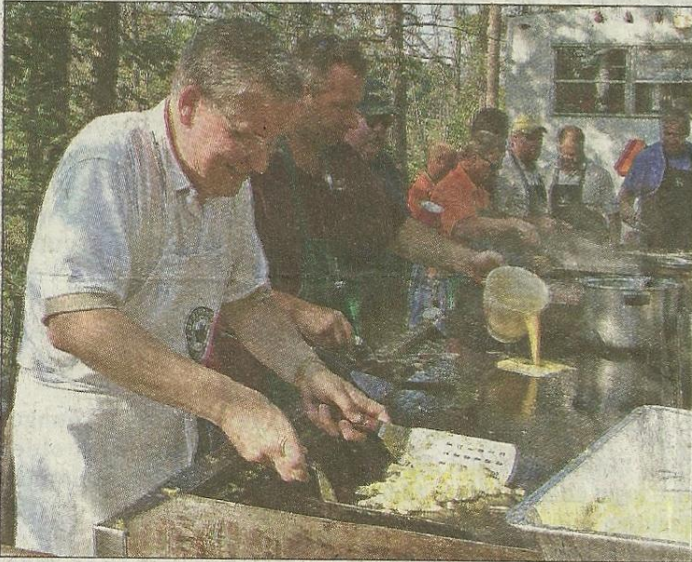


Thursday, November 26, 2009

SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICE



Manning the griddle at the Strongsville City Club's Breakfast on The Bridge are Mayor Tom Perciak, Erie Landscape owner Steve Neal and City Club members Bob Russell, Jim Green, George Jardine, Tom Rieth, Bob Ehrnfelt and Tom Kovacevich.

City Club assists many, with one Special interest

By Ingrid Schaefer Sprague
Correspondent

GETTING INVOLVED

The Strongsville City Club maintains a quiet, yet commendable presence in the city, but there is one area where it can be accurately described as a special interest group.

Although Strongsville City Club President David Knowles acknowledges the many contributions of the organization, he noted in particular its focus on Strongsville Special Olympics athletes. "Our two main fund-raisers are the Strongsville Rib Burn-off in the summer and the annual Breakfast on the Covered Bridge at the Metroparks Ehrnfelt covered bridge," said Knowles.

Considerable support for their organization's efforts comes from the estimated 15,000 to 18,000 people who attend the Rib Burn-off. "For the Breakfast on the Bridge, about 1,700 people attended," said Knowles.

The City Club will host a special holiday breakfast Dec. 12 at the Strongsville Recreation Center for the Special Olympic athletes. In addition to recognizing the athletes' efforts, the group hands out gifts. Musical entertainment is provided as well as visits by Santa Claus, Cleveland Indians mascot Slyder and a balloon artist. "Well over 100 athletes and their families attend the breakfast every year," said Knowles. "To see the athletes and their families at the holiday breakfast, and all of the caring, is amazing. The athletes dance and have fun. It's a great event that's only possible because of the work of their families and our members."

Funds raised by the club help support the various sports events that the athletes participate in, said Knowles.

The City Club meets one evening per month or more as needed, he said. For more information on membership in the Strongsville City Club, contact Knowles at 440-238-5769.

The club also helps create the Special Olympics Homecoming float each year. "When people see the float, they start applauding spontaneously," said Knowles.

Knowles is humble about his contributions, but gives credit to the City Club members, whom he says are responsible for the club's recognition as the best supporting organization of the Special Olympics in the State of Ohio, earning it an award in Columbus this past spring. "I'm very proud of the teamwork that all of the members show at our events," Knowles said. "I'm particularly proud of not only the Special Olympics, but also the other projects we sponsor as well as the support we receive from the city residents, local businesses, and city administration."

The Strongsville City Club also supports other civic events, including the Winter Wonderland, Independence Day fireworks and other Strongsville athletic programs.

The city club was founded in 1968 as a civic organization. "Our projects promote civic interest and city projects within the city," said Knowles. "For example, we previously raised funds for the clock tower and we raised funds to build the new fence around the cemetery about 1½ years ago.

"We also provided the woodworking equipment in the woodshop at the senior center," said Knowles.