

EVERY TIME DR. KING HEARS ABOUT FOLKS LIKE LEW JONES AND HIS FRIENDS RAISING AND DONATING FUNDS TO ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE WILD-WOOD SOUP KITCHEN & DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS, IT MAKES HIM SMILE.

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ALL THE TIME!

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DOES HE
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OFTEN?

Local organizations help keep King's dream alive

During his relatively brief life, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. fought for equal opportunity for people of all races, all social standings and all economic classes.

In his most famous speech, delivered from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 28, 1963, he spoke of his dream — “a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.”

Among other things, he dreamed “that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.’”

He also dreamed “that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood” and that his “four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but the content of their character.”

It was in keeping with the spirit of that dream that members of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Committee last week presented proceeds from its annual fundraising breakfast to representatives of two organizations that share the slain civil rights leader's vision of creating a level playing field for all Wildwood area residents.

Last Wednesday, Lew Jones, a Villages resident who serves as chairman

of the commemorative committee, presented more than \$1,000 each to the Wildwood Soup Kitchen and Dollars for Scholars. The two organizations, which work to feed the community's hungry and provide educational opportunities for children, share the \$2,247.11 that was raised at this year's benefit breakfast.

The Wildwood Soup Kitchen last year served approximately 52,000 meals to Wildwood area residents, according to Dana McCarthy, president of the Wildwood Soup Kitchen Advisory Board, who also volunteers at the kitchen each Thursday.

McCarthy, who also is a Villages resident, said it takes about \$3,000 to \$4,000 monthly to keep the soup kitchen operating and to prepare the approximately 200 meals it serves each day.

He added that the soup kitchen does not receive any public funds from the county, state or federal government, and that each day “is a leap of faith that our needs will be met, and they always are.”

Carol Lutgen accepted the check that Jones presented to the other recipient of funds from his committee's annual breakfast.

Lutgen, who also lives in The Villages, is co-organizer of Dollars for Scholars, an organization that provides scholarships for “gap” students in the Wildwood area.

Lutgen described those targeted for scholarships by Dollars for Scholars as “those kids who fall through the gap.”

“Their grades aren't quite high enough for academic scholarships for whatever reasons, but they want to attend college or a vocational school,” she said.

The goal of Dollars for Scholars this year is to award \$10,000 in scholarships to graduates of Wildwood High School and to be able to include needy students from other parts of the tri-county area, Lutgen said.

She said it is important that individuals and organizations in the tri-county area invest in education since today's children are the community's work force of the future.

“They need the opportunity to excel. They need our support,” Lutgen said.

As for Jones, he said he was pleased that the organization that raised these funds, as well as the two that received them, allow Villages residents to do so much good for so many people in the Wildwood area.

“We're certain that King himself would be proud that his name lives on in connection with organizations such as the commemorative committee, the Wildwood Soup Kitchen and Dollars for Scholars that represent people dedicated to preserving the spirit of his dream in communities large and small across the country.”