

Waffle Shop success

Once again for 2011, Waffle Shop was a great success. We had over 1,700 people in the door, while serving almost that many lunches, counting carry-out in with the dining room. Over the last three years, the dining room count was within 25 lunches of each other. That most certainly speaks of consistency!

When all the dust settles and all the bills are paid, I'm hoping Waffle Shop will have \$14,000 to give in grants this time around. We grossed just under \$19,000 in 2011 for the 82nd Waffle Shop, which is excellent! After all the bills are paid, we'll see what we have left. Look for the Waffle Shop entry in the annual report for more numbers (by department) to analyze and consider.

Many people do much to make Waffle Shop the seasonal success it has become since the first one in 1929, but a few stories this year need to be told so the whole parish knows about good work that might be missed otherwise.

First, total requests for 2010 Waffle Shop grants topped out just over \$18,000, while we had \$14,000 in proceeds to grant. The Waffle Shop committee is used having more requests than funds, so we were ready to pare down where necessary to make the numbers work.

After the first grant meeting last winter, I got a call from a parishioner who had looked at the grant packet and was moved by the need represented in all the requests. *'How would Waffle Shop feel about having an anonymous donor write a check to make up the difference between grant money available and grants requested?'* I was asked. Surprised by such generosity, I said *yes* as fast as I could! And so it was done. For 2010, Waffle Shop was able to make even *more* grants that we thought we could. A special thanks, again, to the anonymous parishioner who made these additional gifts possible!

The second Waffle Shop story begins last fall with Donna & Frank Boensch. Back in October they were attending a Rotary Club meeting when they met Jim Teske, owner of Centerville Landscaping & Irrigation, who had purchased the old Hook's Garden Center down on Ohio 48, not quite to Lebanon. When Mr. Teske purchased the property, some sales merchandise, mostly Christmas stuff, remained in the gift shop. He was looking for some organization to donate it all to. *Would Waffle Shop be interested?*

Indeed we were! A week or so prior to our November event, a crew of parishioners lead by Cindy Cooke descended on the old Hook's gift shop to dust, sort, and pack what stock we thought we could sell. There was enough *stuff* to fill a number of cars. Most of those items ended up in Elsie's Attic, which helps explain Elsie's gross up \$1,500 over two years ago! Such a gift! I hope if you have a yard project in mind, you'll consider talking with the folks at Centerville Landscaping before you do.

The last story I'd like to tell deals with custodial services. Church hires staff from Easter Seals/Goodwill to empty our trash cans, run the sweeper, polish the floors, and basically keep our building looking good through the year. During Waffle Shop, our cost increases because we need much more clean-up. That expense comes out of Waffle Shop revenue.

Well, this year the fine folks at Easter Seals/Goodwill *donated* custodial time for the whole Waffle Shop week because of our Outreach Grant efforts. Such is much appreciated and will permit Waffle Shop to make *more* grants to folks who need to keep programs running in difficult financial times.

Waffle Shop is magic, any way one looks at it. The generosity exhibited by so many guests, workers, and friends make the event that much sweeter. Thanks to *all* for making Waffle Shop the community event it has become!

Tom Schaefer

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Note: Grant requests for Waffle Shop are due in the church office by Wednesday, 15 February 2012. Contact Tom Schaefer or church administrator Lori Rehling for details.