

The Second Front

Oakhurst charity event helps support 'Fallen Heroes'

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Not even near record-breaking rainfall could keep area residents and businesses from supporting an important cause when the challenge arose.

The second annual Michigan Fallen Heroes Memorial Charity Golf Event at Oakhurst Country Club in Clarkston on May 24 raised \$3,000 to support the statue saluting public service officers and another \$1,000 to the family of Officer Gary Davis, a Bloomfield Township police officer who was killed in a car crash on May 13.

The event, supported by Oakhurst residents, the club and area businesses, increased its donation from last year by \$500.

"It's rewarding to see so many residents and members demonstrate appreciation for our local 'heroes' who protect our wonderful community everyday," Paul Cloutier said. Cloutier was just one of the local driving forces behind the charity event.

The event featured a golf scramble at Oakhurst. Despite being only able to play 13 holes due to the large rainfall, area community members and public service officers were pleased to see the weather stay sunny all afternoon for an enjoyable round of golf.

"It looks like some of the Fallen Hero angels up above must have been looking down on us because the clouds miraculously parted and the sun began to shine when we teed off," Cloutier said.

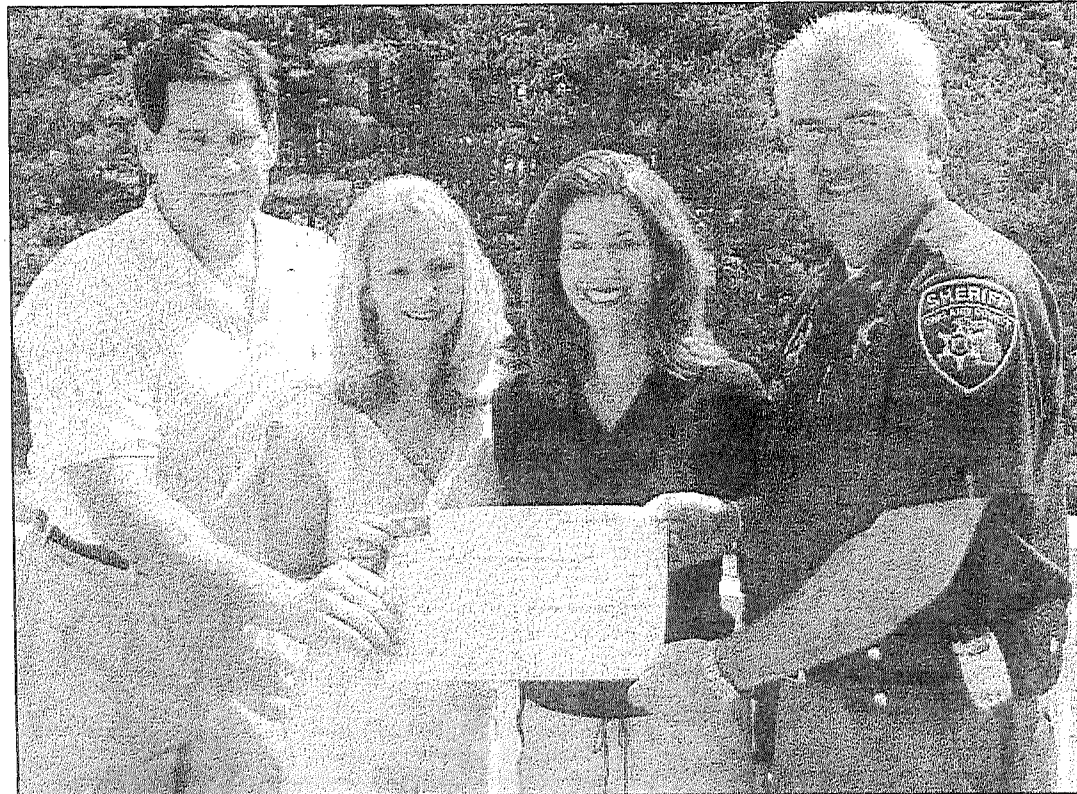
Undersheriff Michael McCabe, of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department, was just one of the many officers who came out to support the event.

"It pumps everybody up. Literally, it gives you chills," McCabe said. "It tells the officers that they're part of the community and appreciated. It's a huge up-lift for them."

Sergeant Paul Bidinger, Independence Township sub-station, not only came on behalf of Lieutenant Dale LaBair, but to enjoy a day off with members of the community and support a cause dear to him.

"For them to do this for the Fallen Heroes and Officer Davis, you just can't help but be grateful to the services offered," Bidinger said. "We're really grateful."

The event also included a silent auction, which also helped raise funds, as well as tournament awards and a dinner with all those involved.



Sergeant Paul Bidinger, committee members Cheryl Callahan and Maddie Park and Undersheriff Michael McCabe present a check for the Fallen Heroes memorial Fund on May 24 at Oakhurst Country Club. The event raised more than \$3,000 for the memorial in addition to donating \$1,000 to the family of Officer Gary Davis. Photo by Alicia Dorset.

Committee members Maddie Park and Cheryl Callahan helped make the day a success by recruiting sponsors and overseeing the day's activities.

"We're just so blessed to have it," Park said.

Callahan found the most rewarding part of the day to be seeing various community leaders able to enjoy an afternoon of fun.

"Just meeting them and seeing how happy they are, they're really enjoying themselves," Callahan said.

Even Sheriff Michael Bouchard realized both the importance and symbolism of the event and stopped by to wish the golfers "good luck."

"Sheriff Bouchard stopped by in the middle of the

course to thank everyone for their participation," Cloutier said. "I thought that was pretty classy."

Money raised from the charity event supports a statue that honors members of various public service divisions, such as police officers and firefighters. The statue is a life-size bronze depiction of a kneeling police officer and firefighter next to one another. Located in Pontiac by the Oakland County courthouse, it was unveiled in conjunction with a tribute to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

"This is a really good charity," Bidinger said. "A lot of times the guys (officers) think that they don't get recognized."