

Sports

Fundraiser raises awareness for Silent Night

The Silent Night Foundation held its first annual A Day of Christmas Fundraiser at the Superior Ice Rink in Kings Park, Saturday, December 22.

The event featured raffle baskets, a silent auction, public skating session, crafts and a few games of hockey between current and alumni hockey players from the Superior program.

The Silent Night Foundation was formed in 2014 by Joseph Ondrush and his family in conjunction with the Smithtown's Children Foundation. The organization aims to help local families that have experienced the struggles and emotions of childhood illness by providing financial and personal support during the holiday season through gifts and parties.

"For me it is personal, I was fortunate to have a great childhood, and my parents were able to provide me great experiences during the holiday season," Mr. Ondrush said. "So, I started this charity so I could give back and do the same for kids and families who aren't as fortunate."

In addition to the hundreds of supporting community members who came out to the fundraiser, Hockey Hall of Famer Pat LaFontaine and King of Queens actor Gary Valentine attended the event.

"I'm really glad to be here and I am glad that you are all here," Mr. LaFontaine said in a speech during the fundraiser. "Thank you for giving back, you are really supporting some great work and a great charity."

LaFontaine is a hockey hall of famer who played 15 seasons in the NHL for the New York Islanders, Buffalo Sabers and New York Rangers. He scored 468 goals and 545 assists for a total of 1,013 points. He famously scored the game-winning goal in the fourth-overtime period of the "Easter Epic," a 3-2 Islander win over the Washington Capitals in Game Seven of the Patrick Division Semifinals. LaFontaine is also the only player in the history of the NHL to play his entire career on all three New York teams.

Valentine is an actor, comedian and writer who has appeared on The Tonight Show and had a regular role on



The King of Queens alongside his brother, Kevin James. Valentine has also appeared in movies, including Stuck on You, I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry and both Paul Blart movies.

Activities at the fundraiser included games like Chuck-A-Duck, as well as crafts and an appearance by Santa Claus. Superior will also donate half the proceeds from the snack bar to Silent Night.

A future stars jamboree, that featured the talent of the Long Island Royals Ice Hockey Organization was played. The Long Island Royals is a Tier 1 Elite 'AAA' ice hockey organization based in Kings Park. A Royals Reunion and ice hockey game was also played.

Mr. Ondrush said that he was very thankful for all the help from the community in putting on the event and for the strong turnout.

"I was kind of nervous coming in, I was hoping to fill this place, but we had a ton of help bringing this together, so many donations and Rich McGuigan opening his doors for us to be here," Mr. Ondrush said. "I think it's going well, a lot of people came, looks like they are having fun and I hope people feel good about where their money is going."

For more information on the Smithtown Children's Foundation, and the Silent Night Foundation, visit smithtownchildrensfoundation.com.



CELEBRITY SPOKESMEN: Hockey Hall of Famer Pat LaFontaine (top-left) mentors a pair of youth hockey players, actor Gary Valentine (top-right) makes a speech, the Long Island Royals (below) play an exhibition and a youth hockey player (bottom) works on face-offs at the A Day of Christmas Fundraiser at the Superior Ice Rink, Saturday, December 22.

-Matthew Cudahy photos



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