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Highfields Reverse Auction Raises \$2,100 for Basketball Uniforms

Local businesspeople donated \$2,100 toward basketball uniforms during Highfields' Fund a Need auction on Monday, June 8 for Highfields' Residential Treatment Program's basketball team.

The auction followed Highfields' 35th Annual Golf Outing, held at Forest Akers West. More than 150 participants and volunteers attended the event.

A Fund a Need auction is a good way to raise donations in an exciting atmosphere to fund a cause, said Doug Sheridan, who donated his time and talent to auctioneer at the event.

"When people have a goal and they see a need, people will fund it," he said. "You just have to ask them."

According to Derek Hitchcock, director of residential services at Highfields, the amount of money raised far exceeded his expectations for the auction.

"I was hoping to get \$500 so we could start accruing some money toward [the uniforms,]" he said. "It was designed to just be the starter and it got us much more than we dreamed. It will fund a full set of modern, attractive uniforms."

Highfields began participating in the Michigan Alternative Athletic Association three years ago. The basketball uniforms they had were old and outdated. Darryl Scott, manager of operations of Highfields' Residential Treatment Program, said he wanted the students to have uniforms they could feel good about.

"We show them that we value them when we give them something nice to wear; something they feel proud in," he said. "You wear what's appropriate for what you're trying to be successful in."

When Judy Christoff learned about the uniforms after the golf outing, she saw the value in them right away. She donated \$300 toward three uniforms. By donating money toward the uniforms would give the boys something valuable – the chance to be part of a team.

"I felt like it was going to a good cause," she said. "It was something tangible; I knew the kids would use them and enjoy them. It's something that'll make them feel good – to have a uniform and be on the team."



Scott said raising the money for the uniforms through the auction showed the students that people can be generous and kind.

“It’s a good thing for the boys to learn because a lot of the time, they think no one cares,” he said. “Now they see so many strangers from the community giving back. They’ll remember this for the rest of their lives. When they get older, they’ll recall these memories and hopefully it’ll inspire them to give back as well.”

Devinci Dumas, one residential student who helped out at the golf event, said he was surprised at how many people were willing to donate their money.

“I appreciate it” he said. “They didn’t have to donate their money. We all appreciate it. It’s going to help people be a part of a team.”

Dumas said seeing people willing to donate their money toward the uniforms made him realize that the community cared about him and the other residential students.

“They really want us to succeed,” said Dumas. “They don’t think we’re bad kids.”

The golf outing occurs every June as a way to educate the community about Highfields’ mission as well as to bring in donations that will go toward Highfields’ programs. This is the 35th annual golf outing, making it Lansing’s longest running golf outing. Last year’s event brought in over \$40,000.

Highfields is a human services nonprofit organization serving 11 Michigan counties through their residential treatment program, community services and educational services. More information about Highfields can be found at www.highfields.org

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Pictured below: Residential students Devinci Dumas and Isaac Wheatley wear the new basketball uniforms on Highfields’ Onondaga Campus.

