

Giants in the Faith' to honor role models of all ages

Written by George Browning
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God works through Christians in sometimes subtle and sometimes overt ways, according to the impact that 201 local Giants in the Faith--from age 4 to 92--have had on others since 2007.

Such people and the family atmosphere and spirit of celebrating God will once again define Hope Southern Indiana's seventh annual "Giants in the Faith" luncheon. That's when the community gathers to honor members of the public submitted for the varied ways they have influenced the Christian faith of family members, coworkers, neighbors, and friends.

Huber Winery's Plantation Hall in Starlight, Ind., will be the setting on Sunday, Aug. 4, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. when people of all sizes, ages, and personalities will be recognized for being "Jesus with skin on." They are known for their service and humble demeanor while not seeking credit or recognition, yet their lives exemplify the tenets of Christianity that encourage others' faith. That's why they are called Giants, according to Jim Kanning, Hope volunteer co-chair of the event.

Members of the public are invited to submit their Giants in the Faith--an individual or husband/wife--who have in some way helped others grow in their own faith. The word "nominate" is not used, according to Christine Harbeson, executive director of Hope, the New Albany-based human services ministry serving Southern Indiana, because there is no selection process. The first 35 people submitted will be honored.

Doors will open at 1, and those who attend will again have free access until 6 p.m. to nine activities for all ages in the nearby Family Farm Park, in addition to free drink refills all day. The park includes a mountain slide; bamboo, tile, and rope mazes; goat walk; pedal karts; pony rides; miniature tractors; and feeding of ducks and fish.

The News and Tribune is the title sponsor of the celebration. Supporting sponsors are Seabrook Dieckmann Naville Funeral Homes and First Harrison Bank.

WHO IS YOUR GIANT?

A person may submit only one form indicating the name of a Giant in the Faith by the firm deadline of Monday, June 3. Past honorees are ineligible to be honored again. A list of past honorees is available at Hope's office or by clicking on the "Giants" logo and then "Previous Honorees" on its website at www.hopesi.org.

Honoree submission forms are available at area churches, on Hope's website, or at its offices at 1200 Bono Road in the Brown-Starks Neighborhood Place between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. To ensure efficiency and accuracy, no forms will be accepted verbally, on voice mail, or via email.

While the number of honorees will be limited to the first 35 submitted to allow the program to focus on them in a timely manner, there is no limit on attendees. Between 350 and 427 have attended each year since the event was launched in 2007.

HONOREE CRITERIA

The honoree must be a Christian of any age, must reside or worship in Floyd County, and must commit to attending on Aug. 4 with the person who submits his or her name.

"There are other wonderful avenues for recognizing volunteer activities, so the Giants event draws attention to the significant and personal ways people of all ages are lending strength and encouragement to each other because of their faith in God," Kanning said. "It's also an opportunity to celebrate God's goodness through His servants now instead of after they are gone, for the purpose of encouraging even more people."

LUNCHEON EVENT

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The luncheon will feature a buffet with a wide variety of favorites and will cost \$25 for adults (ages 12 and older) and \$20 for children (ages 4 to 11). Those under age 3 are admitted free but still need a reservation.

“The committee made a concerted effort to keep the cost of this admission as low as possible,” said Harbeson, who emphasized that it is not a fund raiser. “We hope to bring families together to honor our community’s Giants while operating on a shoestring budget.”

Hope Southern Indiana will pay for each honoree, and all others may make reservations beginning in mid-June. Reservation forms will appear in The News and Tribune in June and July listing the names of all 2013 honorees so others who know and appreciate them may plan to attend as well. The reservation forms also will be available after mid-June at Floyd County churches and at Hope’s offices between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and on its website.

Additional sponsorships are being accepted to help defray costs. Individuals and businesses who wish to donate should contact Harbeson at (812) 206-1800.

Representatives of various churches will participate in the celebration to fete honorees, whose names and brief explanation of their impact will be noted from the podium and in a commemorative booklet for each attendee.

FOR INFORMATION

For additional information, call Hope Southern Indiana at (812) 206-1800.