

## Lifestyle

# People contribute to richness of communities

Tower Town Topics, the weekly column showcasing residents of Western Springs and Indian Head Park, has a New Year's tradition of recounting highlights of the previous year. The opening of the column stays the same from year to year as it remains fitting; observing that if the wealth of a community is measured by the value of its resources, then by any measure, Western Springs and Indian Head Park are rich communities. For the greatest resource in a community are the citizens, and Western Springs and Indian Head Park have an abundance of individuals devoting their time and talent to helping others.

Each year, I have the pleasure of talking with some of the finest residents of these two communities. The following are just a few of the individuals and groups who bring honor to their community as a result of their good deeds.

In a tradition with a long and admirable history, St. John of the Cross Parish in Western Springs has been sponsoring its Share Christmas program for as long as anyone can remember ... perhaps as long as 35 or 40 years. Because of the generosity of St. John parishioners, an estimated 3,500 individuals without the means of celebrating Christmas are the recipients of beautiful, new, wrapped Christmas gifts. Without this program these people would have little if any holiday celebration. The program is coordinated by Pat Genck of Western Springs and Pam Codilis and Jackie Colando of Burr Ridge and is

dependent on the work of hundreds of volunteers and donors.

"This is definitely one of the largest parish programs," said Codilis

West suburban senior citizens are finding that their desires and needs are increasingly being met through the efforts of various organizations and services providers in their community. Working hard to improve the quality of life and independence of area seniors are Mike and Mary Doepke. The Western Springs couple own and operate Home Helpers, an in-home provider of nonmedical care for older adults. Because of the services offered by Home Helpers, seniors are able to maintain independence and remain safely in their homes.

Michael Doepke is also the leader of the Western Springs/Indian Head Park community action team of Aging Well. This is a grass-roots volunteer initiative operated by AgeOptions, formerly known as Suburban Area Agency on Aging in Oak Park. The mission of Aging Well is to create elder-friendly communities through the work of community action teams made up of older adult volunteers and representatives from area businesses and community organizations. The community action teams help to identify the needs of seniors in the area, and work to implement changes that will

## Tower Town Topics

also serving  
Indian Head  
Park

Wendy  
Foster



meet those needs.

Doepke said he became involved with Aging Well because "I wanted to understand the issues in the senior market. I want to understand what people are interested in and this makes me well-prepared to work in the world of the seniors."

This past fall Terry Budny of Western Springs was one of an estimated 6,500 people participating in the 18th annual Boston Marathon Jimmy Fund Walk. The event, which was presented by Hyundai Motor America, was expected to have raised more than \$4.75 million to further cancer research and care.

Budny said he was inspired to participate in the walk by his brother-in-law Steve "Chad" Chadwick, who developed cancer of the spine in the 1990s. One of Chadwick's nurses at the time decided to put together a team honoring him, for the Jimmy Fund Walk. Although Chadwick planned on participating, he succumbed to the disease prior to the event, at the age of 48. His wife, Pat Chadwick, has coordinated and participated on Team Chad every year since 1999.

"They've probably raised about \$250,000 in his name," Budny said. "Every year Pat steps up and gets all of these people together to keep Chad's name alive."

Team Chad raised an estimated \$30,000 this year, he said.

## What's coming up

The first Tower Town Topics of 2007 is a tribute to these special people of Western Springs and Indian Head Park, who are themselves, tributes to their communities.

Divorce is always life altering and traumatic but needs not be destructive and cruel. Anne Chestney Mudd of Western Springs was one of the first area professionals to practice collaborative divorce law. While it has been in existence elsewhere for many years, collaborative law first came to Illinois in the early 2000s. The practice of collaborative divorce law operates as a way for a couple to divorce without litigation, and with minimal court involvement. Both spouses hire collaborative law attorneys and the four individuals work together toward a resolution "with dignity, not destruction." It's a holistic kind of thing that keeps people whole instead of tearing people apart, especially in relationships where there needs to be an ongoing connection. The result of collaborative divorce, she said, is that her clients and their families are healthier and happier and relationships are preserved.

A happy healthy New Year to all!!!