



Hendricks County
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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Women involved in Philanthropy find Pride and Accomplishment in their Cause

Hendricks County – Community involvement and a passion for helping children are some of the interests which draw women to the Habit of the Heart Fund, an endowed fund held at the Hendricks County Community Foundation.

Several years ago, the Hendricks County Community Foundation convened a group of Hendricks County women for the purpose of involving them in philanthropy. In 2004, these women held a luncheon and fashion show that raised almost \$7,000. The ladies used the money to provide eye exams, glasses, hearing aids, and other needs for children in the county.

The ladies realized they had identified a true need in Hendricks County and initiated a permanent fund at the Community Foundation. The purpose of the Habit of the Heart Fund is to make grants to help women and children with emergency needs.

When a classroom teacher, school nurse or guidance counselor identifies a student in need, they fax a grant application to the Community Foundation. Because the Habit of the Heart Advisory Committee has authorized the Community Foundation to award grants up to \$250, grants can be made within a week for those meeting necessary criteria. Other grants are taken under consideration by the Advisory Committee. During the 2007-2008 school year, the Habit of the Heart Fund gave over \$10,000 to help meet emergency needs.

As the county grows, the emergency needs of women and children continue to grow. The women involved in the Habit of the Heart Committee holds a Habit of the Heart charity weekend designed to increase the fund and help meet the emergency needs of more women and children in Hendricks County.

The Fourth Annual Habit of the Heart Weekend will be held on September 19 and 20 at Primo Banquet and Conference Center in Plainfield. The weekend includes everything from live and silent auctions to an engaging keynote speaker.

“Committee members meet one month after the event and begin reviewing the success of the events and possible improvements for next year – as suggested by the attendees, sponsors and committee members. Then the planning and the shopping begins! Five committees work on specific areas (auction, decorating, event, finance and marketing/public relations) and we reconvene in April to share progress, additional ideas and welcome additional members. At each meeting we are also updated on how the funds have been used so that we never lose sight of the real reason we exist – to help women and children in need in Hendricks County. It is a lot of work, but it is also a lot of fun. And it all comes together for a wonderful event for a worthwhile cause,” says Rhonda Wiles, co-chair of the Habit of the Heart committee.

From the development of the event, Wiles is still reminded of real reason she is involved with the Habit of the Heart committee.

“To know that the efforts of a small group of women, the support of caring business partners and the generosity of those who attend the events, can provide the means to change a life, is very exciting. I have a strong sense of pride in knowing that I am involved with a group of people who have a genuine passion for making a difference for those in need in Hendricks County,” says Wiles.

Bonnie West, who is also co-chair of the Habit of the Heart committee, is pleased to see a child’s emergency need is promptly met once the grant is received.

“I like best the fact that a child’s emergency need of eyeglasses, medication, hearing aid, dental work, etc. is addressed very quickly (one week) after a grant application has been submitted. The Habit of the Heart Fund does make life changes possible.

Throughout the planning and preparation, committee member Jill Poynter finds a sense of accomplishment from the generous donations distributed to a child in need.

“Of course the ladies (of Habit of the Heart) are wonderful to work with in all areas; however the greatest, most rewarding experience is seeing the children’s needs met because of the gracious individuals, corporations and all who have contributed above and beyond our expectations with their donations. Hendricks County is a super county to call home!”, says Poynter.

For more information, visit the Hendricks County Community Foundation website at www.hendrickscountycf.org or call 718-1200.

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