Evening of Giving’ raises $32,000 for Marlborough shelter

Bob Kays, chair of the Evening of Giving committee, presents a check for $32,000, proceeds from the 23d event held last December to benefit Roland's House to Susan Gentili, director of the emergency services program for South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC), the sponsoring agency, at a gathering held recently at Chez Siam. (left to right), Chris Sperou, manager and son of owner Chez Siam owner Charlotte Sperou; Kays, Gentili, and Ivette Mesmar, food committee chairman. (Photo/submitted)

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By Joan F. Simoneau, Contributing Writer

Friends of Roland’s House, men and women committed to preventing homeless people from living on the street, gathered at the restaurant Chez Siam recently to hear about the success of the 23rd Evening of Giving. The fundraiser has become a beloved annual tradition for the communities of Marlborough and Hudson.

Bob Kays, chair of the dedicated group, announced that $32,000 was raised at the event held in December 2012. He presented a check to Susan Gentili, director of the emergency housing and services division for the South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC).

Roland’s House is an emergency shelter for homeless men and women, providing safe shelter, meals and supportive services. The majority of those who go to the shelter are in recovery from drug and alcohol abuse. This supportive environment is made possible by the dedicated staff, some of who have worked there since the shelter opened in 1986 and have their own personal stories of recovery to share.
Last year the program provided shelter and related services to 128 people who had nowhere else to stay.

“They are in need of short-term support and guidance as they work toward the goal of increased self-sufficiency,” Gentili said. “In addition to safe shelter, guests receive comprehensive case management and referrals to local resources. Over 50 percent of the guests moved from the shelter into SMOC Sober Housing, where they continue to receive supportive services as needed.”

Ivette Mesmar, chair of the Food Committee, thanked Leon Roberge, a popular local chef, and the generous hotels and restaurants that once again continued to ensure the outstanding food presentations.

Supporting the recent event were: Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School Culinary Department, Bella’s Cakes, Bertucci’s, Best Western Plaza Hotel, Buffet Way, Checkerboards, Chez Siam, China Garden, Courtyard by Marriott, Dino’s Trattoria, Embassy Suites, Firefly’s, Fish Restaurant, Halfway Café, Horse Shoe Pub, Julianna’s Pizzeria, Kennedy’s Market, Kennedy’s Pub, Ken’s Foods, LongHorn Steakhouse, Marlborough Country Club, Marlboro House of Pizza, Olive Garden, Price Chopper, Starbuck’s, Stevie’s Eatery, Trombetta’s Creamery, Vin Bin, Welly’s Wildwood Steakhouse, and The Wayside Inn.

A special thank you was extended to the members of the Marlborough Junior Woman’s Club for helping with the coatroom. Music for the evening was provided by “Insufficient Funds” and popular disc jockey Matt Ruffing.

“Roland’s House is extremely fortunate to be part of the generous and caring communities of Marlborough and Hudson,” Kays said. “The shelter provides a safety net for single adults who are experiencing a housing crisis. All who help by providing food stations, money donations, buying raffle tickets, and attending the Evening of Giving help the shelter continue to make a very real difference in the lives of those needing assistance and helps ensure its continued operation.”

The 24th Evening of Giving will be held Thursday, Dec. 5, at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, 181 Boston Post Road West, Marlborough.