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Hospice finds partnership

It all seemed to work out for both Clarence High School and Hospice Buffalo.

Debra Durkee
REPORTER

Clarence High's Youth Leadership class chooses a charity every year to lend their fundraising expertise to.

This year, they selected Hospice Buffalo.

When they contacted a delighted Hospice, they found that Hospice was already running a charity fundraiser called Kan Jam for Kids and were more than happy to include the volunteers from the high school into the competition.

"When the students decided to help Hospice, they had not even intended on getting a prize," says Youth Leadership teacher Diane Giangreco.

But they did receive a prize: a concert from national recording artist Secondhand Serenade.

Secondhand Serenade is currently on tour promoting their newest album, *A Twist in My Story*, and have headlined with groups like the All-American Rejects and Plain White T's.

The Clarence students earned the concert by coming in on top with the fundraising that they did for Hospice. Not only did they take part in the Kan Jam event, where teams of two players were invited to sign up and participate in a tournament held at the Buffalo Bills Fieldhouse in April, but they also took it upon themselves to hold separate events.

So it wasn't just the fundraising that they did for the Kan Jam event that put them on the top of the list. The students from Clarence also held a spaghetti dinner, a pizza sale, a fashion show, and sold t-shirts all with the proceeds going to Hospice.

The fundraisers were engineered by the participants of the youth leadership program, a semester-long class that emphasizes leadership and responsibility.

"The students become very involved with helping others," says teacher Giangreco. "The whole program is to show them that they can fill their lives with good things so there's no room for the bad things."

The class can be taken once in the student's high school career, but many of them want to continue the work they've started in the class.

The Hearts of Hope club was formed with that sentiment in mind, and the group allows students to continue with the fundraisers and volunteerism ideals that are established in the leadership class.

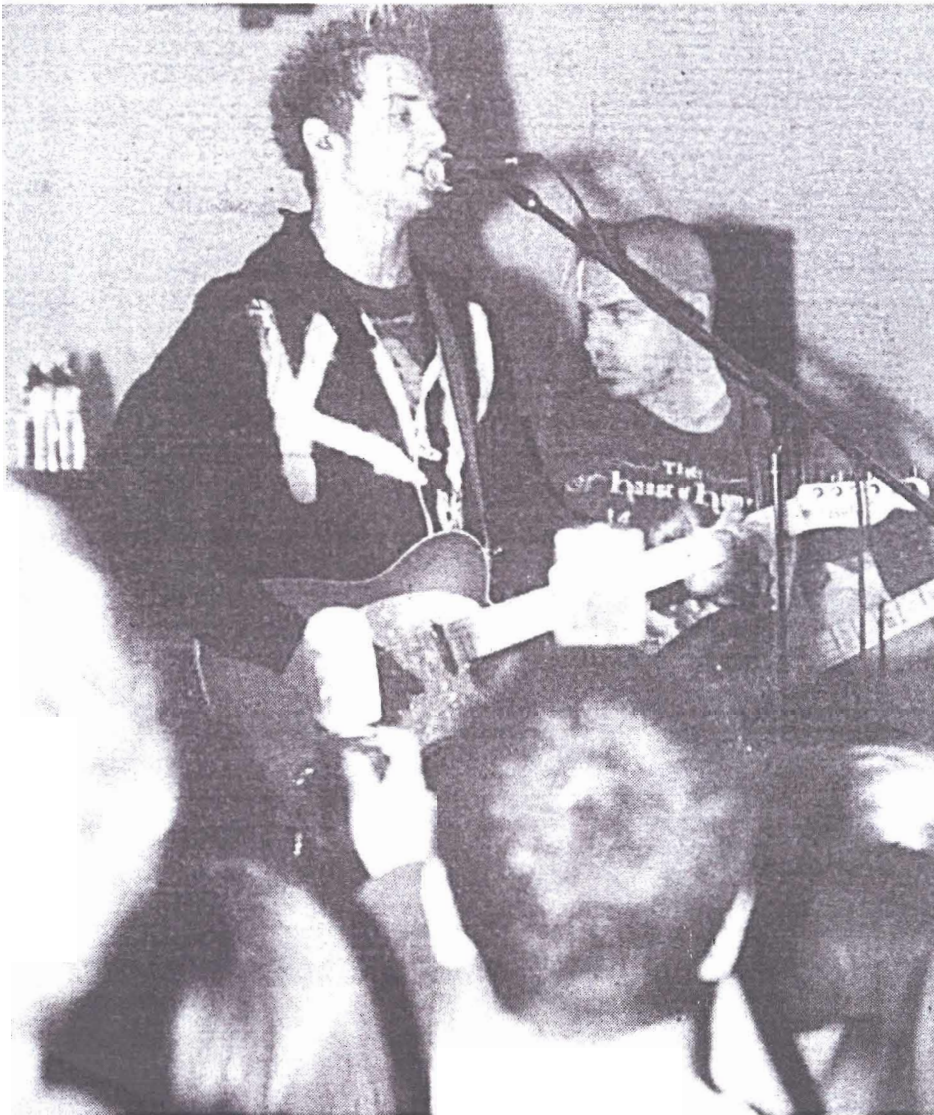
Since it began, Hearts of Hope has helped numerous organizations such as Make A Wish and Carly's Club. There were 100 students actively involved in the fundraiser for Hospice.

Every year, the students vote on which cause to devote their efforts to over the coming year. This year's Hospice nominee was nearly a unanimous winner. "Once they get that fire underneath them, they want to keep going," Giangreco says. And that fire is what the class is all about.

Kan Jam for Kids was sponsored by Time Warner Cable, WBLK 93.7 FM, Verizon Wireless, and Darien Lake. For more information on Hospice, visit www.hospicebuffalo.com.

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Clarence High School is treated to a concert by Secondhand Serenade in honor of their fundraising efforts.
