

The Coast Star (11/29/2012): ‘Freeze Out’ raises \$100,000 in Belmar

Thousands flock to the area for event to raise funds for St. Rose & local businesses



Cari Fletcher, of Wall, who was a top 20 finalist on The X-Factor in 2011, sang “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the 10th Avenue Freeze Out: Rebuilding Belmar event. Photo by SUEANNE GOSS, STAR NEWS GROUP

By Haley Behre

BELMAR — On Saturday, town spirit was soaring as thousands crowded the streets and bars in Belmar for the 10th Avenue Freeze Out: Rebuilding Belmar event.

The event — named in honor of Bruce Springsteen’s song, “Tenth Avenue Freeze Out,” which was inspired by a street in Belmar — brought between 5,000 to 10,000 people into the area according to organizers, raising more than \$100,000 for several local causes.

The event was aimed at helping to stimulate retail businesses and restaurants in the area, while at the same time helping those most affected by Hurricane Sandy, said Joe Davidson, event organizer. Mr. Davidson, also known as DJ Jersey Joe, is a DJ who has worked in many local bars.

About \$20,000 of the total amount raised will be donated to St. Rose High School, Mr. Davidson said. He added that he hopes the money will be used toward the arts and music programs that were affected by the storm.

“Our event wouldn’t have happened without all the musicians and DJs who donated their time,” he said. So, “it makes sense to keep music alive in their school” with the money raised.

Coral Butler Brooks, Director of Institutional Advancement at the high school, said “It’s so upsetting to lose the art and music programs that we’d be thrilled to accept support for both the programs.”

The other \$80,000 raised through ticket sales, which were in the shape of beach badges, will be used to “pump money into Belmar and Lake Como businesses” by using it to purchase gift cards to local businesses of different monetary value that will be distributed to those affected by the storm, Mr. Davidson said.

Mr. Davidson said designer Tommy Hilfiger also donated 20 gift cards worth \$250 each for the cause.

THE EVENT

The 10th Avenue Freeze Out: Rebuilding Belmar event opened up with local politicians, such as Congressman Frank Pallone [NJ-6], Belmar Mayor Matt Doherty, Assemblyman David Rible [R-30], Senator Robert Singer [R-30] and Assemblyman Sean Kean [R-30], as well as Mark Farrell, owner of Connolly Station, and Jim Keady, a volunteer in Belmar, speaking about the community, personal experiences and moving forward after Hurricane Sandy.

Live entertainment was provided by Pat Roddy, who sang two Bruce Springsteen songs, “My City of Ruins” and “10th Avenue Freeze Out.” Cari Fletcher, of Wall, who was on The X-Factor, sang the National Anthem and “To Make You Feel my Love” by Bob Dylan. Wall’s Jessica Charlotte Poland, also known as “Charlotte Sometimes,” who was on The Voice, sang “America the Beautiful” and “Have a Little Faith in Me” by John Hiatt. Mike Dalton, of Brick, sang “Home” by Phillip Phillips.

After the opening ceremony at Pyanoe Plaza, patrons dispersed to all the bars in Lake Como and Belmar. All patrons were given two drink tickets and bars provided a free buffet and live entertainment.

Children were each given a few free food tickets, which could be used at the Belmar and Lake Como pizza shops, which donated pizza, the Dairy Queen, which donated ice cream, Sweet!, which donated cupcakes, and Surf Taco, which donated tacos.

When asked why this event was important, Mr. Davidson said it creates a sense of community.

“Alone we wouldn’t have done numbers like this but together [we can],” he said.

Mr. Davidson said the event also shows that “Belmar is alive.”

“Main Street is alive and kicking,” he said. “We were slowed down for a couple weeks ... but we have to be ready for next summer and keep taking leaps forward.”

LOCAL BUSINESSES

Matt Harmon, co-owner of Boathouse Bar & Grill and 507 Main, both in Belmar, said the bars had good revenue the day of the event.

When asked if it helped recoup some of the costs lost, Mr. Harmon said it “was it better than the average Saturday, for sure. But can you make up two weeks of lost business in one day, that’s hard to do.”

Mr. Harmon also said the event was a nice “jump start” to getting back on track.

“It shows the town has a lot of life between everybody — bars, businesses, restaurants — in town,” he said, noting it is good that people saw that again.

Billy Smith, manager of PK’s Shamrock Pub in Lake Como, said the event was “awesome” and brought in about 1,000 people to the pub throughout the day.

“We were packed from 2 p.m. to 2 a .m.,” he said.

The pub saw a lot of new faces and people as well as faces of people who had not been to PK’s Shamrock Pub in years, he said.

When asked if the pub had recouped some of the costs lost from being closed because of the hurricane, Mr. Smith said PK Shamrock Pub “absolutely” made up for some of that loss.

Jaimie Hardell, owner of JLynn’s Boutique, said the 10th Avenue Freeze Out brought business into her store as the event brought in a lot of people to town.

THE FUTURE

The T-shirts, which were donated by Dr. T-shirt, RadCakes and Seven3two, are still for sale online at www.rebuildbelmarnj.com.

The door prizes, which included Brooklyn Nets, New York Knicks, New York Giants and New York Jets tickets that were donated by CBS Radio and other prizes donated from local businesses, were announced on Tuesday night.

Mr. Davidson said he expects the gift cards to be purchased by next week. Once they are purchased, Mayor Doherty and other borough employees will determine who to give them to and distribute them accordingly.

“I think it’s a brilliant idea that both helps residents in need and small businesses in our community,” Mayor Doherty said, adding that he attended the event and that it was “remarkable.”

The official poster of the event can be purchased for \$5 at Surf Taco, located at 1003 Main St. One-hundred percent of these sales will go back to purchasing additional gift cards.

Mr. Davidson said 10th Avenue Freeze Out may become an annual event.