

## Marlborough Evening of Giving on tap Dec. 3

By Jeff Malachowski/Daily News Staff

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MARLBOROUGH – More than 1,000 guests are expected to attend next month’s 26th annual Evening of Giving, a fundraiser benefitting Roland’s House.

Originally housed in the basement of the Walker Building, the Marlboro-Hudson Community Shelter had no showers, no paid staff and was only open evening and overnight hours. Seeing the need for an upgraded shelter, Roland Simoneau, a former city councilor, and his wife Joan organized a committee and held the first Evening of Giving in 1990, said Bob Kays, chairman of the committee organizing this year’s event.

“Roland saw the desperate need for the shelter,” said Kays. “We got together to make an Evening of Giving for the homeless and away we went. It’s been rolling since.”

During the inaugural Evening of Giving, organizers initially expected about 400 people to attend, but the event drew upwards of 750 people. Over the past several years, more than 1,000 have lent a helping hand to homeless people in the city, said Kays.

Since its inception, the Evening of Giving has raised about \$800,000 for the Mechanic Street shelter, which was named in Roland 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 event raised about \$32,000, said Kays.

Proceeds from past Evening of Giving fundraisers have been used to install a new heating system, windows and floors, upgrade the kitchen and remodel the bathroom. The funds have also paid all food costs many years and have helped maintain staffing levels necessary to run the shelter, according to SMOC’s website.

Several area restaurants will prepare their best dishes and there will be a shrimp and raw bar at the event, said Kays.

“They serve their favorite flair,” he said of the restaurants.

The Evening of Giving will be held Thursday, Dec. 3 at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel from 7:30 p.m. to midnight.

Live entertainment and dancing will be in the lounge and main ballroom, said Kays.

A raffle will also be held with a first prize of \$5,000, one \$1,000 winner and three \$500 prizes. Only 300 tickets, which are \$50 each, will be sold, said Kays.

Kays characterized the fundraiser as one of the most important in the city because the funds assist those who are in serious need.

Attendees are asked to donate socks, toothpaste, toothbrushes and other toiletries for those at the shelter.

Tickets cost \$30. Reservations can be made by calling Madeline Dupuis at 508-485-5705 or Paulina Lynch at 508-485-3741.

Jeff Malachowski can be reached at 508-490-7466 or [jmalachowski@wickedlocal.com](mailto:jmalachowski@wickedlocal.com). Follow him on Twitter @JmalachowskiMW.