

T.H.A.N.K.S. Inc.

Tailgaters Helping Aid Needy Kids' Spirits

President: Tim Russeau Vice President: Brian Trombley Treasurer: Steve Bolster Secretary: Heidi Bolster
Trustee: Harold Russeau Trustee: Melanie Davis

Family Christmas Drive:

We will be sponsoring a Christmas drive once again this year to help our families with the holidays. We have been blessed with lots of support from the community in years past and once again we are asking for your help.

We currently have 4-5 families that will need our help this year. If you would be interested in helping us out with this, please let us know. If you work for a company that sponsors a family, please consider helping one of our families this holiday season. We will be putting together a wish list from each of our families, and they will be available in the near future. If you're unable to go out and shop from one of our lists, please consider purchasing a gift card. If you'd like to give a monetary donation, please write on your check "Christmas Drive" so we can account for it correctly. Please help us make this holiday season a little more joyous for our families.

Parade Season is Here!

Our volunteers have been working overtime for the last 2-months trying to get ready for this year's parade season. We always look forward to the parades and this year is no exception! It's a great way for our organization to be seen out in the community. This year we will be participating in 3-parades. The first parade is also the biggest of them all.

Of course we are talking about the Christmas in Ida Parade. This is actually a weekend long event that kicks off Friday December 4th. The parade takes place on Saturday along with a long list of activities. If you've never seen this event

we encourage you to do so. There are vendors that line the streets with arts and crafts, food, petting zoo, ice sculpting, and the list goes on and on. One of the feature events on Saturday is always the Radio Disney show. National acts are brought in to perform on a large stage downtown. The kids will love it! A great fireworks show will kick off the parade at 6:30 and then sit back and watch as over 100-parade units pass by sparkling with thousands of lights. As always our volunteers will be out in force – passing out over 100-lbs of candy and hundreds of donated stuffed animals to the kids in the crowd. For more information on this parade go to: "www.christmasinida.com" The Ida Civic Club does an outstanding job with this event every year...come out and see for yourself!

On Saturday December 12th we will take our float to Dundee. This parade will start around 6:30 at the High School and continue through downtown. This parade seems to get bigger every year and the Business Association and VFD do a great job! For more information on this event – go to dundeevillage.net.

The 3rd and final parade of the season will take place on Wednesday December 16th in Newport, MI. This is the smallest of all the parades we participate in. Although it may be the smallest, they sure do make us feel at home. We love their hospitality and look forward to another great time again this year.

We want to thank Ed Clock once again this year. Not only does he allow us to store our float in his barn throughout the year, but our volunteers get to work in a nice heated facility while we work on getting it ready for the parades. Thanks to the Clock family for all their support...without you, we wouldn't have a float. THANKS!!!!!!

Parade Donations.

As mentioned above, we'll be participating in 3-parades this year. Between them, we'll pass out more than 100-lbs of candy!!! If you have left over Halloween candy or would like to donate some for the parades, please let us know.

A few years' back we started to pass out small stuffed animals at the Ida parade. It was such a huge hit that we have continued to do it every year since. Each year we receive hundreds of stuffed animals – and this year has been no different. Thanks to everyone who has donated their animals! If you have some you'd like to donate, don't worry; we'll continue to accept your donations throughout the year. Thanks again to everyone who donated!!!

9th Annual Dinner/Dance.

We want to thank everyone who came out and supported our annual prime rib dinner. As always, the food was fantastic! Harold Rousseau always does a great job of running this event.

Although attendance was down this year, everyone had a great time! Guests were greeted with a huge salad bar and some home-made chicken-noodle soup to start the evening. At 6:00 the main course was ready...Prime rib, chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, green bean casserole, and rolls. Everyone who worked in the kitchen all day did a fantastic job! If anyone had room left, we had 3-large tables full of home-made desserts.

Entertainment was provided by T.V.'s Karaoke & DJ, who always do an outstanding job for us! After dinner, T.H.A.N.K.S. was presented a check by members of the Gold Wing Road Riders Association – Chapter C in the amount of \$ 1,200.00 For the past few years, this organization has sponsored a fun ride with all proceeds going to T.H.A.N.K.S. This year's ride was a huge success and we were

very grateful for their generosity. Thanks so much for all your support GWRRA...we really appreciate it!!!

