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Media Release

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'Fakes' needed for Armed Services YMCA event

Story and photo by Derek Gean

Community editor

The 21st annual Fabulous Fakes Benefit Luncheon for the Armed Services YMCA of Missouri is just around the corner, and organizers are looking for community members to volunteer to come out and make the event a success.

The luncheon is scheduled from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 13 at the Pershing Community Center. Organizers need volunteers to dress up like faux celebrities, create an act, and use it to earn tips at the luncheon.

"For example, past celebrities dressed as California Raisins and sold small boxes of raisins," said Linda Bright, ASYMCA executive director.

"We've had photos with a St. Louis Cardinals player for a donation, chance to pose on a Harley Motorcycle for a donation, Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash sang to individuals for tips, and the Happy Feet penguins sold cheddar goldfish treats," she said.

"It is just great fun," Bright said. "Fun for the participants and fun for the attendees. Everything happens at once and the 90 minutes fly by."

Every year, many acts return, but Bright said there are always new additions to the program.

"The event never grows old. The military units change each year and are always very competitive, trying to win "Best Act" or "Most Tips," Bright said. The 3rd Chemical Brigade took the "Most Tips" award three years in a row, Bright said.

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The organization already has commitments from Garrison Command, Mid Missouri Credit Union, Fort Wood Hotels, Headlines Salon and Security Bank, with more expected to sign on shortly.

Tickets for the luncheon are \$15, which includes a lunch buffet and a \$3 donation. Lunch participants are asked to bring cash to tip the acts at the luncheon.

“It only happens once a year and many people mark their calendars in advance,” Bright said. “We can only accommodate 200 people and tickets sell out quickly. I would hope that community members are familiar with the Armed Services YMCA of Missouri and our mission in this area. Supporting this event allows the community to show their support for the ASYMCA and to the military units that participate.”

The ASYMCA provides numerous free services and programs for the community. Money raised from this event helps keep those programs going.

“These programs help us reach out to the Warrior Transition Unit, to the children of deployed parents, and to parents and caregivers looking to give their children the skills to be successful in school,” Bright said.

Bright said the organization’s camping programs have been hugely popular but funding the ASYMCA received from the Sierra Club has expired, making fundraisers like Fabulous Fakes even more important.

“The cost to the ASYMCA for each child to attend summer camp is \$400. Please be generous, have a good time, and help us keep these essential programs alive,” she said.

Lindall Mostajo, ASYMCA board member, has been taking part in Fabulous Fakes since its inception.

“I support this organization with all my heart. When I see the results from people participating in our programs, I feel the heartwarming reward of being part of something great. We reach out to moms, dads, youth, children, babies, grandparents and volunteers. I enjoy touching lives in a positive way by spending volunteer time and offering financial support to the ASYMCA,” she said.

For more information, or to buy tickets, contact Bright at 329.4513.

Media wanting to cover this event should contact the Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office at (573) 563-4145.

Photo Outline:

Candace Ruark and Candice Williams for “Girls Just Wanna Have Fun” solicit tips during the 2011 Fabulous Fakes Benefit Luncheon at Pershing Community Center.

About Fort Leonard Wood

Fort Leonard Wood is a thriving and prosperous installation that has evolved from a small basic training post 70 years ago to a premier Army Center of Excellence that trains 80-90,000 military and civilians each year.

Home to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Fort Leonard Wood now trains and educates service members and develops doctrine and capabilities for the Training and Doctrine Command's U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School, U.S. Army Engineer School, and U.S. Army Military Police School, three gender integrated Initial Military Training brigades, one of only five reception stations in the Army, and the Army's largest Non Commissioned Officers Academy.

Over the past several years, Fort Leonard Wood has received numerous additional responsibilities to include supporting the 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, a large Forces Command unit that is responsible for all deployable capabilities at Fort Leonard Wood. A colonel-commanded Marine Corps Detachment and an Air Force Detachment, which are both the largest on any Army installation, are located on Fort Leonard Wood; a large Navy Seabee Detachment and elements of the Coast Guard train here as well.