

Helping our Community...
By Janet Haley



May – “These are tough economic times. Everyone is cutting back. Attendance will be down.” Even as the economy was sinking last year, and these words were being heard around the country, the organizers of the Habit of the Heart Weekend kept the faith. They did not lower their expectations, they simply realigned them. They pulled out all the stops and worked harder, finding new donors, attendees, sponsors - telling their stories to anyone and everyone they met. And in the end, they exceeded their own expectations raising more money than they ever had before...an astonishing \$63,000!

What makes the women that organize the Habit of the Heart Weekend some of the best philanthropists in Hendricks County and maybe even the world? They identified their passion – helping women and children in emergency need. They focused on making a difference by helping school age students succeed in school by meeting their most basic needs such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, lunch money, shoes or clothing. And they keep that focus in the forefront of all their planning and remember that the more money they raise, the more children they help.

“I joined Habit of the Heart to be involved with a group of diverse women in the community whose goal is to make small life changes possible for women and children in emergency need. I have always believed in giving back your time and talent to your community, this is an amazing group of women with an amazing capacity to give back” said Bonnie West, a five year member and current Chairperson of Habit of the Heart.

The proceeds of the event go to the Habit of the Heart Fund at the Community Foundation to be used for grants and to build the endowment fund. The Habit of the Heart Fund ensures that long after these women are gone, the Habit of the Heart Fund will still be helping women and children in need. The Fund has developed an extensive referral network throughout the Hendricks County school systems and over \$65,000 in grant awards have been made to local women and children since 2005.

Pulling off a successful charity event – especially in tough times – requires planning a year in advance. As soon as they had celebrated the 2009 success, the women were back to work for the 2010 event. Regular meetings keep the committees on track. From menu to venue, sponsorship to donation solicitation, decorating, marketing and more, there is a lot going on. The May meeting gets the women excited. The sponsors are announced, the donations start arriving, the Save the Date cards go out. And the buzz really begins in the community.

The Saturday luncheon with the trademarked Handbag Habit charity purse auction has a new addition: the Unique Boutique, featuring unusual purses filled with goodies. Last year there were over 200 filled purses. Dr. Suzanne Metzger, with her humorous insight returns this year to share her thoughts on “Closetology”. It is not to be missed!

The women take the event and their duties seriously. They do the majority of the work themselves. If you want to be inspired, I encourage you to get involved. Habit of the Heart is always looking for more members, business partners, and those with big hearts in Hendricks County. Reservations for the events on Friday, September 24, and Saturday, September 25, at Five Star Catering at Primo's West in Plainfield are being taken now. To learn more, visit the Habit of the Heart page at www.hendrickscounty.org or call 317-718-1200.