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Glenview Women's Club fights the 'COVID food blues,' raises funds for food pantry

BY DAVE OBERHELMAN
doberhelman@daillyherald.com

There are a lot of things out there that can weigh you down.

Thoughts about school, jobs, the economy, elections, quarantines, ammonium nitrate explosions, about where the heck you can buy Tiletex.

But not lemonade. Lemonade will never weigh you down.

The ladies of the Glenview Women's Club know this. They know the warmth a cold glass of lemonade delivers on a nice summer day.

"It's a good way to come together and it always has been," said Tamara Taylor Holmes, co-president of the Glenview Women's Club with Violette Abawi.

Their special-batch lemonade — made with a homemade simple syrup and basil from members' gardens — has become a key ingredient to the 44-year-old nonprofit



COURTESY OF TODD HOLMES

Glenview Women's Club co-president Tamara Taylor Holmes helped bring the Chicago Lunch Box food truck to Glenview in a fundraising event July 30. Similar events are planned for Aug. 13 and Sept. 9.

organization's fundraising goals this summer.

Known as Glenview Women of Today until the group rebranded in 2015, the Glenview Women's Club registered as a 501 (c) (3) organization in 1990.

Pivoting from Zoom-based virtual bingo to take advantage of the weather and the gradual softening of COVID-19 restrictions, the Women's Club has taken it outside with its Lemonade Stand Initiative and Food Truck Pop-up

fundraisers.

A July 30 dinner-time event at Taylor Holmes' house in The Glen raised more than \$900, which the organization donated to the Northfield Food Repository. That's among a lengthy list of groups the Women's Club supports.

They had their special lemonade and also arranged pre-orders from two on-site food trucks: Chicago Lunchbox serving Asian fusion and A Sweets Girl cupcake truck.

"It was awesome. People were so happy to get away from the COVID food blues and come out and just pick up their food," Taylor Holmes said.

Similar lemonade-and-food truck events are on their slate of events for Aug. 13 and Sept. 9. There's talk of a third, and members also can sign up to host lemonade stands on the Glenview Women's Club



COURTESY OF TODD HOLMES

Glenview residents were happy to get out and about and enjoy food and drink at the Glenview Women's Club's July 30 fundraiser.

website, with proceeds going to their charity of choice.

The club set lofty goals for the 2020-21 time frame, in terms of money to be raised for charities and in its own size. Through a series of fundraisers, a raffle for a backyard makeover and contacts with businesses, the club hopes to raise \$30,000. It also looks to double its membership.

"The more membership we have the more impact we can have," Taylor Holmes said, noting the club earned a solid \$5,000 the prior three months by offering things like the virtual bingo, already nearly matching the club's goal for its smaller fundraisers.

She said the club is focusing on women's issues this year, partly because it's the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote, ratified on Aug. 18, 1920.

Mainly, though, in response to the pandemic, Taylor Holmes said, "We're focusing on women because women are disproportionately affected by COVID-19, especially with food insecurity and safety in their homes."

Thus, the donation to the Northfield Food Repository. Normally, Taylor Holmes said, the Glenview Women's Club raises money throughout the year, then disperses it. This year those donations are quickly getting doled out.

"The need is so great and so immediate that we feel this immediacy to help right away," she said.

Drinking a glass of lemonade with some pals won't make that need go away. Perhaps in other ways it can lighten the load and raise money along the way.

"It's community," Taylor Holmes said, "and I think people need community right now."



COURTESY OF TODD HOLMES

The Glenview Women's Club debuted its Lemonade Stand Initiative July 30, complete with a pair of food trucks. Club members Violette Abawi, left, Ami Bilimoria, center, and Tamara Taylor Holmes raised funds on that day for the Northfield Food Pantry.