

Steve-N-Friends Annual Fundraiser

By HANK GILHOOLY

THE sixth annual Steve-N-Friends fundraiser was held on Friday evening June 13, 2008 at the Billerica Elks Club in Billerica, MA. The Elks were generous to donate the hall for the evening. The event was a very successful dinner dance, run by **Christine and Keith Runyan** for the benefit of the Aleppo Shriners Children's Transportation Fund. Christine's son **Steve Cullinane** was badly burned on over 90% of his body when he was 18 months old, and was treated at Shriners Hospitals for Children-Boston. They hold an event each year with the proceeds being donated to the Transportation Fund as their way of giving back and helping other children to get the care they need.

Invited guests from the Rag Top Unit were Captain **Bruce Dickey** and Lady **Barbara**, Lieutenant **Roger Metcalfe** and Lady **Marjorie**, Noble **Hank Gilhooly** and Lady **Janet**, Noble **Paul Agostino** and Lady **Marsha** and Noble **Bob Kinckle** and Lady **Darlene**.

The evening's events consisted of a huge raffle table with many great gifts like a homemade quilt, gift certificates, rounds of golf, a wheelbarrow filled with goodies, a certificate for a catered cook-out for 25 people, \$400 worth of carpeting for the home, all of which were donated by their family and friends, as well as a 50/50 raffle, which piqued a lot of interest. This was followed by a sit-down catered dinner, and a very heart felt speech by Christine, telling those in attendance what the Shriners do for people in the Boston and Springfield Hospitals as well as what the Shriners have done for their family over the years. The evening was capped off with dancing and games by DJ **Curtis Knight**.

At the conclusion of this special evening, the members of the Rag Top Unit in attendance were asked to come forward for pictures, and Christine made the presentation of the evenings proceeds to benefit the Shriners Hospital Transportation Fund in the amount of \$2,337.00.

We wish to thank Christine, Keith and Steven for all their hard work in executing this event, and also for remembering the Aleppo Shriners.



THE RAG-TOP UNIT members at the Steve-N-Friends fundraiser took advantage of a photo-op with the Runyans. From left to right are: Lieutenant **Roger Metcalfe**, Captain **Bruce Dickey**, **Keith Runyan**, **Steve Cullinane**, **Christine Runyan**, Noble **Paul Agostino**, Noble **Bob Kinckle**, and Noble **Hank Gilhooly**.



Joshua's condition made it hard for him to keep up with his siblings. Today, his legs are much straighter and he's able to enjoy the things he loves in life.

Aleppo Shriner's Past Master's Club

Plans are under way to restart the Aleppo Shriners Past Master's Club. To start, we will offer lodges in our area the availability of our Past Masters to assist them in Third Degree work. As time progresses, we may inquire about the possibility of starting a degree team.

If anyone is interested in joining this group, please contact Noble **Jeffrey Arnold** at: rwjeffa@comcast.net or by phone at 978-536-2842.

A meeting sometime in September will be planned and Jeff will get in contact with those who are interested.



Batter Up! A Young Boy Defies Blount's Disease with Shriners Hospitals

SPORTS have always been Joshua's passion. From the time he could walk, he would find a ball and beg for someone to play with him. Even as an infant, Joshua would watch football and basketball and babble excitedly at the TV. His first steps were even taken on the baseball field.

But as Joshua began to walk, his legs began to bow out and his toes turn in. "He would run and trip so many times and get hurt, but he would always get up and go again, always wanting to play with the big boys," his mother Kristen recalls.

Concerned about their son's condition, Joshua's parents turned to their doctors for answers. They were reassured that Joshua would be fine and were told repeatedly that his legs would straighten out as he grew. But over time, Joshua's legs worsened.

After further investigation and a series of x-rays, Joshua's parents learned Joshua had Blount's disease, a disease that affects the bone development of toddlers and older children. Finding appropriate treatment in a timely matter can help a child develop normally.

Filled with questions, the family searched for the best care for their son and found that Shriners Hospitals for Children was doing the most research on Blount's disease.

"We didn't know anything about Shriners at the time, but wanted the best doctors to help our son," Kristen said. "We just couldn't imagine this athletic little boy with so much energy and drive in a wheelchair."

"The doctors and staff at Shriners gently and patiently care for Joshua," his mother continued. "It hasn't been an easy process for him, but even when he was in a wheelchair for a time he would still play ball with the big boys. He would always tell us, 'I can do it, don't worry.'"

It's been three years and just as many surgeries, but today Joshua's legs are straightening out, and he runs and plays like any other active child. You would never guess all that he had to overcome.

"We are thankful that Shriners Hospitals for Children continues to look for a better way," said Kristen. "Because Shriners Hospitals was able to help him so quickly, our son has a very bright and hopeful future ahead of him."



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