

Rainbows to be beneficiary of HPHS Charity Drive

ERIN YARNALL, Editor

Each year, the committee behind the Highland Park High School Charity Drive chooses one organization to be the beneficiary of a month's worth of fundraising through events and activities.

This year, the chosen organization is Rainbows for All Children, which serves to help children who are dealing with loss.

The organization helps children who are struggling with six different types of loss: death, divorce, deportation, incarceration, deployment and life-altering illness.

"There are a lot of kids living at homes with loved ones who have significant illness, and deportation too," said Stephanie Garrity, the executive director of Rainbows.

Rainbows for All Children began more than three decades ago when founder Suzy Yehl Marta divorced her husband, and became a single mother to three boys.

After her divorce, she started attending a group to talk about what she was going through. When one of her sons expressed interest in having his own group, Marta founded Rainbows, according to Garrity.

"It was originally developed to support kids whose parents were divorced," Garrity said. "Then she pulled together a bunch of



A student and staff basketball game at Edgewood Middle School, Feb. 1, which supported Highland Park High School's Charity Drive. PHOTO SUBMITTED

professionals, created kind of a foundation for what Rainbows is today."

More than three decades later, Rainbows is operating in more than 30 states and 15 different countries.

With the funds raised from Highland Park High School's Charity Drive, Garrity said she hopes to start a group in Highland Park.

"We haven't had one in years, and that's kind of a priority," Garrity said. "I've been having lots of meetings with lots of the social service providers in

and around Highland Park, and I have two volunteers who are ready to go as soon as we find the space and make that available to the kids who need it."

Garrity thinks it is important to start a group because of the large amount of students at Highland Park High School.

"There's 2,000 kids in Highland Park High School," Garrity said. "We know that over 60 percent of those kids are dealing with some kind of loss."

She also said that a group is important, because some

students may not feel comfortable talking about their loss with other students they know.

"At the high school level, they often do have contained groups within the high school, but a lot of kids may not feel comfortable sharing those emotions with kids they know very well," Garrity said. "Sometimes there's safety in sharing with kids that maybe you don't go to school with, or that you don't see every day."

She said she "squealed" when she found out that Rainbows was chosen to be the beneficiary of the month-long fundraising.

"It's this incredible opportunity to put what we do in front of a whole new audience," Garrity said. "For all the fact that our organization grew up in Chicago, there's still big pockets that don't know that we exist, or what we do. Having such an enormous platform like the Charity Drive to put out our mission and the work and the vision is really unbelievably wonderful."

Funds will be raised throughout the month of February at a series of events, from hot yoga to a falafel lunch at the school, and a Highland Park's Got Talent competition on Feb. 26.

To see a calendar of events for the month, visit hpcharitydrive.org.

BEER

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honey and cranberries, hired local architects and builders for facilities, and provided steady employment in rural places.

With this inspiration, Janzen also sought to publish his book as lo-

cally as possible, using paper from a Wisconsin recycling plant and binding the leather-bound book at Reindl Bindery in Germantown.

Janzen's book comes during a booming moment for the craft beer industry; in 2011, Wisconsin had 71 craft breweries, and within

seven years, that number exploded to 160. According to Janzen, a major factor behind that is "people want things produced in a way they can see it."

When Hayek, the librarian, was first approached about offering this presentation, she perked up immediately, knowing the

topic was part of a big and growing industry.

"This could help push the boundaries of the library a little bit," Hayek said.

Attendees agreed.

"This event shows dynamic thinking on the part of the library staff," Winnetka's Harry Grace said.