The Amazing Raise Ohio Valley

The Race Is On

Area Charities Compete for Cash

By LINDA COMINS

The race to raise is on — as area residents get an opportunity soon to donate to their favorite charities and help those organizations compete for cash prizes — all within a 24-hour time span and without leaving the comfort of home.

The Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley is organizing The Amazing Raise Ohio Valley, "an exciting, online giving event that will empower the people of the Ohio Valley to come together and raise as much money as possible for local nonprofits in just 24 hours," Executive Director Susie Nelson explained.

The event begins at 12 a.m. Tuesday, May 6, and ends at 11:59 p.m. that day. During that 24-hour period, all dollars raised through the Community Foundation’s giving website at GiveOV.org will be amplified through matching funds from a national pool, she said. The Community Foundation has committed $20,000 for a pool of incentive funds and hopes to raise more through community partnerships by May 6, she added.

A total of 81 nonprofit organizations — all from the Community Foundation’s eight-county service area — have signed up to participate in The Amazing Raise Ohio Valley. The agencies, from A-Z groups on the list, represent a diverse spectrum of causes, from children to seniors, humane interests to historic monuments, schools to social services, arts to athletics.

With the event's name inspired by a popular reality show in which contestants travel the globe, complete various tasks and cross the finish line ahead of their rivals, officials of participating nonprofit groups are being urged to excite existing supporters, inspire new donors and beat the pack to meet the challenge to raise an amazing amount of money for their good causes.

"Our goal for The Amazing Raise Ohio Valley is to reach new donors and show them how important it is to give to local causes. We want to use this opportunity to build a new generation of philanthropists for our community," Nelson said.

Anyone can make a donation to a participating nonprofit organization on the designated day. The minimum donation is $10. There is no limit on the maximum donation. On the giving website at GiveOV.org, donors can search for a participant by name or by topic (such as arts, animals, etc.), she said.

In addition to giving, supporters are encouraged to "show the Ohio Valley's generous spirit" by giving and cheering on their favorite organizations. The Amazing Raise Ohio Valley is being organized to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the community foundation movement, Nelson explained. Communities across the nation will be participating in a day of giving to mark the major milestone.

Please see Race, Page D4

Representatives of nonprofit organizations participating in The Amazing Raise Ohio Valley include, front row from left, Jeannie Hares, The King's Daughter's Child Care Center; Danielle Cross McCracken, Wheeling Country Day School; Tricia Good, Strand Theater; Lillian Sibley, Great Stone Viaduct and Railroad Museum; Jeanette Wojcik, Faith in Action Caregivers; Kathy Shapell, Augusta Levy Learning Center; Jeannie Finstein, Friends of Wheeling, and Latisha Turner, North Wheeling Youth Center; and back row from left, Jesli Becker, Ogletree Institute; Mark Landini, The Lively School; Nanette Kennedy, St. Mary's Central School; Brian Breyer, Russell Neshill Services; Tammy Kruse, Youth Services System; the Rev. William Webster, Grace Presbyterian Church; Karen Haught, Seeing Hand Association; Kurt Benedict, WATCH; Gail Lounsbury, Wheeling Symphony; Sondra Jackson, Youth Services System; Anne Haning, Belco Works; Lott Jones, YWCA Wheeling; Jamie Remp, Corpus Christi School; Craig White, Grand Vue Park; Nadia Kramer, Franciscan University of Steubenville; Bruce Wheeler, Wheeling Symphony; Brendan Welch, Northern Panhandle Head Start, and Kim Weaver, Weirton Christian Center.
As an extra incentive for The Amazing Raise Ohio Valley participants, generous grand prizes will be awarded for the nonprofit groups that raise the most money on the designated day. The organization that raises the most money will receive a $5,000 check. The second-place finisher will earn $2,500. The group that has the third-highest total will be given $1,000.

Several special prizes also are being offered as incentives:
- **Mountaineer Award** — The organization, with headquarters in West Virginia, raising the most money from 6-11 a.m. will receive a $1,000 gift.
- **Buckeye Award** — The organization, with headquarters in Ohio, raising the most money from 2-5 p.m. will receive a $1,000 prize.
- **Centennial Award** — Celebrating 100 years of community foundations, the organization that receives the 100th donation will be awarded $1,000.
- **1,972nd Donation** — Marking the year the Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley was founded, the organization that gets the 1,972nd donation will be awarded $1,000.
- **Start Line Donation** — The organization that receives the first donation will be awarded $1,000.
- **Pie Stop Donation** — The organization that raises the most money from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. will receive $1,000.
- **Final Leg Donation** — The organization that receives the final donation will be given $1,000.
- **Video Contest** — The winning organization will earn $1,000.

In an attempt to “udge” nonprofit organizations to establish and/or maintain an online presence on Facebook, Nelson said, “We’ve challenged each organization — they have an opportunity to submit a three- to five-minute video about The Amazing Raise Ohio Valley and their organization.” The videos are being posted on the Community Foundation’s Facebook page, and area residents can vote for their favorite video. Voting on Facebook began Tuesday, April 1, and continues through Tuesday, May 6. The organization with the most votes for its video wins $1,000.

“It’s going to be a big deal,” Nelson said regarding The Amazing Raise Ohio Valley. “We’re doing a lot to promote the day itself. We’re trying to get as much publicity as possible.”

While the main purpose of the day is to raise money for the participating nonprofit groups, organizers also are “raising the important awareness of the important work that nonprofits do in our community” and “mudding donors toward that online giving,” she said.

The Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley is active in Jefferson and Belmont counties in Ohio and in Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall, Wetzel and Tyler counties in West Virginia.

“Other community foundations are doing similar drives,” Nelson said. Between 70 and 80 community foundations nationwide are planning dedicated giving days, including the Parkersburg Area Community Foundation and the Pittsburgh Foundation. On the national level, a website called givelocalamerica.org has been established.

“We’re in good company,” she remarked. “We’re excited about it. We’re very pleased with the participation we’ve gotten from the nonprofits.”

Since 1972, the Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley has been making grants to organizations working to improve the Upper Ohio Valley. With assets of more than $20 million, the foundation assisted in making more than $1.7 million in charitable grants last year, officials stated.

Frederick H. Goff, a banker and lawyer, established the first community foundation in Cleveland in 1914. According to the Cleveland Foundation’s website, “His vision was to pool the charitable resources of Cleveland’s philanthropists, living and dead, into a single, great, and permanent endowment for the betterment of the city.”

The concept grew, and, as Cleveland Foundation officials stated, “Now, more than 700 community foundations in the United States collectively manage more than $48 billion in assets and distribute some $4.5 billion a year to community needs.”

To mark the centennial, the Council on Foundations, a national alliance of community foundations, will hold its annual conference in Cleveland in October.