



Volunteers *Delivering the Gift of Human Kindness*

Issue 9

Summer 2003



Sun, Fun, and Oh Yes...Holiday Express **Golf Classic Benefits Scholarship Fund**



The "Golf Gods" took their best shot at raining on the parade of the first ever **Holiday Express Golf Classic** at the prestigious **Manasquan River Golf Club**, but they were no match for the high spirits of golfers, celebrities and volunteers in attendance on May 12th.

From the moment guests arrived at the course, they were greeted with smiles, gifts, activities, entertainment and one surprise after another. The NJ 101.5 "Big Yellow Van" was there welcoming arriving players, as was **Big Joe Henry**, making sure everything was ready to go.

Things got a little crowded at the registration area when the "Coors Hummer" pulled up to drop off complimentary gifts for the players and the players came to meet the **Coors Light Girls** and **Bud Girls**, who spent the afternoon at the event.

Brent Studer, PGA Professional and Head Pro at MRGC, gave a golf clinic before lunch. This alone was worth the price of admission for many, but we didn't stop there. While lunch was being served on the patio (compliments of **Jersey Mike's**), the **Bob Boyd Trio** entertained the players with some light jazz.

Later, two lucky individuals were selected at random to hit one ball each, from 165 yards out on the 9th fairway, for \$1,000,000.00! A hole-in-one would have entitled them to split the funds with Holiday Express. Unfortunately no one made it, but as the players formed a gallery around the back of the green, it did make for exciting conversation all afternoon.

Numerous celebrities came from far and near to join in our inaugural event, including: **Jack Ford**. **Big Joe Henry** of NJ101.5, Producer

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See Inside



A NOTE from the Director

These days, it seems no matter where I am, people approach me and have something to say about Holiday Express. At this time of year, they also usually make some comment about how "quiet" it must be now.

Well, as many of you know, they couldn't be more wrong. Let's see...moving the warehouse, Holiday Extensions barbeques at St. John's and Matheny, scholarships at Collier, board meetings, the Pony concert, newsletters, the communications group, golf outing, schedule and special event meetings...yeah, it's "quiet" all right...too quiet.

It is the mission of Holiday Express to deliver music, food, gifts and friendship to the mentally disabled, those living with illnesses such as cancer and AIDS, the homeless, the isolated elderly and others in need of the gift of human kindness during the holiday season and throughout the year.

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Holiday Express is a volunteer, non-profit, non-sectarian, registered 501(c)(3) organization.
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Brian Williams, Joe Nolan of ABC and WPLJ, Joe Klecko, Jim Spanarkle, John Burke and Ken Dashau of Q104.3, Mark Cannizarro and Phil Mushnick of the N.Y. Post, Bob Cullinane of the Asbury Park Press, and Conductor Karl Jurman, among others. All were upstaged however when a personal appearance by the "Grinch" took center stage. From dodging balls and taunting players on the practice range, to cruising the course with "Elmo," the only disappointment was that the "Grinch" granted no autographs. Luckily, CN8 was there to document this rare appearance at a PGA facility, slated to run that day on Comcast, as well as The Golf Channel on a later date.

Throughout the afternoon the wind howled, even a little rain fell, but in typical Holiday Express fashion it all blew over to reveal a magnificent sunset in time for the cocktail reception sponsored by Paras, Apy & Reiss, P.C. Andy McDonough added just the right touch of class during the cocktail hour by playing the piano... as only Andy can do!

As Ken Dashau said the next afternoon when signing on his Q104.3 show, "The wind was so strong at times, the only thing missing was a house and a witch blowing overhead... but what a great time it was!" After dinner and numerous awards, raffles, give-a-ways and thanks, Holiday Express took the stage to thank the attendees in their own special way. Phil Mushnick said, "I must be invited to fifty of these a year, and this is by far the best one I have ever played in." Thanks, Phil... well said!

A special "thanks" goes out to all of the wonderful friends and supporters of Holiday Express for the tremendous auction items that were donated. In our own way, we set out to show our never-ending appreciation to Greg Arnold and Comcast by presenting him with The Crystal Star Award. This is only the fourth time this award has been given, and it is only presented to those friends of Holiday Express who have distinguished themselves with their tireless and unselfish support to the community. As soon as the event was announced, Greg and Comcast immediately asked if they could sponsor it. It was because of their support that we were able to get this off the ground as well as we did in our first year. Way to go, Greg!

