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Project L.I.F.T.'s 4th Annual Clam Bake and Comedy Show raises more than \$30,000 to help "at risk" teens

Stuart, FL – On May 23 Project L.I.F.T. set out to raise some "clams" with the 4th Annual Clam Bake and Comedy Show fundraiser. The sold-out event attracted a record number of attendees who helped to raise more than \$30,000 for the local nonprofit that is committed to helping "at risk" teens overcome mental health and substance abuse issues.

Presenting sponsor, Seacoast National Bank, was a huge part of making this event such a great success through their generous underwriting support. In addition, many other sponsors, along with ticket sales, a silent auction, a "call to the heart" and an army of volunteers worked together to raise money for this important cause.

Held at the Flagler Center, the Clam Bake and Comedy Show featured a delicious New England style clam bake with an array of lobsters, freshly shucked clams, mussels and crabs. Attendees mingled and enjoyed live music by Jason Montero and were then treated to a comedy show by local comic, Casey Peruski, and headliner, David Stebbins.

Project L.I.F.T. (Life Initiatives for Teens) is a unique organization founded by Bob Zaccheo in 2010. As a licensed psychotherapist, he realized that troubled teens, particularly boys, were not responding to traditional therapy. Out of his passion and belief that teens need motivation and mentoring to change their behavior, Project L.I.F.T. was born.

Zaccheo works with teens in the program by developing a comprehensive mental health therapy, including substance abuse treatment, to help “at-risk” youth process their anger, depression, anxiety and the family issues that are often the root of these problems. He offers trust, guidance and a family atmosphere with nightly meals where the participants and staff come together to eat, sit, share time together and talk.

Project L.I.F.T. then builds upon this trust, and using mentors and volunteers, teaches the boys valuable skills and trades such as auto repair, welding, plumbing, textile printing, graphic design, boatbuilding and general carpentry. But it doesn’t end there. The teens then use these skills to give back to the community. They repair cars and donate them to families in need. They renovate buildings throughout the community that need repair. They fix bicycles and gift them to underprivileged children and homeless veterans. They receive donations of furniture - and after restoring and refurbishing them – donate them to those in need.

Not only does Project L.I.F.T. teach these teens that they can feel safe, but these youth learn valuable skills so they can become productive tax paying citizens. Just as important, Project L.I.F.T. exposes them to the joy of ‘paying it forward’ and giving back to the community. These three components combined are what make Project L.I.F.T. so unique. While most substance abuse rehabilitation programs struggle to maintain a 15% success rate, 85% of Project L.I.F.T.’s teens stay sober and become productive members of society.

Board President, RJ Ferraro believes this is due in large part to the trust that Zaccheo builds with these youth. “Bob hand selects the toughest kids in the community, almost always directly from the juvenile justice system. These are the kids that are using and selling drugs, and breaking into our houses and cars,” said Ferraro. “He and his staff lead by example, and show the kids that there is another way to live.”

The funds garnered from Project L.I.F.T.’s 4th Annual Clam Bake and Comedy Show are invaluable to the organization. “The huge turn-out of attendees, sponsors and volunteers eclipsed past years’ events, and made this the most successful event to date,” said Project L.I.F.T. founder and executive director Bob Zaccheo. “The \$30,000 raised will go directly to

rehabilitating our Project L.I.F.T. teens. The ripple effect will make Martin County a stronger, safer community.”

Sponsors of the 4th Annual Clam Bake and Comedy Show include presenting sponsor, Seacoast National Bank, as well as M.E.’s Team, The Lillis Foundation, Roy A Hunt Foundation, Merrill Lynch Wealth Management, The Place at Stuart, Wallace Hyundai, Wilmington Trust, Caryn Lones, Nis Air, Robert Zaccheo, Sr., Island Party Rentals, The Firefly Group, the Crafted Keg, Express Printing, L.C. Campbell Photography, Cove Gardens Landscaping, Costco Wholesale, The Sign Store, Morningstar Industries Inc., Treasure Coast Sea Winds Funeral Home & Crematory and Sherwin Williams.

Plans are already underway for the 5th Annual Clam Bake and Comedy Show to be held on March 6, 2015. For more information or to volunteer, contact Bob Zaccheo at 772-359-2554 or by email at bobzaccheo@yahoo.com. Be sure to like Project L.I.F.T. on Facebook at www.facebook.com/projectlift to stay updated and informed on future events.

Please view www.fishforthekids.org Project LIFT is the charitable recipient of the Michael Shields Memorial Inshore Open September 26-27 2014.

About Project L.I.F.T.

Project L.I.F.T. is a nonprofit organization helping “at-risk” teens battle mental health and substance abuse issues in a positive way. It is a multi-systemic program that utilizes evidence-based substance abuse treatment practices rooted in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, leadership, group training and mentoring. These therapies, combined with the unique opportunity to give back to a community in need and an opportunity to gain employment through on-the-job vocational instruction, adds an overall benefit for not only the members, but the community as a whole. Peers benefit from a paradigm shift that ripples into positive interactions with each other, their authority figures, their community and their family.

For more information, visit <http://www.facebook.com/ProjectLIFT>, or contact Bob Zaccheo at (772) 359-2554 or by email at bobzaccheo@yahoo.com.

Suggested photo captions:

1.) Program sponsors Scott and Carrie Proctor of the M.E. Team Foundation stand with Wendy Hudson and Dennis Hudson, CEO of Seacoast National Bank, Project L.I.F.T.'s Clam Bake and Comedy Show's presenting sponsor.

2.) RJ Ferraro, board president, and Nina Ferraro, committee member, are proud attendees of Project LIFT's 4th Annual Clam Bake and Comedy Show.

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