

Warmth of Music raises money for Macomb County homeless shelter

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A Macomb County organization is better prepared for the next time a polar vortex like the region endured earlier this year or other meteorological phenomenon hits thanks to the generosity of those who attended a Sunday night event in Mount Clemens

A benefit for the Macomb County Warming Center raised more than \$35,000 to provide shelter and other services to homeless people in the area.

About 180 people converged on Orleans Sport Café to attend The Warmth of Music to benefit the Center, which provides night-time shelter to homeless people and other services.

Warming Center officials were pleased with the turnout in only the second year of the event. It was held at a bigger location this year to accommodate an expected larger crowd, which came to fruition.

"It was wonderful. It was so crowded," Warming Center Director Kathy Goodrich said. "What is so good about this event is not only the money raised but it has gotten our name more known in the community, especially in the business community."

The event was started by Joe and Kata Sowerby of Clinton Township and other organizers in part to recognize the legacy of Sowerby's late mother, Lorraine of St. Clair Shores, who was actively involved in the center.



Joe Sowerby of Anton, Sowerby & Associates talks to the crowd Sunday at The Warmth of Music fundraiser for the Macomb County Warming Center at Orleans Sports Cafe in Mount Clemens.

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The total amount raised will increase with money still coming in from the event, Goodrich said. Last year, \$27,000 was raised, she added.

The Warming Center, based in Mount Clemens, provides a rotating shelter among churches in the county. The center's uniqueness is that it provides a warm place to stay for any adult, regardless of their sobriety. It differs from other shelters that require their residents to be sober and allow children.

The shelter houses about 80 to 90 people a night during the cold-weather season, Goodrich said.

It also operates Ray of Hope, which provides day-time services such as assistance in finding housing and transportation. The center provides a place for the homeless to receive mail. It operates on a \$239,000 budget, Goodrich said. Two years ago it lost about \$40,000 in government funding. It still receives about that much in community block grants and HUD, as well a McGregor Fund grant.

On Sunday, musicians played while attendees ate and drank, played billiards and shuffle board, and participated in various raffles.

Emcee Jennifer Ann Wilson, a reporter at WXYZ-TV (Channel 7), talked about meeting a homeless man while working on a story.



Jennifer Ann Wilson, a report at WXYZ-TV (Channel 7), speaks Sunday at the second The Warmth of Music fundraiser to benefit the Macomb County Warming Center at Orleans Sports Cafe in Mount Clemens.

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“In our daily lives it’s really easy to go about with what we’re doing and to be focused on our world and our friends and our family and forget that there are people who need to know they’re worth it and they do have a future and hope. And this organization really helps do that,” Wilson said. “You by being here today helps do that.”

Live entertainment was provided by Edward Dupas, Larry Larson and Jim Woolsey.