald and Rosemarie Scotella-Kolanowski, also of Troy, Bostick said.

"If not for them I don't know how we could do this," Bostick said.

skowalsk@hometownlife.com|(248) 901-2571

Additional Facts

Charity event

What: Fund-raiser for Calling All Angels, black tie optional

Where: San Marino Club, 1685 Big Beaver, Troy

When: Friday, Nov. 7 - 7 p.m. to midnight; cocktails, silent auction at 7 p.m.; dinner, 8 p.m.; live auction, 9 p.m.

Entertainment: Music and dancing by the Brothers Righteous

Admission: \$100 per ticket, see www.callingallangels4gch.com or call (248) 393-2086