As people left at the end of a long day of golf, fun and food, the long list began of those wanting to sign up for next year. Next year? We haven't caught our breath yet from this year! But it was certainly worth it. And to those who were so surprised at how wonderful it was, the answer is the same as always, "What did you expect... it's Holiday Express!"

We'll see you next year on the first tee.

LETTERS

We would like to hear from you!

Please send your questions and comments to:

halex@monmouth.com

(Subject: Letters to the Editor). Thanks!

Taking It to the Streets...

FEED THE HUNGRY CONCERT

Aimed at energizing the Holiday Extensions program and aptly named “**Feed the Hungry**”, Holiday Express will host its first-ever summer concert on July 6.

The **Holiday Extensions** program is another portion of the “behind the scenes” work that goes on at Holiday Express. You know about the band and the performances, you may even have a special place in your heart for a particular charity we visit, but we also have volunteers working year-round to aid needy organizations and right now your help is needed to keep this year-round vision alive.

Holiday Extensions is a monthly program developed to help replenish the pantries of local soup kitchens throughout the entire year. While we all donate greatly during the Christmas holiday, the truth is many of these

charities lack necessities at other times of the year. The same is true here at Holiday Express. Our holiday visits and gifts are appreciated and “Holiday Express moments” are never forgotten, but the fact remains that these organizations have needs that cannot be met in just a once-a-year, 3-hour visit. *How can we keep their pantries from going bare?* **Holiday Extensions**.

Each month, participating organizations sign on to hold a food drive. It can be the traditional scout troops, school or church groups or it can be an office, a local Mom and Pop store, a rec center or any other group. Food donations are gathered and delivered to our warehouse, where our dedicated volunteers sort and



**July 6, 2003
5 pm**

**Stone Pony
Summer Stage
Asbury Park**

**Donation:
\$20 advance
\$25 at door**

Available at
Jack's Music,
Ichabod's,
McLoone's,
The Stone Pony
and MusicToday.com.

**Bring a can to benefit
local soup kitchens!**

Show will be held outside
(weather permitting)

pack it for redelivery. Then, at the end of the month, the packages are delivered to places that help people daily, places that care for our neighbors: The Center in Asbury Park, Lunch Break of Red Bank, Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, St. John's Soup Kitchen of Newark, St. Paul's Shelter in Paterson, and St. John's Bread and Life Soup Kitchen in Brooklyn, NY.

The “**Feed the Hungry**” Concert will focus on these pantries and the goal of Holiday Extensions. Appearing on the Stone Pony Summer Stage (weather permitting) will be a great group of Jersey Shore bands, donating their talents to this one-time show. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, and can be purchased at **Jack's Music in Red Bank, Ichabod's and McLoone's in Sea Bright, The Stone Pony** and **MusicToday.com**. A great

show for an even greater purpose!

It can't happen without you! You are invited to this “bring a can” show and the Holiday Express van will be there to collect your donations.

All donations are appreciated but those most needed include: *large cans of tuna; large jars of mayonnaise, peanut butter, jelly, paper plates, rice, 5 lb. bags of sugar, soup, vegetable oil, potato flakes, pasta, canned vegetables and tomato sauce.*

If you'd like to organize a food drive, please contact our office at 732-544-8010 or holecx@monmouth.com.

**APPEARING ON THE STONE PONY SUMMER STAGE
WILL BE A GREAT GROUP OF JERSEY SHORE BANDS!**

Holiday Extensions

In this issue, we focus on our "off-season" activities to illustrate how Holiday Express delivers year-round...

Caring All Year Long

For years, Holiday Express volunteers have traveled to **St. John's Soup Kitchen** in Newark, for a good, old-fashioned summer barbecue. The staff and clientele of St. John's have come to know us and our visits have become a sort of family reunion – with familiar faces and good memories. This continued presence also serves another purpose: *to show that we are earnest; that we do care about the future and that the relationship means as much to us as to those we visit.*

This year we will again visit St. John's, bringing a little bit of Jersey Shore summer to McCarter Highway in Newark and a much needed day of relaxation and fun for some deserving folks.

