



Old Mill High School, nonprofits receive Ravens Roost 18 donations



Ravens Roost 18 donated a check for \$400 to Anne Arundel Social Services last week. The funds allowed an 11-year-old in foster care to go to summer camp. From left to right are: Loretta White, committee member; Tim Llewellyn, chairman Charity Committee; Lillian Brandenburg, committee member; Tanya Steele Clements, social services and Bill Thompson, Ravens Roost 18 president. (By Kathleen Shatt/Correspondent)

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Glen Burnie West Kathleen Shatt

Ravens Roost 18 members are feeling a little bit like Santa Claus. The membership is distributing the funds they raised last year to charities.

Recipients include: Old Mill High School, Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services, Hospice of the Chesapeake's Camp Nabi and Believe in Tomorrow.

The Ravens Roost rotates awarding a \$500 check between the athletic departments of the five public high schools in north county. Members of the charity committee nominate local charities for a share of the remainder money.

“We try to donate to charities that benefit children,” Ravens Roost member Debbie Llewellyn said.

The committee had extra money to hand out because Heery International donated \$2,500 to the club earlier this year. Tim Llewellyn works for Heery and has chaired the charity committee for eight years. In past years, the Roost just mailed the checks. This year, they asked the charities to come to the meeting so members could hear first-hand the difference their donations make.

Half of the awards were given out at last week's meeting. The rest will be awarded July 25 at the Ferndale Community Club, 15 N. Fifth Ave.

The membership heard a thank you from each recipient.

“You just allowed two children whose family couldn't afford it to go to camp. Camp Nabi is a great camp for children who have lost someone,” Lori Larussa said.

While the kids attending have never met each other before, they all have in common that they've lost someone – a Mom, a Dad, an aunt or an uncle, she said.

James Poisal of Believe in Tomorrow said the Baltimore nonprofit supports families of critically ill children. Believe in Tomorrow operates two homes for families of critically ill children getting treatment at Johns Hopkins University, as well as provide “once in a lifetime opportunities” for sick kids and respite opportunities for their families.

Poisal said they have several condo units in Ocean City so families can take a mini-vacation.

“It's where families can get away from the hospital and just be a family,” he said.

Tanya Steele Clements had some members wiping tears when she told them their donation was sending an 11-year-old county boy in foster care to a summer camp for kids with emotional disorders.

The child, who has anger management issues had been given up by his birth mother. Clements said his single mother wasn't equipped to deal with him and was afraid for the safety of younger siblings and herself. There is no other family to step in. While some might criticize the mother for abandoning her child, Clements said “it's great that she reached out for help.”

The boy has been living with “special needs” foster parents who have had special training to deal with his emotional issues, but they aren't able to adopt him.

His story is all too familiar to Clements, who said the needs of foster children continue to grow.

While the actual number fluctuates daily, the county averages 165 kids in foster care. Since there aren't enough foster care parents in the county to care for these children, the county usually sends children to live with foster care parents in Baltimore City or Baltimore County.

Mariel Pfister, foster parent coordinator said the nonprofit is always looking for foster parents, especially for teens. Pfister said the stereotype of foster care teens is that they're juvenile delinquents.

“That's not the case at all,” she said. All too often, they're just kids who have no control over the circumstances they're born into.

Social Services provides training for foster parents, as well as networking opportunities with other foster parents.

Besides foster parents, Social Services seeks volunteers who can help in other ways, such as mentoring teens to teach them life skills they'll need to be successful adults, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) who advocate for the child in court, volunteers to donate items and help assemble Back Packs of Care for the Blue Ribbon Project.

The Back Packs of Care are back packs given to foster children on the first night that contain basic essentials like a toothbrush, change of clothes and a blanket, as well as a stuffed animal and other small comfort items.

CASA volunteers typically work two to three times per month and are assigned to children by the courts.

“They can speak to the judge on a child's behalf, “ said Pfister. “They really become the confidantes for these kids.”

For details about Raven Roost 18, contact Elaine Happel at 410-761-7655 or ehappel1225@yahoo.com.

For details about the Foster Parent program, contact Pfister at mariel.pfister@mayland.gov or visit www.annearundelfostercare.com.

For details about CASA, visit www.aacasa.org.

Ferndale United Methodist, 117 Ferndale Road will offer free vacation Bible school evening classes July 11-15. Dinner will be served at 5 p.m. each night.

This year's theme is Construction Zone – Building Character Like Jesus. For details, call 410-761-2880,



The advertisement features a photograph of a man and a woman in a room, with the man pointing at a wall. Overlaid on the image is the text "Dreaming of a new room?" in a red, handwritten-style font. To the right of the image is the MARLO logo, which consists of the letters "MARLO" in a bold, sans-serif font with each letter in a different color (M: blue, A: orange, R: green, L: red, O: yellow). Below the logo is a red rectangular box containing the text "Buy One Room, Get a Second Room F" and "CLICK FOR MORE DETAILS" in white, uppercase letters.

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