

Community leaders participate in Cele-Bra-Ty Waiter event at Wood River Applebees

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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WOOD RIVER - Wood River Fire Chief Brendan McKee and East Alton Fire Chief Rodney Palmer opened the **Cele-Bra-Ty Waiter** event at the **Wood River Applebees**, located at 1921 Vaughn Rd., at 11 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, 2017.

The event was created by **Working Towards a Cure**, a group dedicated to paying for things insurance will not cover for women fighting breast cancer in **Jersey, Madison and St. Clair** counties. "**Chief Everything Officer**" **Julie Fraser** said those needs could include babysitting for children while a woman is in treatment or alternative supplemental treatments insurance may not otherwise cover.

During Cele-Bra-Ty Waiter day at the Wood River Applebees, several community leaders volunteered to open doors and help seat people during two hour shifts from 11 a. m. until 9 p.m. Diners were given coupons from Working Towards a Cure, which will indicate to the staff at Applebee's the person is participating, and therefore, 15 percent of the meal (excluding alcohol) will be donated to Working Toward the Cure.

"We serve up around 2,000 people," Fraser said. "We've given away \$340,000."

Fraser said all the money stays on the Illinois side of the river, because the St. Louis Area has plenty of programs dedicated to women going through breast cancer. She said the Illinois side needed something specifically for the area.

Celebrity waiters for the day included the two fire chiefs as well as **Bethalto Mayor Alan Winslow, Roxana Police Chief William Cunningham, Roxana School Board President Butch McGill, East Alton Wood River High School Superintendent John Pearson, Bethalto Superintendent Jill Griffin** and several other civic leaders.

"We'll have two waiters every two hours that will seat you," she said. "You need to bring the coupon in that is on the website, which is www.workingtowardsacure.com. We also passed out more than a thousand of them."

Applebee's has been a sponsor of Working Towards a Cure for a few years, Fraser said.

"They had an event called 'Dining to Donate' in October for breast cancer awareness," she said. "We didn't even know they did that, so we hooked up with them, and the third Thursday of every month is Working for a Cure night in Wood River."

A breast cancer survivor herself, Frasier said she was given 30 days to live after doctors found more than 100 tumors inside her body. She said she will be celebrating 28 years of being cancer-free on March 6, 2017.

Working Towards a Cure is also hosting its annual **Bra Walk** at the **Liberty Bank Riverfront Amphitheater** on Oct. 7, 2017.