We will also hold our first barbecue at the **Methany School** of Peapack, NJ. Though the clients are different from St. John's, the purpose is the same: *spreading goodwill to the people of both organizations.*

"The event is simply a summer version of what we do during the holidays...bring cheer to the lives of those who live a difficult existence," said organizer **Roger Gardella**. *"This June we will have a Methany-style BBQ with hot dogs and burgers (some of which will have to be ground up for the residents to be able to eat), soft drinks and water games."*

When asked his motivation to hold the event, Roger said, *"When I was introduced to the people of Methany two years ago, I felt an instant connection. These kids and adults are among the bravest people I've ever met. Most of the residents and day students at Methany are wheelchair or gurney-bound and have little to no use of their extremities, yet they exude an excitement for life every day. Most can't even talk, but their ability to communicate is amazing."*

As Roger pointed out, there are different types of needs and Methany is an example of that. *"They have cutting edge technology, music and arts classes, a beautiful campus and a very qualified and unselfish teaching staff,"* he said. *"It's almost the opposite end of the spectrum from the poor, sick and less fortunate people we see every year, but with an ironic twist."*

It's not uncommon for a HolEx volunteer to become personally attached to a facility and its people. *"I fell for them and they fell for me,"* said Roger, *"so it's like going for a visit with good friends."* A great way to make a hopefully good summer even better.



Volunteers Joan Mercer, Merilee Celestino and Valerie Dowd-Webb surround Administrator Barbara Maran and a friend from St. John's.

The Hope Concert – Helping Our Own

Even though giving is not done with receiving in mind, it's nice to see someone who gives so much receive from those who love him. At the April 29 Hope Concert, even **Bruce Springsteen** said that **Bob Bandiera** has helped so many people, its about time we did the same for him.

Holiday Express was honored to lend support to the Hope Concert benefit for **Robert Bandiera, Jr.**, son of HolEx volunteer, the one and only **Bob Bandiera**.

Held in conjunction with the **Rock and Roll Music Fund**, a sister 501(c)(3) charity, the concert was held to support the ongoing care of **Robert Jr.**

The Bandiera band rocked the house at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank, along with **Bruce Springsteen**, **Jon Bon Jovi**, **Southside Johnny**, **Gary U.S. Bonds**, **Norman Nardini** and others, offering rotating players on each song rather than typical sets. Songs such as "7 Nights to Rock" were brought from the vaults for this special event. *"Their selection of 'I Shall Be Released' was really inspired,"* said **Maureen McCrink-Gribbroek**. Bob ended the evening with an emotional 'There Will Never Be Another You.' *Surely, there's only one Bob.*

T-shirts are still available, please contact our office at honex@monmouth.com or 732 544 8010.

Contributions to this cause may be made out and mailed to:

The Rock and Roll Music Fund
PO Box 3243
Sea Bright, NJ 07760
www.rockandrollmusicfund.org

In the Warehouse

behind the scenes at Holiday Express

MOVIN' ON!



Well, it's official!

The two Holiday Express warehouses have become one larger, consolidated and efficient space!

Holiday Express has moved its headquarters and warehouse operations to a

larger space within the same complex. "We're moving from two warehouses with a combined space of 4,200 square feet to one warehouse with 5,500 square feet with no additional expense," according to **Amy Robinson, Director of Operations** for Holiday Express. "So, even though we're moving, we get to keep the same address."

The move to the new space, at 968 Shrewsbury Avenue, took place in the middle of June.

In addition, Holiday Express has acquired an Econoline van for use throughout the year. The van is an instrumental tool in the



Holiday Extensions program, picking up canned goods at local drop-off points and then delivering them to the recipients. It will also come in handy during the season when we have three and four shows in one day. And for some events, a van is all that's needed. "For example," Amy says, "when we go to Blythedale, we don't take a lot of materials with us. So we can just pack up the van."

Look for the Holiday Express van at the **Feed the Hungry Concert** at the **Stone Pony** and other drop off locations this summer.

Giving Partners

As Holiday Express celebrates its 10th anniversary of supplying music, food, gifts and support to the less fortunate among us, we are proud to continue our "Giving Partner" program. Over our first 10 years, we entertained at over 300 venues, and were continually struck by the profound needs and desperate conditions we encountered.

