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## Great Northwoods Gala for the Gulf raises more than \$5,000 for relief

by Gail DeBoer  
Staff writer

In an outpouring of generosity and concern, hundreds of area residents came together Oct. 9 at Moondance Saloon and Grill for the Great Northwoods Gala for the Gulf.

And when it was over, a grand total of \$5,393 had been raised to aid victims of Hurricanes Katrina

and Rita, including many who now have relocated to Minnesota.

Kiki Webb of Walker was part of a core group of 13 who began working on the project just five weeks ago.

As word spread about, more than 100 artists, 33 musicians and 39 volunteers from the Walker, Hackensack, Akeley and Longville areas stepped forward to offer their



Nearly 500 people attended the nine-hour benefit, enjoying dancing and listening to many musical artists.



Several musical groups from the Walker area performed at the Great Northwoods Gala, helping to raise more than \$5,000 to aid victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Photos submitted

time, talents, artwork, prizes, know-how and energies to make the Gala a success.

"We were truly humbled by the generosity," Webb declared. "It was wonderful to see the community spirit and to have all the communities coming together."

During the nine-hour event, crowds flowed in and out of Moondance Saloon, making an exact head count a bit difficult. Webb estimated that at any given time, 100 to 125 people were at the Gala. She estimated total attendance at between 400 and 500 people.

Around 150 donated items, many from artists at the Crafters & Artists Mall in Walker, were sold by silent auction, by the "Buy It

Now" process, or were raffled off.

Successful buyers then could choose where their contributions would go, Webb explained. Checks for 40 individual contributions totaling \$1,649.50 were made out to the Salvation Army. Those funds will go specifically to hurricane evacuees who have relocated to Minnesota.

Another 19 checks for raffle or auction items were made out to the Presbyterian Church USA for its national hurricane relief efforts.

Cash donations were split evenly between the two nonprofits.

The Salvation Army received a grand total of \$2,391 and the Presbyterian Church, \$2,501.

The sound engineer who,

according to Webb, provided "amazing amounts of sound equipment," waived \$700 of his normal \$1,200 fee and would only accept \$500 for all his work.

Throughout the greater community, Webb noted, there have been many other opportunities to support hurricane relief efforts, including a soup fund-raiser in Longville, donations through various local banks, businesses and churches, and a fund-raiser in Bemidji the weekend of Oct. 15, where many of the same local musicians will perform.

"We're very happy we could sup-

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## Gulf gala

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port the relief effort in our own little way, as artists and musicians," she said. "I would like to thank all the people who came together to make this possible.

"Yet I feel funny thanking people, because this is for the people of the Gulf. We were overwhelmed and humbled by everyone's generosity."