

Kiwanis supports Tri-Lakes Cares



Above: The Monument Hill Kiwanis Club presented the proceeds of this year's Empty Bowls Dinner and Silent Auction to Tri-Lakes Cares Executive Director Haley Chapin (second from right) and Silent Auction Director Jo Weilbrenner (second from left). The Nov. 8 event featured musical entertainment from area schools, groups, and soloists. Donations from local merchants and citizens netted Silent Auction proceeds of over \$7,500. Over 80 gallons of soup, donated by area restaurants, were served along with over 100 desserts, breads, and beverages donated by local churches and businesses. The Lewis-Palmer and Palmer Ridge High School Key Clubs, Tri-Lakes Women's Club, District 38, Lewis-Palmer High School custodial and kitchen staffs, and local artists also helped run the event. Also pictured are Anne Shimek, left, a local potter who donated her bowls and coordinated the donation of over 1,000 additional bowls, Harry Brandon (center), current president of the Monument Hill Kiwanis, and RF Smith, right, 2014 Empty Bowls director. *Photo by Warren Gerig.*

ALS Ice Bucket



Above: ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) is diagnosed in about 5,600 people in the U.S. each year. The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge fundraiser has gone viral on the Internet at www.alsa.org, generating contributions for ALS research. Logan Aggers, left, and Cole Aggers, far right, really enjoyed dumping a bucket of ice water on OCN volunteers Lisa Hatfield and Mark Aggers, center, on Nov. 9 as part of the challenge on behalf of former Tri-Lakes Tribune reporter Lisa Collacott. Earlier this year her husband, John, set up a Facebook page devoted to his wife called "Lisa Collacott's Journey to Victory." People who would like to use U.S. mail to make a donation can send a check to: The ALS Association, Gift Processing Center, PO Box 6051, Albert Lea, MN 56007. *Photo by Kristen Aggers.*

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Legacy Sertoma supports Tri-Lakes Cares



Above: Denny Myers, Legacy Sertoma Treasurer, presents Haley Chapin, Executive Director of Tri-Lakes Cares, with the Club's Holiday Donation while member Dorothy Myers and Erin Taylor, Tri-Lakes Cares Development Manager, look on. *Photo provided by Legacy Sertoma Club.*

Wounded veteran given home in Monument



Above: Army SPC Matthew Spang and his children listen to friends and project-related speakers at the HFOT Kickoff Celebration. *Photo by Kate Wetterer.*

By Kate Wetterer

Army SPC Matthew Spang and his family will be the recipients of a specially built wheelchair-friendly home in Monument, courtesy of Homes for Our Troops (HFOT). HFOT is a nonprofit organization devoted to building specially modified houses for the most severely injured American veterans wounded after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Celebrating the Spang family's new home and hoping to garner support for their cause, HFOT hosted a Community Kick-Off event Nov. 21 at the Inn at Palmer Divide. Spang spoke at the event, along with Tim McHale, president of HFOT, Ashley Twigg, the community coordinator, and others.

Spang was injured on his second deployment, with the 130th Engineers in Afghanistan. On July 12, 2011, his vehicle was hit by two explosive devices, resulting in the loss of both his legs below the knees and intense damage to his right hand. Spang hopes to return to school to finish his bachelor's degree, spend time with his two children, and participate in a variety of sports.

HFOT houses are given to veterans free of cost and mortgage. The point is to create a safe space that adjusts to a veteran's particular needs rather than forcing them to work around the inconveniences

of unmodified buildings. Over 115 adjustments are made to house plans, including widened doorways to provide enough room for wheelchairs, pull-down shelves, and wheelchair-accessible showers.

McHale explained that whenever they promise to build a house, HFOT makes sure to have all the funds lined up so the project will succeed. The finest materials are secured to build a home that will last, with minimal upkeep. Veterans are asked to choose where they would like this home to be built. Spang chose Monument for his family, and the land has already been cleared.

Since all funds for Spang's home are secure, this kickoff's fundraising ventures were primarily intended to gather resources for future building projects. HFOT has built 116 homes for veterans as of July 2014, and it hopes to keep going until all eligible soldiers are equipped with homes that suit their needs. Visitors were urged to consider donating to HFOT in some capacity, whether through funds or volunteer efforts.

HFOT relies on personal recommendations to promote its cause. Only 9.8 percent of revenues from fundraisers goes to advertising, leaving 90.2 cents of every dollar to go toward building homes. More information about Homes for Our Troops can be found online at: www.hfotusa.org.

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