

New men's group making an impact with nonprofits

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by Dennis Buckley / Neighborhood Extra editor, October 13, 2015

Are you a Lincoln man who believes in giving back but doesn't have time in your busy life?

How about a commitment of 90 minutes once every three months?

If you enjoy networking, eating and drinking, and meeting other community-minded men, this group is for you.

All it takes is your attendance – and a \$100 contribution.

Thanks to the benevolence of a new group of community-minded men, cancer patients are already getting free, professional housecleaning services, and children are getting help to cope with the death of someone close to them.

The impact of a group calling itself 100s of Lincoln Men Who Care is just beginning. Five months ago, the 18 founders of the group recruited supporters to turn out for an evening of socializing and to support a good cause.

The process is simple: Enjoy an after-hours social, write a check for \$100, and if you'd like, nominate a charity and throw your entry into the hopper. Names of three non-profits are drawn and become finalists. The three men whose entries are drawn get several minutes to promote the causes they've nominated. All men then vote and the nonprofit with the most votes gets the cash. Mourning Hope Grief Center got the opening-night cash last May. With 183 men kicking in \$100 each at the event last May, Mourning Hope got a cool \$18,300. Three months later, 208 men turned out for the group's second event, generating \$20,800 for the winner, the Aiding Angels Foundation. An extra \$200 was later added, resulting in a \$21,000 check for the foundation.

Directors comment

Executive directors of the selected agencies were almost at a loss for words.

“This means we can help so many cancer heroes in our community,” said Brenda Schwery, founder of the Aiding Angels Foundation, whose cleaning services make cancer patients' lives a little less stressful.

“We never turn anyone away but this will definitely ease the burden,” said Schwery. “Also, I'm so excited that so many men have been introduced and informed what Aiding Angels does and now they can also spread the word that the service is available to anyone undergoing treatment so we can help so many more in our community.”

Carly Woythaler-Runestad, executive director of Mourning Hope Grief Center, said her agency was able to use the money to fund scholarships to Camp Erin Lincoln, a weekend-long, overnight bereavement camp for children ages 6-17 who have experienced the death of someone close to them.

“Because the camp is offered at no cost to the participants, we originally planned to take 35 kids,” she said, “but thanks to the generosity of the 100’s of Lincoln Men Who Care, we were able to accept 50.”

Mourning Hope also used part of the money to fly in a professional drummer from Philadelphia to make drums with the kids, and to offer many other activities and projects that otherwise would not have been accessible due to limited resources.

“Through their generous donation, we were able to help mend many broken hearts throughout the community, and helped children not feel alone in their grief,” she added.
Just the beginning

“Hopefully, we’re helping change the scope of what charities can do,” said Lincoln attorney Kevin Schneider, one of the 18 founders of 100s of Lincoln Men Who Care. The local group is modeled after similar, all-male organizations that have taken root throughout the U.S. and Canada.

At each quarterly event, a representative of the selected agency from the previous gathering is asked to address the group and to share the impact made by the donation.

Schneider said the group is hoping for a turnout of 250 to 300 men for the next event on Nov. 19 at Star City Motor Sports. Union Bank and Midwest Bank will help sponsor the event. All food and drink at each event is provided by sponsors.

Founders

The founders of 100s of Lincoln Men Who Care are:

Doug Alleman—Duncan Aviation

Steve Anderson—Midlands Financial

Stan Beeder—Hausmann Construction

Dan Black—US Bank

Doug Carlo—US Bank

Aaron Hilkemann—Duncan Aviation

Andy Hunzeker—Lincoln Industries

Mike Jurado—Principal Financial

Robert Kay—Star City Motor Sports/Liberty Arms

David Keck—Director of the Raikes School at UNL

Jim Kruger—NelNet

Jeff Lake—Duncan Aviation

Bill Lester—Ameritas

Charlie Meyer—Nebco/Saltdogs

Bill Mueller---Mueller Robak

John Olsson—Olsson Associates

Kevin Schneider—Cline Williams Law Firm

Larry Williams—Malone Center

For more information about 100s of Lincoln Men Who Care, send an email to membership@LincolnMenWhoCare.org

Schneider said a similar group for women is also forming in Lincoln. They will hold their first event Oct. 29. More details about the women's group is available from AshLea Allberry at ashleaallberry@nanonation.net