We have been equally impressed by the enthusiastic willingness of both small businesses and large corporations to participate in the mission of Holiday Express. We wondered if we could somehow bring our supporters the opportunity to witness their generosity in action. So often, these companies are asked to make cash donations to charities and while most are certainly beneficial, they don't embody the personal touch that has been the hallmark of the Holiday Express tradition.

The solution to our dilemma was resolved with the idea of establishing a Giving Partner Program. We asked our charities to provide

us with "wish lists" of items they could use, but which never seem to get into the budget. The response was immediate. A homeless shelter needed a microwave oven. A soup kitchen requested a stereo system and 50 overcoats to enhance the quality of life for its clients. The lists grew.

We then partnered small businesses and corporations with these charities through their "wish lists." These professional partners would purchase the requested items, then accompany Holiday Express to present the gifts and get to know the people we are all serving. Each time, the result was a mutual exchange of joy and thanks-giving.

As always, we invite small businesses and corporations to join us in the mission of Holiday Express through our Partnering program. If you'd like to get involved, please email Executive Director Tim McLoone at honex@monmouth.com or call (732) 544-8010.

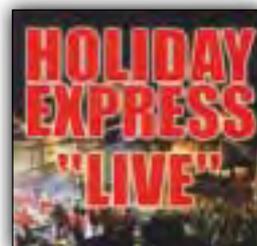
Look for profiles of previous Giving Partners in upcoming issues!

Holiday Express CDs – Still Available OnLine!

Choose from the following CDs...or order both!

- Holiday Express Live at Columbine CD (recorded live in December 1999)
- Holiday Express Greatest Hits (all your favorites on one lively CD)

www.oglio.com



Awards Group

Holiday Express Awards Two Scholarships to Local Students

Two Collier High School students will have an easier way to finance college thanks to scholarships from Holiday Express.

Rachel Krupnick won the **Little Steven Creative Arts Award** and will study drama at Arcadia University in Glenside, PA. The aspiring actor has participated in many school productions. Ranked ninth in her class, Rachel also found time for cheerleading, theater tech, prom committee and volunteer work at St. Mark's Soup Kitchen, Empty Bowls, St. Claire's Home, Senior League Luncheon and sing-alongs at various nursing homes.

Rachel's scholarship is named after songwriter/guitarist **Steven Van Zandt**. It assists recipients in pursuing a future in the field of performing and creative arts.

Lauren Townsend Award winner **David Petrusевич** hopes to become an ornithologist and will attend Delaware Valley College in Doylestown, PA. David, an A-student on the honor roll, formed a backpacking club at his school. He was also a Camp Anytown, NJ delegate and involved in Peer Leadership, as was Rachel.

The **Lauren Townsend Award** is named after a student who would have been valedictorian of her class but was killed in the Columbine High School tragedy in 1999. It is based on financial need with an emphasis on scholastic or community extracurricular activities. Lauren's family remain friends of Holiday Express and participate in the selection of this awardee.

Holiday Express formed the Awards Group in 1999.

"The Awards Group searches for students who have been overlooked by traditional scholarship programs but who we feel can be successful if given the opportunity. Awards are based on an individual's desire to succeed, community service, as well as their financial need," said **Rick Brunermer**, Chair of the Awards Group.

Holiday Express awards the one-year scholarships for a maximum of \$5,000. Recipients receive priority consideration if they reapply after successfully satisfying the first award year.

Collier High School in the Wickatunk section of Marlboro, NJ, educates over 150 students each year. Small classes, Individual Education Plans, extracurricular activities and active involvement by child-study teams encourage students with difficulty adapting to public schools to reach their full potential, according to the school's Web site.



Volunteer Spotlight

Holiday Express volunteers are a special group – the very energy and hope of our organization. Here is one of those wonderful people who help Holiday Express deliver...



ROGER GARDELLA

is a self employed Design/Build Consultant and Real Estate Developer. He attended West Virginia University and New York Institute Of Technology. He and his wife Dawn have two daughters, Kathryn, 14 and Tessa, 11 (shown at right). They live in Middletown, NJ.

