

Strength in numbers

Matthew Cody's fund-raising efforts help comfort grieving children

By Amy E. Gaeth

For Matthew Cody, bingo is more than just a numbers game. It's a chance to volunteer his time raising funds for My Good Mourning Place, a grievance support center for children.

Cody runs a monthly bingo fundraiser on Wednesdays at the Knights of Columbus in Greenfield. He leaves his job early on those days and heads to the organization's hall to prepare for the big game. Card sales begin promptly at 5 p.m., and he is responsible for financial recordkeeping. The event draws some 100 people monthly.

Cody heard about the volunteer opportunity through a co-worker, CPA Jodi Bauer, who previously served on the board of My Good Mourning Place. Cody was invited to join the board in June 2007 and has been actively involved ever since. Besides attending monthly board meetings, he chairs Bingo Night and participates in other organization fundraisers, including Fall Gala and Open House.

"I got involved with this organization because it's a good cause, and I wanted to find a way to help people outside of my job," Cody said. "My Good Mourning Place was looking for someone with a financial background, and I thought this would be a good way to put my accounting skills to good use."

Community service has always been important to Cody. "Growing up in rural Beaver Dam, there were so many people who sacrificed so much so that kids like me could enjoy activities and programs in the community," he said.

Cody now embraces those strong community values. During his college years at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, he helped to reinforce his belief in helping others. He also helped tutor accountancy students through Beta Alpha Psi, volunteered with Safety on Our Sidewalks, and took part in activities with the Roncalli Newman Center.

Cody said he has grown both personally and professionally through volunteering. "Community service is a good way to build your personality and to build just who you are," he said. "Besides, there are always people in the community who need support. It's a good feeling when you can do something to help."

A staff accountant at Ritz, Holman, Butala, Fine in Milwaukee, Cody assists individuals, small businesses and corporations with their taxes and also conducts nonprofit and HUD audits. His employer is also committed to volunteerism and encourages employees to join boards and get involved in their communities. In fact, the firm allows flexible scheduling to accommodate community service. "They put the ball in our court," he said. "The motto is: 'Do whatever you need to do to make the service happen.'" ● ● ●

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