Thanks again to all the volunteers who helped set up and tear down, donated desserts, or who worked in the kitchen all day. And of course...thanks to everyone who came out and supported us!

Winterfest Planning Underway.

The dates for this year's Winterfest will be Friday, February 12th – Sunday, February 14th. Events include:

- Friday Night Steak Dinner
- Softball Tournament
- Raffles
- Saturday Night Spaghetti Dinner
- Live Music & Entertainment
- Concession Stand
- Gambling
- 50/50 Raffles
- Texas Hold'em Tournament
- Team Fundraising Competition
- Sunday Morning Breakfast

We are in the process of planning activities for the kids to do throughout the weekend. Last year we had face-painting, arts & crafts, and games. These activities seemed to be a big hit with all the kids and we are working out all the details for this year. We may add a babysitting service also to allow the parents to participate in one of our events.

Other events we are considering this year include bringing back the euchre tournament on Sunday afternoon. We have also received several suggestions to add corn-hole or to do a corn-hole tournament. You can keep up-to-date with all the events by checking our website "www.thanksinc.com" or be looking for our "Winterfest" edition of the newsletter which will come out a couple of weeks prior to the event. SEE YOU THERE!!!!

Softball Tournament.

Believe it or not, we started to receive calls from teams in October wanting to sign up for the tournament. It's amazing how many teams want to play in this winter classic! We have turned teams away each of the last 3-years. It's a tremendous amount of work to put this tournament on each year. Last year for example, our volunteers worked non-stop for 2-days, pumping water off the outfields, adding stone to the fields and doing whatever was necessary to make the fields playable.

This tournament is so critical to the success of the entire Winterfest that we go to extreme measures sometimes to make it happen. We owe a huge amount of gratitude to all the volunteers who make it happen each and every year! Believe us, if we could find a way to replace the revenue generated by the tournament – we would in a second! But until then – Let's Play Ball!!!

Sign up for the tournament will begin January 1st. Please go to our website to sign up. Although the information is posted on the site now, you will not be able to sign up until the 1st of Jan. Last year we filled up in only 10-days, so please register early!

Team Fundraising.

Once again, we'll be having a team fundraising competition. The team who raises the most money will get to keep the traveling "Johnnie Trophy" for one year. We want to encourage all our softball teams to participate in this. It's a great way to show your support for the organization and to raise additional funds for our sponsor families.

Since the trophy has been awarded (4-years now), we've been able to raise nearly \$ 7,000.00!!! The winning team will get their team name engraved on the trophy and get to keep it in their possession for 1-year. Since the trophy has a large cup on it...the winning team can drink the beverage of their choice from it!!! This competition is open to everyone. You don't have to be a softball team to compete – get your friends, coworkers, or family together. You have

until Sunday, February 14th to turn in your money. As a special treat, we will have an additional prize for the winner this year.

There's still plenty of time to get your team together. Please help us make this a record year for the "Johnnie Trophy"!!!

Anniversary.

This Winterfest will be our 10th Anniversary! Can you believe it? It sure is hard to believe that it's been 10-years already!

It seems like only yesterday a few of us were hatching this idea over drinks one evening. It seems we use to come up with a lot of great ideas over drinks...the problem was that we never remembered them after a few days or we realized how stupid the idea actually was the next day. For some reason however, this idea stuck with all of us.

Remember, back in March of 1998 our softball team (Tailgaters) put on a fundraiser for Jamie Davis – the 3-year old niece of one of our players. She was diagnosed with brain cancer and we wanted to help the family. It truly was amazing how quickly things came together for that event and the amount of support we received from the community. Although, Jamie lost her battle with cancer shortly after our event; her death inspired us to do more and T.H.A.N.K.S. was created less than 2-years later.

The Winterfest continues to be our "signature" event each and every year. This is the largest and most important event we put on each year. Approximately 60% of our annual funding comes from this single event. We owe a HUGE THANK YOU to all the volunteers who give up so much of their personal time to make this event happen. It requires a huge commitment from everyone. Set up begins in late fall as the sides for the pavilion are installed before cold weather arrives. The work continues almost every weekend leading up to the event and ends in the spring when the sides are removed. Thanks again to everyone who continues to help us make this event possible each year...it is so important to our existence!

Donations Needed:

T.H.A.N.K.S., just like many non-profit organizations is feeling the effects of the slow economy. As expected, donations are down this year.

