

Service Above All Else

From fund-raisers to family events, Sheboygan Branch 630 is focused on community service

ANYONE WHO HAS HELD a large event to raise money for an individual or an organization knows the number of hours and hard work that goes into an endeavor of that magnitude. Branch 630 of National Mutual Benefit in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, has learned that putting the word “FUN” into fund-raiser helps get the job accomplished.

In the past two years, the group has been perfecting an egg roll fund-raiser that has raised over \$16,000 for two separate families. The first year, they organized an egg roll benefit to assist a family in which the husband was injured and out of work. But it was the next egg roll benefit that became an undertaking so big that its impact not only gave peace of mind to a young family who was losing a husband and father, it changed

the lives of the volunteers who gathered to aid them in their distress.

“We expected to do it [egg roll sale] the same way we did the first one, but it mushroomed larger than we ever expected,” recalls Branch 630 President Donna Wiegerling.

“We sent flyers for advance egg roll orders to Plymouth, where Keith [the husband] worked, and pushed the event at the clinic where his wife worked. We introduced the project in the local school system because they had school-aged children,” she states.

The organizers became a little concerned about the event when everyone in the community began connecting with the effort. They wondered if they would

be able to successfully carry out each step of a fund-raiser that was turning out to be so much more than they had bargained for.

“We were committed to helping this family, and we couldn’t expect to have others do it for us, so everyone had to find people to work,” Donna explains. “We had to step out of our comfort zone and come up with a plan,” she adds.

“So Rick Wentz called upon other NMB members and people he knew. Tzong Yang was in charge of bringing in the people to teach us how to make egg rolls. Helen Fuchs called NMB volunteers who contributed their time at past

Volunteers of all ages team up to make and sell over 8,000 egg rolls to benefit a young family in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.



events. Barbara Schmitt enlisted members of her family, and I contacted people from their church,” says Donna.

Over 100 volunteers in the Sheboygan community area worked on this project, learning from each other what it takes to successfully complete their mission of raising hope for a family in need. Teamwork was the key to their success.

Beginning as a branch that met mostly for social and fellowship purposes, NMB Branch 630 has always provided service to its members. But this fraternal organization has now transformed into a group that puts service above all else.

Former Branch President Nancy Stankas and Secretary Sue Henschel started moving in that direction when they began partnering with community organizations and schools to improve the lives of children and older adults. The branch hasn't been the same since.

The women and their fellow branch volunteers started by organizing canned good drives for the food pantry, then added school supply drives a few years ago. Last year alone, Branch 630 gave supplies to ten area elementary schools.

Cooper Elementary School Principal Marirose Lucey shared the impact this branch made on her school when she wrote, “It is with sincere appreciation and respect for your dedication to the education of Sheboygan's youth that we thank you for your recent donation of school supplies to our students. The materials you provided are being used daily by students who, without your charitable gesture, would had to have done without.”

Remembering those who are not as mobile anymore, the branch organizes Flag Day and Veterans Day ceremonies at local nursing homes, as well as providing residents with Mother's Day and Father's Day gifts. They also recognize NMB



TOP: Highlights of the day for this energized group of volunteers include wearing hairnets and painting the egg rolls with melted butter in preparation for deep frying. BOTTOM: To keep up with the demand, more deep fryers are purchased and another table is set up outside.

members who are 90 years and older through an annual program created by the branch.

One of the branch's annual traditions is an Easter Egg Hunt for NMB children up to 11 years old. It is held whether it's cold, sunny, or pouring rain. The interesting part is that you will never see a child going away without something. Every youngster finds an egg numbering one through five, and each receives a bag of candy. Hot chocolate and cookies are served afterwards. And now the older brothers and sisters, who used to enjoy the hunt in their early years, are helping at this memorable family event.

Last year, NMB Sheboygan Branch 630 was awarded one of the highest fraternal honors in the state by the Wisconsin Fraternal Congress. It was chosen as a *Lodge of the Year* by the Congress during the annual recognition program for service chapters of fraternal benefit societies in the state.

If you live in the Sheboygan area and want to find out how you can become more actively involved with this energetic, enthusiastic group of volunteers and give back to your community, call Donna Wiegerling at (920) 453-1578 or NMB's Fraternal Services Department in Madison at 1-800-779-1936. ♦