

November 2006



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

Tailgaters Helping Aid Needy Kids' Spirits



PRES.: Tim Russeau V. PRES.: Brian Trombley TREASURER: Steve Bolster ASST. TREASURER: Melvin French SECRETARY: Heidi Bolster

Winterfest Planning Underway.

The dates for the 2007 Winterfest will be Friday, February 16th – Sunday, February 18th. As in the past years, we have a variety of different events planned. While events are subject to change, here are just a few of the activities that will be included in this year's event:

- Softball Tournament
- Friday Night Steak Dinner
- Saturday Night Spaghetti Dinner
- Sunday Morning Breakfast
- Live Music & entertainment
- Refreshments
- Raffles
- 50/50
- Gambling
- Carnival style games for the kids
- Texas Hold'em tournament
- Team Fundraising Competition

Look for future mailings that will include dates and times for each of the events listed above. If there is an event you would like to see us have that isn't listed please contact our office. We're always looking for new ideas.

Volunteers needed.

People constantly approach us wanting to know how they can help. Although we have a great group of individuals who constantly volunteer at our events, the need for volunteers is never greater than it is during our winterfest. This event requires a small army of volunteers each and every year. From the set up of the facilities, to the tear down, this event requires a massive amount of help. If you are able to help in any way, please give us a call. We are already in the planning stages for the event. Help is needed setting up, advertising, collecting

raffle items, making signs, dealing cards, working the kitchen, running errands, and the list goes on and on.... If you have a special "skill" that could benefit our organization or are just looking for an excuse to get out of that "Honey-Do-List" at home, please consider volunteering!

Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. However, as the event draws closer, more meetings are scheduled. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please see one of the T.H.A.N.K.S. staff, or contact our office. We would love to have you!!

Stuffed Animal Drive.

We wanted to take the opportunity to thank all of you who have so generously donated your stuffed animals to our organization. Your response has been absolutely amazing!!! Last year was the first year that we passed them out during the Christmas in Ida parade, and it was quite a hit! We will once again pass stuffed animals out during the upcoming Christmas parade on Dec. 2nd. If you would still like to donate your animals, don't worry; we'll continue to accept donations throughout the year. Thanks again to everyone who donated!!!

Donations Needed.

Since T.H.A.N.K.S. Inc. is a non-profit organization we depend on the generosity of both personal and corporate donations to keep our organization afloat. Without your help we wouldn't be able to put on all the events that make it possible for us to help so many families.

Our organization is completely funded by the public. All of the money we raise each and every year comes from your generous donations and from the money we raise at our fundraisers.

In the past several years since T.H.A.N.K.S. was created, our name has become more recognizable throughout the community. There are a number of families, all very deserving, that are requesting our help. Quite honestly, we have been a little overwhelmed with the response. We want to be able to help all families in one way or another. Your donations make it possible for us to provide support to these families.

Please keep in mind that this is the season of giving. Please consider giving either a monetary donation, or an item that can be used in our raffles. Also keep in mind that since T.H.A.N.K.S. is a 501(c)(3) organization, your donation is tax deductible.

Christmas Drive.

T.H.A.N.K.S. will be sponsoring a drive to help our sponsor families with the holidays. If you would be interested in helping us out with this please let us know. We will be putting together a wish list from each of our families and they should be available in the near future. If you're unable to go out and shop from one of our wish lists, please consider sending a monetary donation, or even a gift card. Please help us make this holiday season a little more joyous for our families. For more information please contact our office.

Christmas in Ida.

T.H.A.N.K.S. will once again be participating in the Christmas in Ida parade this year. This will be our 5th year entering the parade, and we are proud to say that each year we have won a prize in the float contest! We have big plans for our float this year, and we hope that you will all come out and watch this amazing scene of floats covered in Christmas lights go through downtown Ida. It is always held the first Saturday of December. As previously mentioned we will be accepting stuffed animal donations to hand out during our parade. We will also be

accepting Candy donations. Each year we pass out well over 100 lbs of candy to children along the float routes. Please consider donating your extra Halloween candy to us this year. Contact our office for more details.

Don't let this be your last newsletter!

T.H.A.N.K.S. recently sent out a survey to those of you who are on our mailing list. We ask that you please take the time to fill these out and return them. Our mailing list is currently over 400 people. With the increase in postage and office supplies, we are in the process of updating our mailing list in an attempt to save some money. If you are still interested in receiving our mailings, please return the survey back to us as soon as possible or email us. Anyone wishing to receive our mailings via the internet, please let us know. This is a great way to help save us some money. If you have misplaced your survey you can either get online via our website, or contact our office and we would be happy to send out a new one to you.

Comedy Night a Success.

