

RMCHCS Valentine's dinner raises funds for Gallup's Battered Families Services

Written by By William Madaras For the Sun
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Brings in nearly \$7,000

Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services hosted a Valentine's Day dinner and dance for Gallup's Battered Families Services. The fundraiser turned out 100 residents and netted the non-profit organization close to \$7,000.

Couples and singles swayed to the R&B mixes of Marvis Wynn, aka DJ Marvelous, a KGLP disc jockey and feasted on Beef Wellington, salads and Valentine's desserts at the Valentine's Day event held at the Gallup Knights of Columbus Hall.

"Everyone on Friday night gave of their heart," Emily Ellison said. Ellison serves as interim executive director for Battered Families Services. "Every dollar counts when it comes to serving families who suffer. When people give to battered families, they are making an investment to seeing that mothers and children have a great opportunity."

"We strongly support Battered Families," RMCHCS CEO David Conejo said. "As a community hub for healthcare, RMCHCS not only offers medical treatments for those who are injured, but believe it is more important to prevent injuries. Battered Family Services is an important ingredient in Gallup's behavioral healthcare mix. Keeping residents safe is a common goal we share."

Kindred Spirits

The event also provided an opportunity for those at RMCHCS's WellSpring Recovery Center who are also returning to begin new lives free from substance abuse. Culinary students enrolled in the center's food preparation and service training program, which earns them three college credits, prepared the dinner and served it to guests.

"The irony here is that we have students who left a bad lifestyle situation helping those who also left a similar situation," RMCHCS Director of Behavioral Special Projects William Camorata said. Camorata is president of the Immediate Action Group (IAG) a non-profit organization which assists Gallup's homeless community. "The kinship is fantastic."

A similar synergy was displayed by Wynn who donated his DJ services for the evening. "I am a big supporter of these types of organizations who help the community." After some turbulent times, Wynn left New York's South Bronx for New Mexico four years ago. He currently DJ's the "Saturday Night Dance Party" at Sammy C's in downtown Gallup.

"The music I play is for the heart and soul to help people heal. It is music to tap your feet to, reminisce, clap your hands, bob your head, share an affectionate moment and dance to. The key to a person's broken heart is hidden within their playlist," Wynn noted.

Battered Families Services Inc. Empowers and Advocates for Women and Children's Safety

The organization offers the following services:

Emergency shelters for families who are in immediate threat and in need of safety.

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24 hour crisis line.

Clothing donations program.

Transportation for families in immediate need.

Safety planning for families in need of safety guidelines.

Batterer's intervention program for those who've been court-mandated as a result of a domestic violence conviction.

Comprehensive services which include helping individuals' access resources, develop safety plans, provide stability as they plan their next steps and work toward building self-efficacy and social connectedness.

Shelter and legal assistance for families who are threatened and in need of safety.

Survivor benefits for families who are threatened and in need of safety.

Fund Raising Goal of \$25,000.00

In addition to the \$7,000.00 raised, the organization is still trying to raise an additional \$20,000.00 from the event, while also seeking private donations for a variety of items such as twin and full size bedding comforter sets, towels, wash cloths, hand towels, curtains, blinds, living room and bedroom rugs, laundry room cabinets. Also shower kits, washers, dryers, an outdoor patio set, a gazebo, basketball hoops, playground set, dinner table set, couch set, TVs, bookcases, bunk beds, picnic tables and computers.

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"Our goal is to make Gallup safe for families," Ellison said. "By providing a safe place, we can help hurting families heal, which begins by support from the community for this process. We welcome residents from Gallup and McKinley County to visit and see the difference we made in the lives of battered families."

For residents who would like to contribute toward the organization's goals, but couldn't attend the dinner, contributions can be made by contacting Emily Ellison at ellison@batteredfamilies.com.

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