

The Gift That Keeps on Giving

July 19, 2011

Growing up in the city of Lawrence, MA, Janet and Bob St. Louis were aware of the positive work that Lazarus House did for people in need. When Janet's father passed away, she was stunned to discover that her father was a guest at the emergency shelter a number of times when she was young. Several of his supporters from Lazarus House came to his funeral, and she was touched by the way each of them had seen her father's goodness through his struggle. Janet shared, "Since then, Lazarus House has held a special place in my heart."



In 2010, the St. Louis' participated in the Hike for Hope with Bob's company team from MKS Instruments. With support from the company president, Lou Berlinghieri, the Marketing Department, and Cathy Langtry, as MKS Instruments Team Leader, the 25 team members were the top corporate fundraiser last year. MKS Instruments generously matched their employees' donations for the Hike and held a celebratory lunch following the Hike. "We're such a big company," Bob explained, "when the president of your company sits down and has lunch with you, it really means a lot. I can't say enough about MKS for supporting us."

2010 Hike for Hope

Bob and Janet expected that the most challenging part would be asking people for donations in these tough economic times, but they were surprised by the outpouring of support. They used the social media site Facebook to invite their friends to donate to the Hike. "It was easy," Bob shared. "I was amazed because I wanted to hit \$1,000, and when we did, people just kept giving more and more." On Facebook, they posted a brief description of their goal for Hike for Hope, along with a link to their personal fundraising page at HikeforHope.org. They soon realized that persistence pays off. "We had a great response from our friends on Facebook," said Bob, "you don't necessarily talk to your 'friends' on Facebook daily or weekly, but when people see that you are fundraising for a charity, they are very generous." Bob and Janet actively fundraised for two to three months and raised \$1,500.

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- BOB ST. LOUIS

As for the walk itself, Bob, Janet, and their 9-year-old daughter Haley had a great time as a family. The morning of the walk, they met the MKS Instruments Team and put on their matching T-shirts designed by the company's marketing department. After a relaxing walk through Andover, they felt an immense sense of accomplishment from their combined efforts.

At the culmination of the walk, Haley had a chance to meet some of the people from Lazarus House who knew her grandfather. Bob explained, "Haley never got to meet her Grandpa, but from this experience, she can grow up to learn to give."

Bob, Janet, Haley, and the MKS Instruments Team plan to participate in this year's Hike for Hope. "I guarantee we won't lose one person from our team, and hopefully, it will just grow from there," Bob said.