Our first ever Comedy Night at Ambassador Hall went over fairly well. We had 126 people show up for a night of food, drinks, and laughter. The comedians were very funny, and the company was delightful. We need to thank the staff at Ambassador Hall for doing a wonderful job. They were great to work with and it was a relaxing evening for all that attended. Thank you to all of you who came out to support comedy for a cure.

Special Thanks & Well Wishes.

-Well wishes go out to ***Marvin Trombley***. We will keep you in our thoughts and prayers and hope for a new year full of better health!

-Well wishes go out to the ***Epaminonda family***. As you get ready to face an emotional and heart-breaking anniversary, our thoughts and prayers are with you.

-Well wishes go out to the ***Smithers family***, as they too will soon face an

emotional anniversary. We continue to keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

-Well wishes go out to all of our ***sponsor families***. May all of you experience a very happy holiday season full of lots of memories and laughter.

-Congratulations go out to ***Tim Matta*** who recently got married. Tim is a member of the Ida Volunteer Fire Dept. and has always been a big supporter of our organization.

-Congratulations go out to ***Bonnie Moser*** who recently got married. Bonnie is the one who created and maintains our website.

As always there are numerous people we need to thank. Thank you to *Ed Clock*, who once again has let T.H.A.N.K.S. use his barn to house our float while our volunteers work on getting it ready for the parade. Thank you to *Jon Madden and Larry Hemery* for running the Texas Hold'em Tournament. Thank you to *Melanie Davis and Bill Bray* for setting up our comedy night. Thanks again to all our volunteers who put in a couple of long days to get the pavilion all set up again. Finally, thank you to *Don Stotz* for the use of his barn for storage. And to the many, many volunteers who continue to keep T.H.A.N.K.S. going.

Texas Hold'em.

We had such incredible luck with the Texas Hold'em tournament we held in conjunction with our Winterfest this past February that we decided to give it another try. We held another tournament on October 28. While we didn't have the turnout that we had hoped for, we did have 63 players come out ready to gamble and have a good time. Congratulations to all of our winners!

Printer Cartridges Needed.

T.H.A.N.K.S. Inc. is collecting printer and copier cartridges. We recently enrolled in a program that will give us money for each printer and copier cartridges that we send in. This is yet another way to raise money to help much needed families. Please keep us in mind the next time you're cartridges need replacing.

Office Equipment.

Well, finally after a longer then expected delay; we were able to purchase some much needed replacement equipment for our office. Our computer was completely destroyed from a lightning strike back in July. After finally settling with the insurance company, we were able to replace our main computer and add a laptop computer as well. The upgrade in equipment should be a tremendous help to us. We were able to program the new computers with software that will be very beneficial to us. Although, we still have many needs in our office, this will be a much needed upgrade for us. We could really use a new/used color copier. Our current model has served us very well for the past 4-years, but is in need of replacing. If anyone knows where we can get a good deal on one, please let us know.

My View.

This is the time of year where we all start writing down our wish lists, which got me thinking...if I could create a wish list for T.H.A.N.K.S. what would it be? If there were absolutely no boundaries, what would I wish for T.H.A.N.K.S.?

I would wish for a large plot of land where we could build our own facilities. A place that could include a very nice hall with a state of the art kitchen and all the latest appliances. It would also have to have a walk in cooler and freezer for storage, and let's not forget INDOOR bathrooms. A place with enough room to hold all of our activities in one building...the gambling, kids games, Texas Hold'em tournament...EVERYTHING! A place where we could not only hold our Winterfest, but also our Dinner/Dance and any other event that would come up. A facility that we could rent out for weddings or other events that would generate funds for T.H.A.N.K.S. I would also want the land to be big enough where we could have ball fields, and an outdoor pavilion for those summer months. It would also need to be big enough so that we could assure plenty of parking for all supporters.

I would wish for an office that was equipped with everything we need to run this

organization more efficiently and cost effectively. A state of the art color copy machine and a few more computers so that we could get more people involved with the office work. STORAGE space and extra supplies to keep on hand such as white and color copy paper, pens, pencils, markers, poster board, tape, staples, printer and copy cartridges, stamps etc.

I would wish for enough money to help our families. Just enough where we wouldn't have to choose between upgrading facilities, purchasing office supplies, or helping them pay for their electric bill.

I would wish for funding for us to be able to employ a few full-time people that would spend more time grant writing and researching ways to make us bigger and better. Funding for at least one or two people who would spend more time with the families and supply the support and companionship that they need and deserve.

I have BIG dreams...Happy Holidays everyone! On behalf of all of us here at T.H.A.N.K.S., thank you for your support throughout the year.

Written by: Heidi Bolster

Family Updates.

As I promised in our last newsletter, here are updates on the three families we have been helping this past year.

Megan Fricke

"When our little Megan was diagnosed with Leukemia that cold Saturday morning, it felt like someone had sucked all of the oxygen out of the room. It literally hurt to breathe. The precious baby would have to undergo chemotherapy for 2 years and 2 months. Here we are, one year later and Megan is doing great. She remains in remission and will continue treatments until January 3, 2008.