Roger's been singing and playing guitar and blues harp for over 33 years. When he's not designing and building, he's playing music in any number of musical incarnations. He performs as a solo acoustic guitarist and singer at **Redheads** in Middletown and **Basil T's** in Red Bank. He also performs in a duo with fellow HolEx'er **Andy McDonough** and in a six-piece rock and roll band called the **Average Thom White Band**, which also includes Andy and two other HolEx'ers, **Jim Celestino** and **Mike Guadagno**. Roger recently CO-founded 'ART' a guitar/piano/harmony/percussive trio, which includes **Andy McDonough**, **Roger Gardella** and **Thom White**. ART can be seen at **Briody's** in Rumson and **Windansea** in Highlands, NJ throughout the summer.

A songwriter for over 25 years, Roger spent much of the mid-1990's with the Nashville Songwriters Association, for

whom he performed many solo original shows at such places as the Blue Bird Cafe in Nashville, TN and Coyote Kate's and Under Acme in New York City. These days he pools his solo original efforts with many local songwriters and performers in an organization called Songwriter's Block (www.songwritersblock.com), a grass roots group that helps to promote original music and give songwriters a venue in which to perform.

Roger was introduced to **Holiday Express** shortly after its inception by his good friend and fellow musician, **Al (Alfonse) Subarsky**. Later he was invited to join the troupe by **Tim McLoone** and **Amy Broza**; whom, after hearing him perform at **McLoone's** one evening, thought he'd be a good fit...that was over six years ago. "The most challenging thing for me, by far, is the number of shows. With all of the other things going on in my life...family, business, music, etc., finding the time to do as many shows as possible is a burden. But it's a burden of love. I get no better feeling from anything else that I do than that of the emotional fulfillment and feeling of accomplishment when I see a poor or sick child lighten up because of a song we sing or a gift we give. How can you not feel good about making people happy by doing what we already love to do...make music?"

Roger originally came on board as a singer but since his freshman year, **HolEx Class of '98**, he has become more involved with the organization. In addition to singing and playing guitar, he has been responsible for directing some of the shows when the band has had to split due to the often stressed schedule...talk about being in two places at one time.

Roger is a member of the **Scholarship Committee**, which is "a source of enormous pride. When I joined Holiday Express, I never thought that I'd be helping to put kids through college or giving a young artist a chance at realizing their dreams." Roger is also a member of the **Golf Committee**, which just launched its first-ever golf tournament. The event was a huge success and raised over \$40,000 for the **Holiday Express Scholarship Fund**. For the past two seasons, Roger has been an **Event Manager/Coordinator** for several events including **Easter Seals**, **Methany School** and **Ocean Mental Health**. He is presently working on a **Holiday Extensions** project for Sunday, June 29th at the **Methany School** where he plans to bring a band, several outdoor activity volunteers and a staff of burger and dog cooks for the **First Annual HolEx/Methany BBQ**.

"It's hard to sum up any one feeling or memory as 'most memorable' because we've made so many great memories. However, the most touching of my experiences has to be the trip to **Columbine**. Even today, I can't fully grasp the fact that we were there. The events of those few days were bazaar. We traveled in the coldest of winters to the coldest of places and performed an outdoor concert for over ten thousand people...and the evening of the show, the weather turned unusually warm, blustery even for December in Colorado. I'll never forget Tim's face the morning of the show. We were all just coming down to breakfast and Tim had been up since 6 am after getting a call from home that the morning radio stations were reporting a bomb threat at the high school. Tim held an impromptu team meeting and basically asked us all what we wanted to do...go on or go home? Well, go on we did. I know it sounds corny and it's often said – the whole experience was definitely a Holiday Express miracle. But hey, that's us...making memories and making miracles."



DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR
 CANNED GOODS DONATIONS TO
THE STONE PONY
ON JULY 6.
 STAY TUNED FOR UPCOMING
 FOOD DRIVES AND OTHER WAYS
 YOU CAN HELP
 HOLIDAY EXPRESS DELIVER!

SAVE THE DATE – 2003 SPECIAL EVENTS

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Sunday, July 6 | Stone Pony Concert | Asbury Park |
| Sunday, November 23 | Annual Dinner Dance | Ocean Place, Long Branch |
| Friday, December 19 | Count Basie Theatre | Red Bank |

Thanks to the folks at
 Sgt. Pat's Foundation
 and all who participated



in April's Sgt. Pat's Race.
 Our volunteers were there
 to join in and \$1,200 of the
 funds raised from the event
 were donated to
 Holiday Express.
 Good Show!

We deeply appreciate your generosity – without it, Holiday Express could not deliver.



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