



## ***ST. JOSEPH'S FOUNDATION OF THUNDER BAY***

***Supporting the works of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the District of Thunder Bay***

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **ST. JOSEPH'S FOUNDATION OF THUNDER BAY CELEBRATES A MILESTONE YEAR!**

(Thunder Bay, ON, May 16, 2011) St. Joseph's Foundation of Thunder Bay has a lot of be proud of this year. In 2011 the Foundation will mark a milestone year for 3 well-known community activities; Benny Birch's Birthday Party, the Grand a Day Draw, and St. Joseph's Golf Classic. Thunder Bay and Northern Ontario have played a very important part in the success of these fundraisers.

Greg Fayrik, Chair, St. Joseph's Foundation says "It's wonderful to be part of an organization that is so strongly supported by our community. Thank you to everyone who has helped by participating or volunteering over the years."

St. Joseph's Foundation of Thunder Bay was incorporated in 1983, but its history of fundraising for St. Joseph's Care Group started long before this date. After St. Joseph's Heritage opened in 1979, financial pressures continued to be a problem. Something was needed to help raise funds for the new facility that was surrounded by beautiful birch trees. So, Benny Birch, mascot for St. Joseph's Heritage, was created and celebrated his first birthday in 1982. No one could ever have imagined that 30 years later, we would be celebrating Benny Birch's 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party!

In 1982, the small 1-day celebration was open to the community with mostly staff, tenants, families, and volunteers helping to organize and participate with entertainment, bake sales, rides, and fun! Over the years, this well attended event out-grew the Heritage and Pine Street School location, moving to Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital grounds in 2002, and then to Chippewa Park in 2006. The Birthday Party has spanned generations of families in the last 30 years. Many stories have been told by parents who first attended as young children and are now bringing their own youngsters. Despite some rainy weather over the last 29 years, the event has raised over \$1 Million for Bethammi Nursing Home. Benny Birch's 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party will be held on June 10, 11, & 12, 2011 at Chippewa Park.

The Grand A Day Lottery began in 1992. This annual fundraiser gives ticket purchasers a chance to win \$1,000 each day in November along with early bird prizes and bonus draws. Some lucky winners were even able to win more than once, as tickets are returned to the drum after each draw. In 19 years, \$914,999 has been awarded in prizes, and almost \$1.4 Million given to St. Joseph's Care Group to purchase capital equipment such as beds, therapeutic equipment, lifts, and special equipment for the safety of clients. Tickets for St. Joseph's Foundation 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Grand A Day Draw will go on sale in August 2011.

St. Joseph's Golf Classic began in 2002 in support of the Hogarth Riverview Manor Campaign. It was an instant success and has continued to be a very popular golf tournament with full registration every year. Thanks to the generous sponsors and participants, the event has raised \$391,000 in 9 years! The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual St. Joseph's Golf Classic will be held on September 12, 2011.

Over the years, St. Joseph's Foundation has held many fundraising events, such as Hey Day Flea Markets, Fantasy Car Raffles, Art Happening, Antique Show and Sale, Wine Festival, Bingos, Fish Derbies, and fundraising dinners, but these 3 special events have stood the test of time and have been well supported by the community. An amazing total of \$2.8 Million has been raised in almost 30 years from these events!!!

Sharron Owen, Executive Director, St. Joseph's Foundation stated "I have been involved with the Foundation since the beginning and I have seen many things change, but the support and generosity of the community has always been tremendous."

Happy 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Benny Birch, 20<sup>th</sup> Grand A Day Draw and 10<sup>th</sup> St. Joseph's Golf Classic and best wishes for many more!

For more information about St. Joseph's Foundation, visit [www.sjftb.net](http://www.sjftb.net) or call 768-4440.

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