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Quarter Auction to benefit area children in foster care

By Breanna Francis bfrancis@journal-news.net Apr 9, 2019

MARTINSBURG — A local Mothers Offering Mom Support club chapter is teaming up with area businesses and a grassroots duffel bag program to benefit children in the foster care system in the Eastern Panhandle.

MOMS club of Martinsburg is hosting a Quarter Auction to benefit the work of JJ Bags, a locally founded group that fills duffel bags with essentials for children in the foster care system.

“My family and I started the ‘JJ Bags’ in 2017 and named it after our two sons, who we adopted from the foster care system,” Jennifer Patoray, founder of JJ Bags, said. “We wanted to do something good for the holidays and we saw that this was really a need, especially in West Virginia because the kids are coming with trash bags or nothing at all.”

Patoray said seeing these children carrying their worldly possessions in garbage bags drove her family to take action by creating duffel bags filled with various items that she said would be appropriate for children such as hygiene items, books, individual games and new sets of pajamas.

“We started with an idea of making five to 10 bags but ended up doing 99 by the end of the first year,” Patoray said. “Last year we had 170 bags completed and since January of this year we have somewhere between 50 and 100 completed.”

Patoray explained that it costs roughly \$100 to make each bag, including the purchase of a new duffel bag for the child to call their own.

“We wanted to support a community organization that focuses on the children in our community. I fell in love with JJ Bags and wanted to make this our big yearly project,” Lacey Shrewsbury, president of the Martinsburg chapter of MOMS Club, said. “We offer play dates, monthly mom’s night outs,

activity groups, community giving opportunities, and life-long friendships for our members and children. But we also love to give back to our community and saw what great work JJ Bags was doing and knew we wanted to get involved.”

Shrewsbury said the MOMS chapter unanimously voted to make fundraising for JJ Bags its main yearly project and, after attending a quarter auction in Hagerstown, knew that this would be a fun way to get the word out to the public about JJ Bags while raising money for the organization as a whole.

Shrewsbury explained that the club has a goal to raise \$2,000 for JJ Bags and that through the collaborations with various local businesses and organizations — such as the Historic McFarland House and the Boys and Girls Club of the Eastern Panhandle — the group has been able to save on the cost of running the event and will be able to give even more to the duffel bag program.

The auction will include prize packages from various photographers, date night gift certificates, tickets to area children’s museums and packages from River Riders Family Adventure Resort.

The auction will host various games including the quarter auction, a silent auction, and a 50/50 pot as well as vendors such as Lularoe, Tupperware and Scentsy.

The quarter auction will be held at the Boys & Girls Club of the Eastern Panhandle, 105 W. John St. at 12 p.m. on April 13.

Admission to the event will be \$5 per person, however the group will be accepting new children’s pajama sets, with tags still in tact, in lieu of the admission fee.

Admissions fees or new pajama donations include the cost of two bidding paddles. Additional paddles can be purchased separately. Street parking is available and is free during the weekend.

For more information on the quarter auction, visit the MOMS Club of Martinsburg page on Facebook.