

GM News Article

by Jane Meggitt
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Giving back catches on with area foxhunters

Food items being collected for needy at The Bank

UPPER FREEHOLD - Although these are difficult economic times, the Give Back Foundation is still finding the means to help people in need - this time in the form of foxhunters.

The nonprofit operates in Monmouth, Ocean, Burlington, Mercer and Middlesex counties to help those faced with life-altering circumstances. Since its inception in 2005, the foundation has given out over \$350,000 to needy recipients, according to Executive Director Ivan Olinsky, who also serves as president of Princeton Nurseries.

Olinsky said the foundation focuses on helping people dealing with catastrophic illness or injury, not those suffering job loss in the current economic climate. The group holds various fundraisers throughout the year to support its cause and has developed a new partnership with the Monmouth County Hunt Club to garner more donations.

Upper Freehold's Meg Valnoski, the master of foxhounds in the Monmouth County Hunt, met with Olinsky and other foundation board members late last summer to drum

up a partnership that would benefit the community. She said Olinsky and the Flemer family, which owns Princeton Nurseries, have contributed a great deal to the hunt over the years.

"We have been welcome on the nursery for over 25 years," Valnoski said. "As we look at challenges that hunts all over the country have faced in maintaining hunt countries under the pressures of development, we recognize how lucky we are to be in a community that embraces the preservation of farmland as well as diverse hunting and equine activities."

Valnoski said that MCH has a diverse membership brought together by a love for the sport of foxhunting and a commitment to the community that they have considered home since 1970.

"Becoming involved with the Give Back Foundation seemed an ideal way for us to provide support to the community which has been so supportive of our organization over the years," Valnoski said. "Since the hunt no longer has an annual hunt ball, we have put our support behind the Give Back Foundation gala, and hunt members have also been lending their support to other Give Back Foundation

fundraising activities."

The MCH donated some proceeds from its dinner and auction at the Shadowbrook restaurant in Shrewsbury on April 4 to the Give Back Foundation.

The Foundation hosts an annual black-tie gala and various other fundraisers throughout the year. The Foundation has scheduled two fundraising golf outings this year, one in September at Medford Lakes Country club in Medford Lakes and another in October at Battleground Country Club in Manalapan. A gift auction on September 26 at the New Egypt Elks Lodge and an Atlantic City bust trip that has not yet been scheduled will also help raise funds for the foundation's cause.

The Give Back Foundation also collects goods for the needy and will hold a toy drive in December. Currently, the group is partnering with The Bank on Main Street in Allentown to collect food items. Community members are encouraged to make contributions at the drop-off place in The Bank.

For more information about the Give Back Foundation, visit www.thegivebackfoundation.com or call 609-259-4961.