

Marlborough community to showcase generosity at Evening of Giving

By Jeff Malachowski, Daily News Staff

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MARLBOROUGH – The city’s generosity will again be on display next week when the community gathers to raise money for Roland’s House during the 28th annual Evening of Giving.

The Marlborough-Hudson Community Shelter – later renamed Roland’s House – was initially located in the basement of the Walker Building. It was only open evening and overnight hours, had no showers or paid staff. Ronald Simoneau, a former city councilor, and his wife Joan saw the need for an upgraded shelter and formed a committee aimed at organizing the first Evening of Giving in 1990.

“That was the key to the whole (event),” said Kays.

The Evening of Giving has raised close to \$1 million over the past 27 years for the Mechanic Street shelter – which was named in Simoneau’s memory in December 2005, six months after he died. Roland’s House is a temporary emergency shelter that houses 18 men and women and is operated by the South Middlesex Opportunity Council.

Last year’s Evening of Giving raised about \$35,000, said Bob Kays, chairman of the committee organizing this year’s festivities.

Money raised has been used to install a new heating system, windows and floors, upgrade the kitchen and remodel the bathrooms. It has also paid for food and staff, according to SMOC’s website.

Festival attendees are asked to donate socks, toothpaste, toothbrushes and other toiletries.

“We get inundated with soaps, shampoos, socks,” said Kays.

The Evening of Giving will be held Thursday, Dec. 14 from 7:30 p.m. to midnight at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel.

Thirty local restaurants will prepare their best dishes to sample. The shrimp and raw bar is also popular, said Kays.

Kays anticipates up to 1,200 people will attend. Organizers expected only about 400 people to show up during the inaugural Evening of Giving and were more than 750 attended.

“We were rolling tables onto the dance floor,” Kays said with a laugh. “We were rolling tables everywhere. We ran out of food. That was wiped out immediately.”

The Evening of Giving is a way to give back to those in need.

“It’s the spirit of Marlborough,” he said. “It’s really great to give back.”

Tickets are \$30. Reservations can be made by calling Madeline Dupuis at 508-485-5705 or Jean Peters at 508-481-1833.

Jeff Malachowski can be reached at 508-490-7466 or jmalachowski@wickedlocal.com. Follow him on Twitter @JmalachowskiMW.