

Evening at Bas Bleu will help the homeless

Nov. 17 event will include a private performance of "Almost, Maine"

By Rhema Zlaten Special to the Reporter-Herald

Posted: 11/08/2011 09:06:41 PM MST

Homelessness Prevention Initiative Fundraiser at Bas Bleu

When: 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 17.

Where: 401 Pine St., Fort Collins.

Tickets: \$50 per person.

Info: Call the Bas Bleu box office at 498-8949 or visit basbleu.org or homelessnessprevention.net.

Preventing homelessness is a valuable asset to every city. Join the Bas Bleu Theatre Company for an evening of solidarity with the Fort Collins community when it hosts a fundraiser for the Homelessness Prevention Initiative on Thursday, Nov. 17.

The evening will feature appetizers and wine at 6 p.m., a preview of Plymouth Church's sixth annual Clothing the Cold Warming the World Youth Sleep Out at 7:15 followed by a private performance of "Almost, Maine" at 7:30 p.m.

Executive director of Bas Bleu, Dulcie Willis, directed the show "Almost, Maine" and she relishes the opportunity to raise funds for HPI via the poignant love stories found in the show. "Almost, Maine" features a series of vignettes all tied together by one magical winter night and different seasons of the heart.

"The Homelessness Prevention Initiative is a really important program to our community," Willis said. "They really do help people avoid homelessness."

Bas Bleu uses its theater building to partner with community initiatives, according to Bas Bleu media director Mishelle Baun.

"Bas Bleu has a history of partnering with area nonprofits," Baun said. "When artistic director Wendy Ishii co-founded Bas Bleu 20 years ago, she envisioned Bas Bleu as a place which would foster community conversations and support all types of artistic and philanthropic events. The HPI benefit is a perfect example of this."

The evening is also sponsored by Neenan Architecture headquartered in Fort Collins, and the food will be prepared by the students of the Aspen Grill Teaching Restaurant at CSU. The preparation will be assisted by clients from the Matthew's House and Fostering Leadership Program, according to HPI executive director Sue Beck-Ferkiss.

"This is an example of our collaboration with the community," Beck-Ferkiss said. "It is a celebration of 10 years of service for homelessness prevention."

HPI partners with United Way to help people stay in their homes if they are experiencing a temporary emergency. The bulk of their clients are renters. They have six community intake centers where over 60 volunteers meet with clients to screen them. Eligible families are given an appointment where a financial adviser examines if a small temporary assistance will help with the emergency situation. Checks are then made out to the landlord directly, and families in need are also routed to the Sister Mary Alice Murphy Center for Hope where they can receive more services.

"Last year we served over 900 families that represent about 2,700 individuals, and about 1,700 of them are children," Beck-Ferkiss said. "It costs so much less to help people

through a financial intervention than to deal with a family who has become displaced. Homelessness is very taxing on individuals. Even a short period of homelessness can cause serious emotional and physical damage, as well as learning delay in children, and it is harder for them to stay in school at all."

To attend the Homelessness Prevention Initiative Fundraiser at Bas Bleu at 6 p.m. Nov. 17, call the Bas Bleu box office at 498-8949 or order tickets online at the theater's website, basbleu.org.

Tickets are \$50 per person and include hearty appetizers, drinks and a private showing of "Almost, Maine."