



Waunakee Rotary Club

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After losing two Waunakee High School students in a drunk driving crash earlier this winter, many community members hope this year's Project Graduation keeps Waunakee kids safe on graduation night.

Mark Weller is working on the Project Graduation committee, which is organizing the all-night party for the seniors.

He told the Waunakee Rotary Club that the highest number of drunk driving deaths happens on the night of high school graduation.

Think back to your high school graduation night, Mark told the club members. The students have just achieved a major milestone, and the feeling is, "Doggone-it, we're going to party our brains out."

Unfortunately, booze and driving don't mix, Mark said. Drinking and driving is the leading cause of death for individuals 15-20 years of age.

"The big thing we can do is get involved with Project Graduation 2008," Mark said.

That party offers food, music, entertainment and prizes for the single purpose of keeping Waunakee's graduating seniors safe.

"It's a community's gift to our graduating seniors," he said.

Project Graduation started in Maine after one year when that state saw 18 deaths on graduation nights. A statewide effort was launched, and now Project Graduation events have spread throughout the country. In some states, the parties receive support from the Department of Transportation.

Waunakee hosted its first Project Graduation event last year with garage bands, a volleyball tournament, a Wiffleball tournament video games and other entertainment.

To encourage attendance, prizes are given away. The Project

Graduation committee is looking for prizes such as dorm refrigerators, i-Pods and microwaves, Mark said. Last year, a car was raffled off.

The cost for Project Graduation is \$7,000, and the committee has raised \$4,000 so far from the following sponsors: General Casualty Insurance; Nord Gear; North American Mechanical, Inc.; Ken and Beth Anderson; State Bank of Cross Plains, Suttle-Straus; TDS; and Paul Maggio, DDS.

Mark said the committee is now asking service organizations for funding and help with public relations.

"Talk this up in the community," he said. "Anything we can do to give them a safe place to party and celebrate their accomplishments is a positive thing."

Help is also needed at the event setting up and tearing down, he said.

The surgeon general has found that life expectancies have improved among all age groups over the last 75 years except for high school seniors. The death rate among that age group is actually higher than it was 20 years ago due to alcohol-related crashes, Mark said.

Already, 70 seniors have signed up for Project Graduation, and the committee has seen great support from Brian Kersten, high school principal.

Anyone wishing to donate to Project Graduation can call the high school at 849-2100 or Terry Schadeberg at Nord Gear.

In other news:

• Ray Statz brought a full-page advertisement that Rotary International had placed in the New York Times celebrating the organization's 103rd year.

• Harriet urged the club to see the Between Fences exhibit at the Sauk Prairie River Arts Center.

OFFICERS

LYNNE SPIELMAN, PRESIDENT • DAN STATZ, PRESIDENT ELECT
PHIL WILLEMS, CLUB SECRETARY
BOB PULVERMACHER, RECORDING SECRETARY • KIM LENGFELD, TREASURER

DIRECTORS

TOM REIS • LORI DERAUF • BILL ERICKSON

Calendar of Events:

- Super Raffle, March 12.
- District Conference, April 25-26

• Club President Lynne Spielman noted that the District Conference is April 25-26 at Chula Vista and will feature international speakers. Also, the club's board of directors' meeting is Tuesday, March 4, at 7:15 a.m. at the Village Center.

• The Whitetails Unlimited event was a success, Lynne said. The proceeds will go toward the Rotary Walk at the pond near the Village Center.

Guests: Kerri Matthews, guest of Dan Muxfeld.

Visiting Rotarians: None

Birthdays: None.

Anniversaries: None.

Prayers: March 6, Pat Durden; March 13, Msgr. Kramer; March 20, Susan Vergeront.

Programs: March 6, Club Assembly.

Greeters: March 6, Ted Pertzborn, Ken Pesik; March 13, Bob Pulvermacher, Tom Reis; March 20, Ellen Schaaf, Jim Schmitz.

Make up meetings online

It's easy to make up a meeting on the Internet. The site is www.rotaryclubone.org. Print out the form and give it to Phil Willems, the club secretary.