

Knights of Columbus donate to Brian's Safehouse

By Pamela Pritt REGISTER-HERALD REPORTER | Posted: Friday, November 6, 2015 3:00 am

Beverly Lilly is going to cook a Thanksgiving dinner for 10 this year. The number is not remarkable, but the "family" who will sit down to this particular Thanksgiving feast is.

They are recovering addicts at Brian's Safehouse, and their Thanksgiving feast is because Knights of Columbus made the unanimous decision to provide the money for the meal with a \$500 donation.

Grand Knight Dave Wynne said his organization was happy to do it. Wynne said he used to be "one of those people" who thought addicts were an unsavory subset of society.

Through connections to people who are addicts Wynne's opinion changed.

"I've gotten to know a few people," he said. "Once you're addicted, it must be tremendously hard. We're a Christian organization; we're supposed to offer mercy to people. We're just trying to do what little bit we can to help."

He said drug addiction is a "plague in our country now," noting that Fayette County removed 134 children from their homes, mostly because of drug use.

Safehouse director Leon Brush said Wynne has discovered just what his staff has — addicts "are really quite amazing people.

"They're not the thugs they're labeled to be," Brush said. "Once their mental processes have been adjusted because of sobriety, they're above average; they're a very talented pool of people. Their contribution to society is usually better after the program.

"They're worth investing in."

Brush said the money will feed "the whole family and the staff."

"We are so thankful organizations such as the Knights of Columbus that reach out into the community and help," Brush said.



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Brad Davis/The Register-Herald Former Knights of Columbus Grand Knight Sande "Bear" Genung, left, and current Grand Knight Dave Wynne, right, present a \$500 check to Brian's Safehouse co-founder Leon Brush for a Thanksgiving dinner at the Safehouse's Dry Hill Road location.

The dinner may be one of the first Thanksgivings for many years for which some Safehouse residents will be clean.

"Holidays are usually not times that have the 'normal' meaning for addicts because they have to get high in order to handle the anxiety associated with family members," Brush said. "The interaction is faltering at best."

Residents at the Safehouse are in different states of recovery, with residents who have been there for nearly their year, others who have been there just a few months and still others who are just beginning the journey back to a life without drugs.

"The thing that bothers the residents the most when they come is that it's a 12-month program," Brush said. "When they get ready to leave, the thing that bothers them most is that it's only a 12-month program."

Brush and his staff are diligent about keeping in touch with their residents who've gone out into the world — 75 percent of them remain in touch.

He said he listened to President Barack Obama's speech in Charleston a few weeks ago. Brush is "not an Obama fan."

"I do agree with his notions that these people should not be classified as criminals. They should be classified as people who are sick and that's a significant understanding."

Wynne said any funds left over after the dinner can be used at the Safehouse for day-to-day expenses.

Brush and his wife Donita founded Brian's Safehouse when they lost their son to a drug overdose.

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