A dear friend of mine wrote T.H.A.N.K.S. informing them of our family, in concern for what might happen financially. These wonderful people [at T.H.A.N.K.S.] work so hard to help my family through this very

hard time. We have so many loving friends at T.H.A.N.K.S., we love you all dearly. We can't thank you enough for all you have done."

-The Fricke Family

Noah Martin

"Noah is doing great. He is in the maintenance phase of his treatment which will last for two more years. He is currently taking 6-mp and methotrexate at home, and gets steroids once a month for five days. He gets IV chemotherapy once a month called Vincristne. Every three months he gets a spinal tap. He is still in remission. He started all day kindergarten in the fall. He got to go on his make a wish trip to Disney at the end of August. We had a wonderful time."

-Paul & Elizabeth Martin

Jared Foland

"Jared and I are doing well and are currently in Mississippi. We have been on the road now for the last 19 months. We average 4-6 days a month at home with the exception of August. I was home for 30 days straight and Barney took Jared to Georgia twice for treatment. We have been gone since Sept. 4th and will be returning home on Oct. 24th. Jared was diagnosed with stage 4 squamous cell carcinoma of unknown origin in March 2005. The tumors are in his bones. The average survival time from diagnosis is 3-4 months and to the best of our knowledge, Jared is the only one that has ever lived this long.

After Jared was diagnosed we did a lot of research including talking to oncologists at MD Anderson and Cancer Centers of America. We decided to decline treatment—you see there was no cure anywhere. We then started looking at alternative medicine and found a clinic in Georgia that would accept him. We left in April 2005 and have never looked back. We have spent everything we own trying to save his life, and to be honest, when we left I never thought he would live this long. All I expected was to extend his life and give him better quality of life.

Jared and I also spent a month in Mexico (Nov/Dec 2005) at the Oasis of Hope Hospital. Although we did not find our cure,

I believe what we did find was the ability to stop the cancer from going to his organs and slow down cellular replication of the cancer which in turn gave us more time to find a cure.

This July we found a clinic in Mississippi willing to take Jared. Many places are not willing to see children for fear of government prosecution. Many of you are not aware that we had to fight the hospital when we refused treatment. Even though there was no cure and no one has lived longer than 9 months, they wanted to do treatments anyway. We won but even so we have been denied access to over 25 alternative clinics during the last 18 months for fear of prosecution.

Jared's story is way to long to tell, but I wanted to share with everyone ALL OF THE CANCER IN JARED'S BACK IS DEAD and God willing any cancer that is left will be dead before we come home. The doctor believes Jared has a good chance for a CURE. We will find out at the end of November if he is cured. Please pray for Jared.

We wanted to thank everyone at T.H.A.N.K.S. and all the people who support T.H.A.N.K.S. I am not sure if everyone knows how important this organization is to the families they help. Without T.H.A.N.K.S. we would have lost our home. Can you imagine choosing treatment for your son or paying your house payment? Insurance does not pay for alternative medicine and if I had to estimate what it has cost to keep him alive it would be around \$130,000.00. T.H.A.N.K.S. has taken care of every bill we could not pay and without them we would have nothing left. There is no way for us to ever be able to thank you enough...just know because of this organization we have been able to survive and live."

-Nicole & Barney Foland



We want to take the time to thank our sponsor families for taking the time out of their chaotic schedules to give us an update. We are often asked how our sponsor families are doing, and we enjoy the opportunity to update all of you, especially

when it's good news. Lord knows that we have had our share of bad news in the past and are so thankful that we can share this good news with everyone. Although, the news is very encouraging for all of our families, we know that they still have a very long battle ahead of them and hope everyone will continue to keep them in their prayers. We will continue to keep everyone posted on their conditions in future newsletters.

Happy Holidays.

As our 2006 efforts come to an end, we'd like to thank EVERYONE who helped out this past year. It takes a lot of dedicated people who give up a lot of their personal time (much of the time on weekends) to make this organization survive. On behalf of the board of directors, we'd like to thank everyone once again for their continued support. We hope that everyone has a safe and happy holiday season. We hope to see everyone soon.

How to contact us.

There are several ways to contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns. Our office phone number is (734) 269-6071. Our E-mail address is thanks_incorp@hotmail.com. Our web page address is www.thanksinc.com. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 126 Ida, MI 48140. Our shipping address is 1207 W. Albain Monroe, MI 48161-9520. Please feel free to contact us at any time.

Got something to say?

If you would like to write an article for our T.H.A.N.K.S. Inc. newsletter, or if you have any questions or comments, please mail them to us. We would love to hear what you have to say (good or bad), and will publish it in upcoming editions of our newsletter.

Happy Holidays!