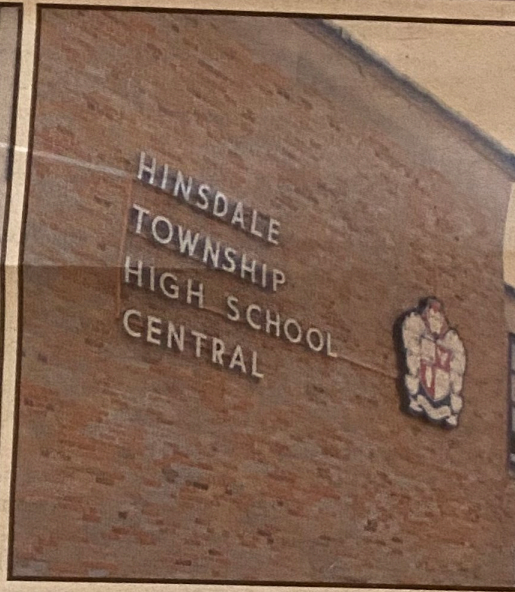


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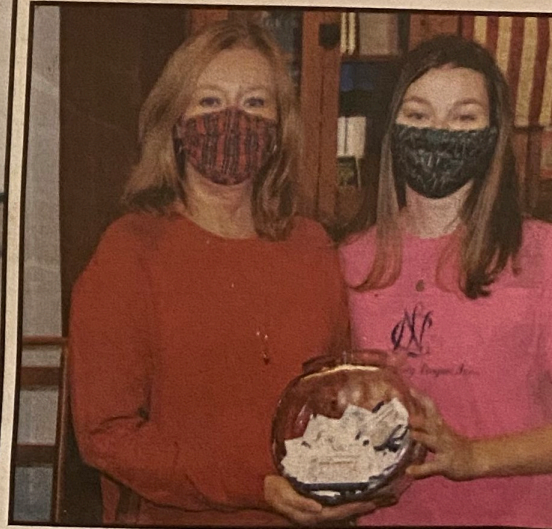
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Increasing Attendance

Hinsdale Central hybrid students to attend school per week during second semester (p. 4)



Benefit at home

CHIW develops innovative virtual concept for annual January benefit (pp. 8-10)

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Clarendon Hills Historical selects 'daisy raffle' winners

FEATURE



Clarendon Hills Infant Welfare president Jen Alsman, left, works on the 2021 benefit with benefit co-chairs Danielle Wheeler, center, and Melissa Woodbury, right. PHOTOS BY CAROLINA MENAPACE

Reimagining a benefit

Mike Ellis

Over the past number of years, CHIW has hosted its benefit—which functions as the chapter's largest yearly fundraiser—in the clubhouse of Butterfield Country Club in Oak Brook.

But with large gatherings suspended indefinitely, the chapter needed to modify its

approach to hold a benefit in early 2021.

"We knew we wanted to do something—we just didn't know what that something could be—and we knew we couldn't gather in a big group of people in January," CHIW president Jen Alsman said.

Alsman said chapter members suggested sundry alternative concepts, such as a golf outing or virtual 5K, but because they wanted to keep the same January timeframe, ultimately settled on a scattered approach, whereby homeowners can welcome guests into their

respective homes, while a virtual video component links the overarching event together.

Benefit co-chairs Danielle Wheeler and Melissa Woodbury—who is concurrently serving as chapter vice president—had been assigned to the benefit prior to the onset

of the pandemic in March, having functioned as "step-up" chairs during the last gala in January.

Woodbury said the driving force behind continuing the benefit this year is that "we are giving to a population who is in need of healthcare resources."

"In a crisis such as this, which is health-related, it's become ever more acute for them to be able to access the services that the Angel Harvey [Family] Health Center provides," she said. "When you look across the population overall, 15 percent of Americans just don't have healthcare today."

"So we wanted to be sure that we were doing something that would still support the population we've been supporting all these... years that Infant Welfare has been here in Clarendon Hills."

Alsman said chapter members have demonstrated flexibility in "pivoting" from the comfortable confines of a Butterfield benefit to a unique, untried concept. "Everyone's been working really hard to figure something out that we hope people will like, and that we hope will be successful in bringing those donations for the people who need it the most," she said.

Scheduled for Jan. 23, the benefit will be held at various locations.

The purchase of a \$75 ticket affords any individual access to a link to virtual benefit evening entertainment and content, including a comedian, silent and live auctions, a raffle and information concerning the Clarendon Hills chapter and Infant Welfare's Angel Harvey Family Health Center on the Northwest Side of Chicago.

Any ticket purchaser is eligible to host their own party to celebrate the benefit in their home.