Our organization is completely funded by the public. All funds are raised through the many fundraisers we sponsor each year. Last year our organization sponsored 7-events. This is an incredible amount of work for the small but dedicated group of volunteers we have.

Raffle items are always needed, corporate sponsors are needed, and of course personal donations are always accepted. We know times have been difficult for many people...if you can't donate money, please consider volunteering at one of our many events. If your company offers grants to organizations like ours, please let us know so we can pursue them. Last but not least...help us to advertise! Advertising is very expensive! Help us get the word out...post flyers to our events at your work, invite family, friends and coworkers to come out to one of our events. Any help you give us is appreciated. Remember, word of mouth is the best advertisement.

There is a continuous line of families seeking our assistance each year. We want to make sure that we'll never have to turn any families away. Help us to help them.

Family Update.

We are always being asked how a particular sponsor child is doing. We want to provide everyone with updates when we can. This month, our feature child is Megan Fricke.

Megan was diagnosed with A.L.L. (Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia) in November of 2005. A.L.L. is the most common type of cancer in children and represents about 23% of cancer diagnoses among children younger than 15-years of age. In the 1960's fewer than 5% of children diagnosed with A.L.L. survived more than 5-years. Today, that number has risen to 85% of children living 5-years or more. A.L.L. is a

cancer of the white blood cells, these cells are responsible for fighting off infections in the body.

Megan was diagnosed when she was just 3-years old. We fell in love with her the first time we met this special child. It didn't take us long to make her our 2006 sponsor child. Since 2006, Megan has continued her treatments and has done well.

Amy (Megan's mom) reports that Megan is doing great. She is now 7-years old and is adjusting well in school. Although she has some "catching up" to do with the other students, we know she can do it. Megan still visits the hospital every 3-months for lab work and a physical. If everything remains good she will only have to visit every 6-months. The family is doing great and they are so happy to have things returning to "normal" around the house again.

We love to hear stories like that from our sponsor families. We feel blessed to have had the opportunity to help their family in a small way. We continue to keep in touch with them and will pass along any updates.

Website Update:

It's long overdue, and we are in the process of updating our site. Information on upcoming events will be posted and kept up to date. We are gathering pictures to post on the site and will be updating information.

We also want people to send us their photos of any events you have attended. If they don't make the website, they may make the annual T.H.A.N.K.S. DVD video.

Also, new to the site will be a donation page. Supporters will be able to donate by clicking on a button. We will be using paypal in hopes of increasing the amount of donations we receive each year.

Please check out the improvements and let us know what you think. We hope to have all the updates ready by Jan 1st.

Receiving Our Newsletter.

If you are not currently receiving our newsletter and would like to, please let us know. The newsletter is sent out 4-times a year and is free of charge to anyone who signs up. You can receive a copy through the mail or you can elect to have a copy emailed to you instead.

The newsletter is a great way to keep up to date on what we're doing. You will soon be able to sign up on our website and we'll also have the newsletter on our site for you to download.

How To Contact Us.

There are several ways to contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns.

Address: T.H.A.N.K.S. Inc
1207 W. Albain Rd
Monroe, MI 48161-9520

Phone: (734) 269-6071

Email: thanks_incorp@hotmail.com

Website: www.thanksinc.com

Please feel free to contact us any time.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!!

Well it's been another successful year for us here at T.H.A.N.K.S. It's hard to believe that another year has come and gone! We are thankful for so many things.

We are so thankful for all the people who came out and supported us at one of our many events.

We are thankful for all the businesses who donated throughout the year.

We are thankful for all the people who believe in us and support us.

We are thankful for the families who reach out to us for help. You inspire us to keep going when we're tired and feel burned out.

We are thankful for our sponsor children who are showing signs of improvement. May you be in great health one day soon!

We are thankful for the families we've helped who can finally move on. We wish you all the happiness in the world and thank you for letting us be a part of your lives for a short time.

We are thankful for all the friendships we've made over the past 9-years within the organization.

We are thankful for the dedication and thoughtfulness of our volunteers. You are the reason we have survived this long.

We are thankful for our own families. Being a part of this organization has taught us how precious our families really are.

And finally, we are thankful for 9-great years as an organization. We look forward to our 10th year knowing that there is a lot of work ahead and that we have the greatest volunteers in the world!!!

On behalf of the board of directors, we'd like to thank everyone once again for your continued support. We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.

See everyone soon!!!!!!!