

Dallas Foundation seeking input from community

By SARAH HITE
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the Dallas Foundation for Excellence in Education or make a donation, write to the Gattuso Group, c/o Dallas Foundation, 1000 Wyoming Ave., Forty Fort, PA 18704, e-mail dallasfoundation@comcast.net or visit www.ourdallasfoundation.org.

The newly-formed Dallas Foundation for Excellence in Education is looking for input from the community with ideas on how to raise funds to improve students' experience within the Dallas School District.

Ray Ostroski, president of the foundation, said talk of starting a foundation for the Dallas schools began more than a year ago when local accountants Kristin and Jim Gattuso informally discussed the idea with administrators.

It wasn't until this past year

the process to start the foundation kicked into full gear.

"With the latest round of the funding cuts that came around this year, it kind of put a little more emphasis on getting something done so that we might be able to start helping with the gaps in the funding ...," said Ostroski.

The Gattusos and Ostroski, a

lawyer, were able to do the initial work of filling out paperwork to file for 501(c)(3) status, which would make the organization a tax-exempt nonprofit, and set up a board filled with parents of Dallas students.

"We have no preconceived notion of what we're going to fund at this time," he said. "There's nothing that's already

been designated at this time."

The goal is to help fund anything the district might need but can't squeeze into a cash-strapped budget, such as facilities improvements, academic pursuits and extracurricular activities equipment.

"We hope eventually we can get to the point where we can do scholarships for kids, Dallas students who want to go on to higher education," said Ostroski. "It's all dependent upon how much money we can raise."

Ostroski said the group is looking for ideas on how the organization can raise money to improve the educational experience of Dallas students.

"We want to do something

that will help the most kids that we can with the funds and the resources that we have," he said.

Ostroski said teachers, coaches and other staff will be able to send an application to the foundation board to request funding, and the board will decide which project will be beneficial to the most students.

At this point, the board is looking to build its funds in order to be able to consider projects. Members of the Dallas School District community are encouraged to submit ideas for fundraising projects.

Private donations will also be accepted on the group's website soon. Ostroski said sup-

porters can donate through the online purchasing program PayPal.

The Dallas Foundation for Excellence in Education will host its first fundraising event, a golf tournament at Mill Race Golf Club in Benton, on October 14. The tournament will begin with a shotgun start at 12:30 p.m. The \$100 entry fee per golfer includes a commemorative gift, cart and green fees, food and beverages on the course, open bar, complete dinner buffet after the game and trophies, gifts and prizes.

Ostroski hopes this fundraiser will be the first of many.

"The possibilities are limitless," he said.

Flood victims urged to contact FEMA

Rep. Karen Boback (R-Columbia/Luzerne/Wyoming) is encouraging residents of Columbia, Luzerne and Wyoming counties who incurred property damage as a result of Tropical Storm Lee to contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to apply for assistance through the Individuals and Households Program (IHP). This includes damage to dwellings, vegetation and any structure on the property.

Boback noted that residents should contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) directly to apply for disaster assistance by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or by logging onto www.disasterassistance.gov.

Applicants will be asked to provide personal details, including Social Security numbers, the name of their private insurance company and contact information.

Through the Individuals and Households Program (IHP), FEMA can provide up to \$30,200 in financial assistance. This assistance would supplement any insurance company reimbursements. Residents of

Luzerne and Wyoming counties may be eligible for individual assistance for damage incurred due to Hurricane Irene. Residents of Columbia, Luzerne and Wyoming counties may be eligible for individual assistance in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Lee.

The projects eligible for financial assistance include:

- Temporary housing.
- Home repairs (structural, heating, utilities, well or water systems, windows, floors, walls, etc.).

Total home replacement, under certain conditions and with a limit of \$30,200.

Other needs assistance (medical, dental, repair, cleaning and replacement of household items, clean-up items, vehicle repair or replacement, moving and storage expense, etc.).

FEMA will require the homeowner to provide all necessary documentation to process assistance applications. This may include proof of occupancy, ownership and income loss. Applicants should keep all receipts and records for any expenses incurred as a result of the disaster.

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Members of the Dallas Senior Center, from left, Harold Elston, Sue Masters, Alfreda Malak, Joe Malak, and Jim Reese, talk about manners during lunch.

SARAH HITE/THE DALLAS POST

Are you practicing proper etiquette?

By SARAH HITE
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Do you know the correct way to butter a roll during lunch, or how to politely find your seat in a movie theater?

These answers are among the rules of etiquette – a subject Jill Evans Kryston, of Defining Manners: A School for Contemporary Protocol in Shavertown, doesn't take lightly.

But the idea is not to be perfect, she says. At the core of the matter, etiquette is based on mutual respect.

"Etiquette is about relationships," said Evans Kryston, who is certified by the International School of Protocol based in Maryland. "Whenever two or more people interact, these principles help determine how they should act."

In life, whether one is at work, attending school or watching a movie, Evans Kryston believes etiquette plays a central role in

how human beings interact with one another and the relationships that stem from verbal and nonverbal communication.

"Our behaviors affect others," she said.

Chip Morgan, president of the Back Mountain Business Association and owner of Wilkes-Barre Bookkeeping Co., said there is a clash between generations when it comes to maintaining proper etiquette in the professional and social worlds.

