

Boyne Eta Nu Charities Volunteers Jump Into Fall

There is suddenly a chill in the morning air, but the women of Boyne Eta Nu Charities are warming up to start the projects that fulfill their mission – To create community impact and empower families in the Boyne area. The group is perhaps best known for its Dress for Chill Project, an initiative that provides complete sets of new winter outerwear to area preschool and elementary school children whose families need extra assistance. In the past several years, the number of children impacted by this project has increased to over 220.

While BENC members work diligently on Dress for Chill, they also impact the community in many more ways. Also in the fall, they provide new school clothes to a family identified by the Boyne City Elementary School staff as one in need of extra support. Additionally, a project begun just two years ago offers a group of eighth grade girls, again selected by school personnel, an opportunity to shop for winter gear at Boyne Country Sports, a local business that offers a substantial discount to the group for this project. Last year, for the first time, BENC was able to support the counseling department at Boyne Middle School with a donation to that department's own winter gear program. That donation also supported the counselors with funds to stock their supply of healthy snacks for hungry tweens who stop by the office daily.

While the group is well-known for helping Boyne City school children prepare for outdoor winter fun, the members are also involved in other projects that help the Boyne community. In the fall, they provide a festive dinner for the residents of Litzenberger Place and Deer Meadows and in the winter, serve that group a nourishing breakfast. Both of these events are produced in conjunction with the Boyne City Schools Culinary classes. During the holidays, BENC is recognized for their support of Hospice of Michigan as they produce another well-known project, Lights of Love. The group offers commemorative red wooden hearts inscribed with loved ones' names along with colored lights to donors who want to honor family members or friends who have passed away. The hearts and lights are displayed on a Christmas tree located on the Dilworth porch and all proceeds from the project are donated to the hospice program. Over its 38-year history, Lights of Love has provided more than \$130,000 to Hospice. Finally, in the spring and early summer, BENC begins its program to raise funds for the Boyne City Fireworks. The group has been a Platinum sponsor of the "Best Fourth in the North" for several years.

Clearly, all these projects to help the community take funding. The group relies on donations from local businesses, organizations and individuals. With the generous support from the Boyne community, BENC has been able to continue its service and assistance to help our neighbors.

Boyne Eta Nu Charities will have a booth at the upcoming Harvest Festival on September 26 in downtown Boyne City. They will offer free cider and donuts and an opportunity to find out more about the good works of this group of dedicated volunteers. Information about projects and ways to support the group's efforts can also be found on their website boyneetanu.org.