

# The METROWEST DAILY NEWS

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## Marlborough: Evening of Giving to raise money for Roland's House

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By Jeff Malachowski  
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MARLBOROUGH – The city’s community spirit and generosity will once again be on display next week, as more than 1,000 guests are expected to attend the 27th annual Evening of Giving, a fundraiser benefitting Roland’s House.

Initially housed in the basement of the Walker Building, the Marlborough-Hudson Community Shelter was only open evening and overnight hours and had no showers or paid staff. Ronald Simoneau, a former city councilor, and his wife Joan saw the need for an upgraded shelter and formed a committee tasked with organizing the first Evening of Giving in 1990.

“He’s the force behind it,” Bob Kays, chairman of the committee organizing this year’s event, said of Simoneau.

Since its creation 27 years ago, the Evening of Giving has raised about \$800,000 for the Mechanic Street shelter, which was named in Roland Simoneau’s memory in December 2005, six months after he died. Roland’s House is a temporary emergency shelter that houses 18 men and women and is operated by the South Middlesex Opportunity Council.

Last year’s Evening of Giving raised about \$35,000, said Kays.

Money raised at the Evening of Giving has been used to install a new heating system, windows and floors, upgrade the kitchen and remodel the bathrooms. The funds have also paid all food costs many years and helped maintain staffing levels necessary to run the shelter, according to SMOC's website.

"The added money they get from us helps maintain the property," said Kays.

Patrons are asked to donate socks, toothpaste, toothbrushes and other toiletries for those at the shelter, said Kays.

"It all helps the people in need," he said.

This year's Evening of Giving will be held Thursday, Dec. 1 from 7:30 p.m. to midnight at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel.

More than 30 area restaurants will prepare their best dishes for guests to sample. There will also be a shrimp and raw bar at the event, along with an ice cream sundae bar, said Kays.

"That's a big feature we have," Kays said of the shrimp and raw bar. "They like that."

The event typically attracts between 1,000 and 1,250 people each year. During the inaugural Evening of Giving, organizers expected about 400 people to attend, but the fundraiser drew about 750 people.

"The whole dance floor was filled with tables instead of dancing," he said. "It was wall-to-wall, shoulder-to-shoulder that night."

Kays said the fundraiser is a way for the public to get together and have fun while raising money for a worthy cause.

"It's probably the biggest single event in Marlborough," he said.

Tickets cost \$30. Reservations can be made by calling Madeline Dupuis at 508-485-5705 or Paulina Lynch at 508-485-3741.

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