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18 Fore Life Weekend Kicks Off With Banquet

JUNE 04TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

18 Fore Life Weekend Kicks Off With Banquet

*By Annabeth Miller,
ShowMe Times Editor*

It was a combination of reunion, community festival, and a family gathering. As more than 500 people jammed into the Dexter Elk's Lodge for Friday evening's Ben Kruse Fore Life banquet there was a sense of joy and excitement at the annual event.

"We welcome from literally all over the United States," said event organizer Scott Kruse in his opening remarks. He rattled off a list that included Oregon, California, Texas, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Illinois, Kansas, Georgia, Colorado Oklahoma, Virginia and more. "We thank you for choosing to be here and it's great to see you show up in Dexter."

Kruse also thanked the folks who attended from the region, who have through the years "embraced a grassroots charity like this one and grow it into something that would make an impact."

The annual banquet is held the evening before than annual 18 Fore Life Golf Tournament, and gather golfers and non-golfers alike in a celebration that exemplifies the motto of the Ben Kruse 18 Fore Life Foundation – ***Celebrate, Give, Remember.***

In recognizing the many individuals and groups who helped make the event a reality, Kruse relate a unique telephone call he received on his way to the banquet. The caller asked how much the banquet cost to host – from the rental of the lodge to the food served.

“Doug Libla was wanting to be here and could not make it. He is paying for the facility and the food to everyone’s ticket money will go directly to families. That’s just one bill we won’t have to pay and it’s kind of overwhelming to get a call like that,” he said.

Kruse paid tribute to local Elks for the “teamwork and hospitality” each year with the banquet.

“We are constantly amazed at the compassion and generosity of this community and beyond,” he said.

Incredible volunteers who put heart and soul in the organization are the reason for it’s success, Kruse said.

“They are the reason why we gave \$153,000 in love offerings,” he said. “They are the reason why we’ve given away \$753,000 over the last 11 yeas. And it’s just going to be a year or two, and we’ll give away our one-millionth dollar. And that’s overwhelming.”

Kruse explained that the first group of golfer tee off at 7 a.m., the other 1:30 p.m.

“The only reason we stop is because it gets dark,” he said as the crowd chuckled. “We have 86 four-person teams and that’s 386 golfers on one golf course in one day. And I’m still trying to find another event can do that, because I’ve never heard of it. I’m searching and if anyone finds one that big I want to know about. And if they’re bigger, then we will try to be bigger!”

The 18 Fore Life charity now encompasses more than the golf tournament and banquet. Through the years, Kruse recounted how other events have joined the 18 Fore Life “family” of events, including

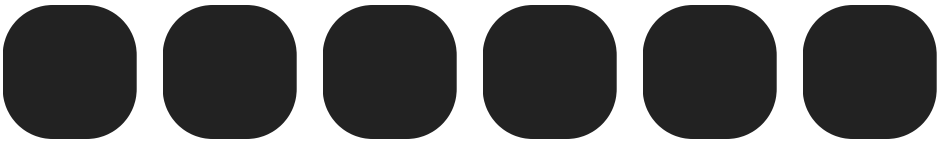
- 10 Pins for Life bowling event that raises funds for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital;
- Birdies for Breast Cancer;
- Ben Kruse Crappie Tournament;
- Hits for Hope volleyball;
- Swing Pink softbll tournament;
- Claus for a Clause;
- 4H t-shirts;
- Becky Dennington’s book, “Me and the Ugly C”

Photo Above: Organizer Scott Kruse speaks at this weekend's Ben Kruse 18 Fore Life Banquet, held at the Dexter Elks Lodge. (ShowMe Times photo by Andrew Cato)

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