

NMB's Matching Funds program enhances a Wisconsin branch's efforts to help two members in need

Renewing Hope

A WOMAN LIVING IN Balsam Lake, Wisconsin, was suffering from an eye condition that ultimately results in blindness. Edie Osborn's doctor told her that without a surgical procedure, she would lose her eyesight in one eye. The problem was, Edie did not have health insurance to cover the procedure and she could not afford to pay for the surgery on her own. She and her husband, Bill, didn't have any idea how they would obtain the funds necessary for the surgery. Hope for saving her vision was fading.

Like most people, Edie was hesitant to ask anyone for help. But knowing that National Mutual Benefit had programs to aid member families, Edie's daughter contacted Sue Vlasnik, president of National Mutual Benefit Branch 828, to

ask if there was a way NMB could help her mom out.

After talking to Edie's daughter, Sue and Dale Vlasnik contacted National Mutual Benefit's Fraternal Services Department at the Home Office in Madison, Wisconsin, to see if NMB would match funds if they held a fundraiser. A matching funds grant was approved if branch members and friends held a benefit in the community on Edie's behalf.

With the matching funds grant as an incentive, Branch 828 members, together with Edie Osborn's friends and fellow church members, began planning a surprise that she would never forget. They organized a spaghetti dinner benefit on April 8, 2006 at her church, the East Balsam Baptist Church.

Included as part of the festivities was a raffle for a gas grill and cash prizes, along with a silent auction.

"I was sitting at a table when people started coming in," Edie explains. "I was amazed at how many people knew about the benefit and showed up. I just couldn't believe they would be there for me," she humbly adds.

Edie did have her eye surgery, but complications set in and she had to undergo a second surgery to remove blood that had accumulated behind her eye. "Fortunately for us, the benefit NMB held had raised enough to cover expenses for both surgeries," Edie sighs in relief.

"Not only did National Mutual Benefit members hold a fundraiser to assist me, but another [similar] benefit



A crowd gathers for the Edie Osborn Benefit.



District Representative Phil Keiser (left) and Branch 828 Officer Dale Vlasnik (center) visit with Edie.



Matching Funds Program Expanded

Do you know of a National Mutual Benefit member who is struggling financially due to an accident, disaster, or life-threatening illness—someone you would like to help in his/her time of need? Or are you, or an immediate family member in your household, in this same type of situation?

Since 1902, National Mutual Benefit has been helping provide financial security for members, their families, and beneficiaries through its fraternal life insurance programs. In addition, the organization and its member volunteers carry out projects that benefit both individuals and communities through a variety of avenues. Since established in 1986 as part of its fraternal branch system, the Society has offered Matching Fund grants, which provide extra assistance for members in crisis situations.

The Matching Funds program enables friends and families of NMB members to illustrate its mission of *people helping people in time of need*. Funds are raised locally for NMB members who need special assistance due to accident, disaster, or life-threatening illness and are then matched by a monetary grant (up to a specified amount) from the Home Office in Madison, Wisconsin.

Since the beginning of this program, National Mutual Benefit has raised \$1,179,728 in local communities, with the Home Office matching funds of \$697,500. This adds up to almost \$2.0 million in disbursed funds to assist families who are struggling financially.

What's exciting about this benevolent program is that it is now available to all NMB members. To find out more about this newly expanded benefit, call your local NMB representative or the NMB Fraternal Services Department at 1-800-779-1936. You, a member of your family, or someone you know could be eligible for Matching Funds!



Val Rowe (center) visits with guests attending her benefit dinner.

was held in June 2007 for Valerie Rowe, an NMB member in need of her independence. Val was bucked off a horse and is paralyzed,” Edie sadly shares. “After her accident, Val would frequently drive her handicapped-accessible van to the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, but lately it’s a wreck and Val was afraid that it would break down when she was out driving,” Edie adds.

Val was reluctant, at first, to let others do something for her. But Edie made her look at it differently. She told Val, “It’s hard to ask for help, but people love to do it. So let them help you if they offer!”

As a result of the benefit held for her, Val Rowe was able to purchase a much safer van to drive. It has a lift to get her wheelchair in the front of the van, and from there, she can slide over to the driver’s seat. Special hand controls were also installed. Val’s new van has helped her regain what she values most—her independence.

With the help of National Mutual Benefit’s Matching Funds program, a small group of people with big hearts and helping hands can renew hope and make a profound difference in someone’s life. We’re sure both Edie and Val would agree. ♦



Matching Funds Ideas

To give you ideas for planning your Matching Funds projects, here are some examples of benefits that were organized in 2007 for NMB members:

- › Outdoor barbecue to cover medical and travel expenses for two young brothers who face the same illness and a long recovery.
- › Egg roll sale for a gentleman awaiting an organ transplant.
- › Dinner to cover loss of income for a self-employed man recovering from open-heart surgery.
- › Dinner to cover medical expenses for a woman with an ongoing condition who needs multiple surgeries.
- › Raffle, silent auction, and dinner to cover medical and living expenses for young father awaiting two organ transplants.
- › Picnic and silent auction to cover medical expenses for uninsured young man who broke his leg in four places.
- › Raffle, silent auction, and chili/sloppy joe supper to help a seven-year-old boy diagnosed with lymphoma.