

Donations Needed For This Year: Annual Dance Cancelled, Parade Instituted Instead For William M. BeDell Achievement and Resource Center

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WOOD RIVER - The William M. BeDell Achievement and Resource Center (arc) hosted a successful parade in November 2020, in the place of an annual dance, normally a huge fund-raising event, that was canceled because of COVID-19. The parade began at the BeDell school located at 400 S. Main Street in Wood River.

Chad Rollins, CEO of William BeDell Achievement and Resource Center, said it was very difficult not having the dance because it normally raises \$10,000 to \$15,000.

The parade was organized in place of arc's 40-year tradition of a fall dance which was canceled in compliance with social distancing recommendations. Board President, P.J. Jun, stated that the dance has always been the agency's only fundraiser. At that time, he asked that "In lieu of purchasing a \$20 dance ticket, we're asking our supporters to make a contribution to support the parade."

The parade also included local first responders, individuals served by the agency, staff, volunteers and paid a special tribute to veterans. Shirley Wiedman, a 40-year volunteer with the BeDell Center, was the grand marshal of the parade in place of the dance.

Rollins said the parade was so successful they will likely have it incorporated with the annual dance in November 2021.

Rollins encouraged anyone who can to donate to the BeDell Achievement and Resource Center to either sending a check to P.O. Box 349, 400 S. Main, Wood River, IL., 62095, or dropping donations by at the 400 S. Main location. He said the donations are often used to purchase vans that run in the \$38,000-\$45,000 range to transport clients back and forth and other in-house needs.

The William M. BeDell Achievement and Resource Center is a non-profit organization serving individuals with developmental disabilities throughout Madison County. On typical years, the school program, the family support unit, the Community Day Services program and the residential program serve more than 500 children and adults per month, Rollins said. However, with COVID-19, some of the services have been reduced until the pandemic lifts.

Rollins explained that COVID-19 has been difficult on both programming and definitely the donations from the annual dance.

"We are hoping to continue the dance and have our 40th one in the fall and possibly marry it with the parade," he said. "We hope with the COVID-19 vaccine, things will get better in regard to the disease and things will open up."



