

Annual house raffle benefits care centers

\$150 ticket buys chance for \$350,000 residence

By **KIRBY SPROULS**

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If Bill Killilea calls you on May 7, he's likely got real good news.

One of the satisfactions Killilea derives from the Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center House Raffle that he started 19 years ago is notifying the winner.

"A lot of times people don't believe you," he said. "And it's amazing how so often someone gets to them before we do, and they already know."

Two years ago, Killilea was delighted to inform a friend that she and her husband had won a home in Bradford Shores at Knollwood.

That home sits next to this year's house, which was unveiled this week. The 2,514-square-foot home is at 18195 Baldwin Drive in the subdivision southwest of Ironwood and Adams roads in Clay Township.

Valued at \$350,000, the home features a two-story great room with fireplace, specialty woodwork in the dining room and a first-floor master suite with a garden tub.

Built by Place Builders, the home has three bedrooms on the second floor, a three-car garage, 2½ baths, a ready-to-finish basement and a stone-accented exterior.

Offers (or tickets) are \$150 apiece and go on sale at 8 a.m. March 2 at the former SJRMC at 215 W. Fourth St., Mishawaka.

All paid offers entered by noon March 8 will be eligible for the \$2,010 "early bird" prize drawn that day.

The winner of the house can opt for the \$200,000 cash prize, but Killilea said only one winner has ever taken the money. He said five winners have moved into their new homes while the others have taken the homes and sold them.



Tribune Photo/BARBARA ALLISON

Bill Killilea tours the Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center raffle house, 19 years after he organized the first one. Proceeds go to Women's Care Center and the Healthy Family Center.

"The formula is set up to encourage the winner to accept the house," Killilea said.

There are plenty of prizes that will be awarded at the drawing May 7. Second prize is the choice of a 2010 Ford Ranger or a 2010 Subaru Impreza, provided by Gurley-Leep Automotive Group. The alternative cash prize is \$15,000.

In all, there are 40 cash prizes, ranging from \$175 to \$5,000. Raffle organizers will sell 3,950 offers — and it's always sold out.

The biggest winners, of

course, are the two beneficiaries of the raffle — the Healthy Family Center in Mishawaka and the Women's Care Center.

Over the years, more than \$4 million has been distributed to those organizations, according to Andrew Snyder, vice president of marketing and community development for SJRMC. He said the two annually divide about \$200,000.

Ann Manion, president of the Women's Care Center, said the raffle is "huge for us ... without it we could not do what we do."

What they do, she said, is serve one-third of the pregnant women of St. Joseph County from four locations in the county.

Offering all their services free of charge, the Women's Care Center served 4,093 women in St. Joseph County alone in 2009.

Manion said with the state of the economy, the center has had to provide 50 percent more tangible items such as diapers, cribs and car seats to its clients.

The Healthy Family Center, meanwhile, served more than 19,000 patients in 2009. But Jo Iden, director of operations, said at the current rate, that figure could double this year.

The HFC, which is affiliated with Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center, serves uninsured, underinsured and others.

Iden said the raffle is the largest single fundraiser for the HFC.

"I don't know what we would do without it," she said.

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