"I think that kids coming into the business world don't realize how important it is," he said. "They don't realize they're being judged."

Does that mean 19-year-old Jason LeVan, of Troy, is already ahead of his peers in terms of manners?

The wildlife and fisheries science major at Penn State Wilkes-Barre in Lehman said he's always been accustomed to minding his "ps and qs."

"It's the little things that make you think a lot more about peo-

"Etiquette is about relationships. Whenever two or more people interact, these principles help determine how they should act."

Jill Evans Kryston
Etiquette expert

ple, when they're considerate and willing to take the time to do those things," he said.

LeVan said he will hold the door for others when the situation requires it, and he'll often say "please" and "thank you," even with his friends.

Gianna DeGraba, 19, of Dallas, said manners are more important at home than at school.

"With my friends, I'm more laid back," she said. "At home, I won't use gruesome language and I don't chew with my mouth full."

DeGraba, who is studying communications at Penn State Wilkes-Barre, said manners might play a more important role when she nabs her dream job in

public relations.

"Ninety percent of the time my (interactions) will be based on etiquette," she said.

Some members of the Dallas Senior Center on Rice Street in Dallas said they don't even need to practice manners – they're in-born.

"People from the old school just have them," said Jim Reese, 73, of Dallas.

Seventy-five-year-old Joe Malak, of Dallas, said manners and etiquette are about "having respect for people," and it pains him to see how things have changed over the years.

"The younger generation

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After Hurricane Irene devastated northeastern Pennsylvania, Sen. Lisa Baker (R-Luzerne/Monroe/Pike/Susquehanna/Wayne/Wyoming), center, and Rep. Karen Boback (R-Columbia/Luzerne/Wyoming), right, toured hard-hit areas to assess the damage. They met up with Gov. Tom Corbett at a demolished bridge in Forkston.

HARPIN' ON THINGS

The critters in my yard are having a hi-ho good time in this weather

Fall officially entered the area last week according to the calendar and the cooler temperatures, yet those who spend time outdoors know the seasons are changing by the behavior of the animals.

Our resident groundhogs, which don't have much ground clearance when running anyway, now have their fat bellies dragging on the ground due to their diet of fresh clover from all the rain and their newfound favorite, cantaloupe, thanks to the Mrs. She was worried they were getting too much sun and wondered if

we (which means me) should put a tree near their hole in the backyard to provide some shade.

My comment about having to build small lounge chairs next was not muttered low enough and I received "the look" yet again. The Mrs. doesn't realize the only way I used to view groundhogs was with crosshairs on them.

The red squirrels are having a field day carrying Butternuts across the fence tops. It's fun to watch these small animals carrying something twice the size of their head. Their front end is low with the weight while their back legs are sometimes just touching the wood of the fence. They use their tail as a counterweight to get more traction. I would love to video them and put Bugs Bunny music, preferably "The Barber of Seville," as the background.

And then there are the three bears. Not momma, papa and baby bear, either, but an adolescent sporting ear jewelry and two associates. They came to visit a friend in Lehman several nights last week to raid his refrigerator.

My friend, who shall remain nameless primarily due to the fact that I want to be able to use my fingers to type in the future, is really into smoking...meats that is, and last week he was finishing up several sides of apple smoked bacon which were placed in the outside refrigerator.

He went into the house to do something and came back out about half an hour later to find the refrigerator door, which has a latching handle, open. Upon inspection, he found two slabs of bacon gone and, backing out of the frig, saw the south end of a

northbound bear disappearing into the woods. He searched the yard and found no sign of the 18 pounds of bacon, not even scraps.

He closed the fridge, propped a wheelbarrow against it and went inside where, instead of putting on his slippers, kept his boots on. The bear came back a few hours later, knocking over the wheelbarrow and my friend chased it out of the yard before it got into the refrigerator.

Two nights later just before dark, he heard the wheelbarrow fall over again and went to see what was going on. The bear with the tag was standing on its hind legs with front paws on top of the refrigerator, another bear was sitting and working on the latch and a third was watching the show and drooling in anticipation of the bacon.

Picture, just for a second, a long-haired, wild-eyed man in his Earnhardt Jr. No. 88 slippers wielding a stick, protecting not only his bacon but his case of Bud Light, yelling at the top of his lungs. The bears backed off and scattered across the driveway between vehicles with one going straight into the woods, never looking back and two going up a tree. He backed off to let the bears come down, then proceeded to chase them out of the yard.

Those bears are probably still running and have learned it's one thing to mess with a man's bacon but not with his Bud.

I have heard that Mrs. Cook at Cook's store in Lehman is planning more off-the-wall decorations for Halloween. Be sure to look up and down when enter-

ing, so you don't get too scared. Send me an email at The Dallas Post if you have decorated your business for Halloween and I will do my best to stop by.

The Atta Boy of the week goes to the Dallas Rotary and their new sign (creatively done by Hoover Signs) at the intersection of Routes 309 and 415, welcoming everyone to Dallas and the Back Mountain Community. Nice way to let people know we take pride in our area.

Harp Heffernan was the associate publisher, outdoor editor and chief photographer of the Sunday Independent, a newspaper that was in his family for 87 years in Wilkes-Barre. You can e-mail him at news@mydallaspost.com.