



\$20K raised for charities

■ Neighbors come together for fund-raiser during golf outing

By NATALIE LOMBARDO
Of The Oakland Press

A group of determined residents from an Independence Township neighborhood were able to raise \$20,000 in one golf outing for two local charities.

"We pooled our resources and went to work," said Oakhurst subdivision resident Rose Marie Farrar. "There are so many people who need help right now, and we wanted to do something to let them know they're not alone."

The group of neighbors — with no fund-raising experience — joined to help Lighthouse of Oakland County, a Pontiac-based nonprofit organization that assists low-income individu-

als through various programs and donations, as well as the Michigan Fallen Heroes Memorial in Pontiac, which honors law enforcement and firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

The Oakhurst residents organized an all-star golf outing in late August at Oakhurst Golf and Country Club, attended by Detroit Pistons player Lindsey Hunter, WDIV-TV Local 4 Sports Director Bernie Smilovitz and many police, sheriff's deputies and firefighters from Oakland County.

A check was recently donated to the charities during a special presentation at the golf course at 7000 Oakhurst Lane in Independence Township.

The event was the fourth golf outing hosted by Oakhurst residents, but

previous events yielded about \$5,000 a year, Farrar said. The team was able to earn more money this year because almost everything was donated, such as the food and wine.

Donors sponsored golf holes, there was a silent auction that included luxurious trips, and the after-party was hosted at a resident's home.

Half the money will help struggling clients of Lighthouse Emergency Services in Independence Township, a subsidiary of Lighthouse of Oakland County.

"We're trying to keep people in their homes with the lights on and the heat going. We want food in their pantries, because no one should go without in Oakland County," said Connie Stapleton, manager of Lighthouse Emergency Services.

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INDEPENDENCE TWP.



Golfers raised funds to benefit Lighthouse Emergency Services and Fallen Heroes of Oakland County. Oakland County Sheriff's Sgt. Paul Bidinger (left) and John Ziraldo (second from right), CEO of Lighthouse of Oakland County, accepted checks from benefactors Cheryl Callahan of Independence Township (second from left), Oakhurst Country Club golf pro Carl Bevin, Rose Marie Farrar of Independence Township (center) and Terri Nallamothu of Independence Township (right).

CHARITIES

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The proceeds will pay for utility bills, delinquent rent, food from Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan and personal care items.

Farrar is familiar with Lighthouse, as she formed a group called Ladies Helping Hand, which collects monthly emergency needs that food stamps don't cover, such as diapers, food and school supplies.

"We live in a lovely golfing country club community and there are people not that far from us that don't have money to buy their kids diapers," Farrar said.

"I've been fortunate in my life, and giving back has been something important to me," she said.

The other half of the proceeds will help complete the last phases of the Michigan Fallen Heroes Memorial.

The site includes a life-

sized, bronze statue of a kneeling police officer and firefighter set side-by-side, facing a granite wall with the names of public servants who died in the line of duty.

It's on the east side of North Telegraph Road, between the road and the Oakland County Courthouse.

Work includes further landscaping, a flag pole and ground lighting, a weather-proof kiosk so people can locate names on the wall and find out about the person's life via computer, and, sadly, the addition of more names.

The first phase of the project — a brainchild of Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard — was unveiled in 2002 in conjunction with the remembrance of Sept. 11.

"It's critically important that we all not forget the fallen heroes, the men and women who gave their life in the line of duty by doing all they could to keep a community safe," Bouchard said.

"We need to thank and remember the families they left behind, too."