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Goodfellows benefits raise funds

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Editor

An economic downturn hasn't hurt the charitable spirit in the City of Wayne.

The Wayne Goodfellows put on two benefits last week and generate more than \$14,000 toward their annual goal of ensuring no child in the community goes without a Christmas.

"That's pretty good, considering all the layoffs and plant closures we've had," said Bob Dunn, president of the Wayne Goodfellows.

The two benefits took place last Thursday and Friday night. Jake's Again hosted the first for city employees, family and friends, Dunn said when the final tally came in, they had generated about \$7,400 there.

The Village Bar hosted Dunn's fundraiser on Friday.

"We had a good turnout," he said. "Both sides were packed. You couldn't even move."

He said it generated more than \$6,000.

The funds will continue to come in, too. The Goodfellows have not yet tallied the total from their Christmas bulb fundraiser. Each year, they created hundreds of paper Christmas ornaments—at eight cents a piece—and distribute them to several restaurants, bars and stores throughout the community. They're sold for \$1.

Dunn said the walls at Jake's and the Village—as well as places like Scooby's Coney Island and the 7-11 store on Annapolis Road east of Venoy Road—are bursting with the decorations. That fundraiser alone brings in about \$5,000 every year.

"We've still got some things coming in," Dunn said.

He's also working with students at Wayne Memorial High School on another fundraiser, but he didn't have the final figures on that.

"They came to us, we didn't go to them," said Cathy Lutkenhoff of the school do-gooders. "That's nice of the kids."

The Wayne Goodfellows use their funds to purchase gift cards to places such as Toys-R-Us and to provide food vouchers. That way parents who apply for assistance can purchase their own gifts for their children. It gives them a sense of involvement and allows them to make more personal choices, Dunn said.

Families picked up their vouchers yesterday, but it's not too late to get involved in the annual fund drive. The Goodfellows operate off the funds they made the preceding year, so the 2006 fundraisers will pay for the 2007 program. He said he's hoping some Wayne businesses will still help out. "Were looking for some more corporate sponsorships," he said.

The Goodfellows have a new web site this year, www.waynegoodfellows.org, which has brought in donations from outside the area, according to Lutkenhoff. It also spells out the new application requirements, which make it harder for people who don't really need the help to get it.

"This way we give more to the people that actually need it," she said. "That's our goal."