Woodbury described the concept as a "pop-up" benefit in your home, with the overall event consisting of separate parties, "but we are giving them all the components to make it as easy as possible for them."

Host homes may invite as many guests to participate as they are comfortable do-

"If you want to put on a sparkly dress, put on a sparkly dress, set your table with china ... You can make it anything you want."

Danielle Wheeler, Clarendon Hills Infant Welfare benefit co-chair, on benefit attire and theme

ing. "We can't control how many people you have in your house," Woodbury said. "We hope that people who host will encourage their guests to give generously to the cause."

Non-hosting guests are not required to purchase tickets, but the chapter is hopeful that they will be inspired to give by bidding on auction items and participating in a raffle.

"Our silent auction has always been virtual; we've always done it from our phones," Wheeler said. "So that actually won't change for people."

The raffle will be a 50-50 concept, with half of the money contributed being donated to Infant Welfare.

"[For] every ticket that you buy, half will go to Infant Welfare," Woodbury said, "and the other half will go into the pot; so the more tickets that we sell, the bigger the pot gets."

CHIW has also retained its photographer's services to roam around to local host homes and capture the evening atmosphere.

As for attire and themes, Wheeler said those are really at the discretion of hosts and their guests.

"If you want to put on a sparkly dress, put on a sparkly dress, set your table with china," she said. "... You can make it anything you want."

In addition to the basic ticket, hosts also have the option of purchasing various "add-ons," including food, floral, alcohol and luminaria.

Host homes are encouraged to display luminaria

that night as they would do on Christmas Eve to signify their participation in the benefit.

Floral services will be provided by the English Garden Flower Shop in downtown Clarendon Hills, with hosts either procuring arrangements from the shop that day, or having them delivered to their homes by chapter members.

As for food and beverages, Wheeler's Chicago-based catering company Maison Cuisine will be delivering to host homes within a 15-mile radius.

"We're going to be providing all the meals for anyone who wants food delivered to their home," Wheeler said.

Wheeler, whose company will be donating a portion of the proceeds it secures to Infant Welfare, said Mason Cuisine is accustomed to catering events for 200 to 300 people, "so delivering 20 dinners of 10 wouldn't be the end of the world for us."

"I'm hoping that people spend a lot on catering, because [then] more money goes to Infant Welfare," she said.

Wheeler said the absence of regular overhead costs this year will allow a greater proportion of funds received to proceed directly to Infant Welfare.

"We do obviously have expenses with production... but I think, this year more than ever, a large percentage of what people are donating is actually going directly to the cause—not going to band that we hire or the alcohol that people are drink-

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ing that night," she said.

The chapter will also be offering a single \$5,000 "platinum ticket," which, if purchased, will consist of a chef in the home, servers, a wine and spirits bar, luminaria, dinner for ten, floral accents and a limo ride for guests to be conveyed to the host home.

While this novel benefit approach carries uncertainty and uneasiness, the chapter is also keenly aware that it presents an opportunity to raise awareness for its cause and engage newcomers that would not otherwise be able to attend a Butterfield benefit, capped at roughly 300 guests.

"It was a hard change, because we're so used to what we do," Alsman said, "but I actually think a lot of positives can come out of doing it this way."

Because the benefit will feature a virtual component, it is not confined within any specific geographic boundaries, offering homeowners well beyond Clarendon Hills and surrounding communities the



Clarendon Hills Infant Welfare will present its annual benefit on Jan. 23. Anyone who purchases a \$75 ticket is eligible to host a benefit party in their home.

opportunity to partake in the evening.

"There could be a thousand different people hosting, anywhere in the United States," Woodbury

said. ... "If you go online and buy a ticket on the Infant Welfare website, you could buy it from Des Moines and participate for \$75."

Alsman encouraged Clarendon

Hills residents who have not previously participated in the benefit to "give it a try" this year.

"I think all charities right now are working really hard to do what

they can to raise money for the people that they're raising money for," she said.

Woodbury said giving in general has been impacted by the virus, "and we just want to be sure we raise as much money as we can" for the uninsured and underinsured individuals who receive medical services from the Angel Harvey Family Health Center.

"It is a fun party," she said, "but it has a cause behind it."

The Clarendon Hills chapter of the Infant Welfare Society of Chicago auxiliary will present its annual benefit, "Light Up the Night," in a modified format on Jan. 23. Individuals interested in serving as hosts for the evening can purchase tickets for \$75, as well as optional add-ons, on the chapter's website, www.clarendonhillsinfantwelfare.org. For more information about the Infant Welfare Society of Chicago, visit www.infantwelfare-society.org.