

Surrounded by hundreds of items, organizers for the 2012 Kids First Auction are preparing to take bids for some great stuff.

Oversized stuffed bears, a John Deere spreader, a football signed by Peyton Manning, handcrafted bird houses, a hat from Larry the Cable Guy, Amish rugs and a chaise lounge are among the 750 diverse items already donated to the auction.

At least 1,200 items are needed for the auction, which will be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall and start at 9 a.m. on Saturday, November 17. No one knows when it will end. "When we run out of things to auction!" declared one volunteer.

Anyone may donate. Several people have created themed baskets to contribute to this worthy cause. Lots of gift certificates, rounds of golf, a quarter-karat diamond ring among other sparkling pieces of jewelry, an American Girl doll, the rim off a Richard Petty race car, handmade quilts, luggage, cookware and an overnight stay at Horseshoe Casino are included in the booty. Quite a few of what is being offered this year would make great Christmas gifts, either to give away or keep!

Funds raised by Kids First is used throughout the year to help children and their families with expenses like medical bills, transportation costs and the like. The non-profit organization has a board of directors that considers all requests.

The requests come, regardless of the state of the economy. Sometimes, families with ailing children or youngsters who need clothing or special aides need a little help to meet unexpected expenses. That's where Kids First can step in and help relieve anxiety.

People wishing to contribute to the Kids First Auction can call Sherry St. Clair at 752-5854. Arrangements can be made to pick up items.

By clicking on Insight Cable Channel 25 on Friday night, November 16, folks will see a preview of everything that is available. Starting at 9 a.m. that Saturday, they'll be able to follow the auction lot by lot as it progresses on that community channel - and place their bids on what they want.

There'll be two ways to place bids. Either call the phone number that will be advertised during the auction or visit the Knights of Columbus Hall during the auction. Volunteers will be available to accept bids from audience members.

Kids First organizers are thanking local and area businesses in advance for their support. "We couldn't do it without their support and the support of a lot of people who faithfully contribute year after year and bid on what we have. It's a great community effort that helps those in need," stated St. Clair.