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Illuminating The Night

by Tricia Despres • January 1, 2020 • Leave a Comment



Clarendon Hills Infant Welfare Society sheds much-needed light on those less fortunate. Amy Ponto, Jennifer Van Zant. PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBIN SUBAR

Every year, more than 13,000 patients walk through the doors of Chicago's Angel Harvey Family Health Center seeking medical attention for a tooth that won't stop hurting, a sore throat that won't get better, or a sick child who desperately needs medical care. Regardless of their financial circumstances, they leave feeling better—and so does the Clarendon Hills Infant Welfare Society (CHIW).

"As a team, we all want to achieve the same end result, which is to help some of Chicago's most vulnerable populations," says society member Jen Van Zant.

"We're engaged in one common goal, and that's to raise awareness," adds fellow member Amy Ponto. "Throughout the year, we donate our time, money, and necessities to the center."

Established in 1948, CHIW began with nine women seeking to help mothers and children in need. Today it is one of nine chapters in a larger network known as the Auxiliary of the Infant Welfare Society of Chicago. Together they raise funds to support Angel Harvey, a full-service operation that offers an array of health services—medical, mental health, and dental care, to name a few—on a sliding scale fee.

Today the group is 50 members strong. But there's always room for more helping hands, and with their latest event, Van Zant and Ponto invite fellow members of the community to show their support.

The duo has taken on the shared responsibility of co-chairing this year's fundraising gala. "Light Up the Night" will take place on Saturday, January 25 at Butterfield Country Club in Oak Brook. The event will include cocktails, dinner, dancing, and an auction.

But for all the fun and entertainment in store, it's the solemn moments that prove to be the most memorable.

"One of my favorite moments each year occurs when a beneficiary of our organization's efforts—usually a mother, child or a family in need—shares their story with the attendees that evening," Van Zant says. "It's always a tear-jerker and galvanizes our members around the cause at hand."

For more information, visit clarendonhillsinfantwelfare.org.

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