

# **Holly's House of Hope Plans Annual Gala to Provide Job Training for Young Adults with Disabilities**

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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HIGHLAND - Holly's House of Hope will host its second annual gala to provide job training and support to young adults with developmental disabilities.

From 1–4 p.m. on April 7, 2024, attendees can enjoy a raffle, fashion show and meal at the Schwarz Barn in Highland at the A Day of Hope Gala. All proceeds from ticket sales and the raffle will benefit Holly's House of Hope.

“We have received far more support from our community than we thought was ever possible,” said Julia Donato, a volunteer with the organization. “I feel like when people know how much we’re doing for the community, it makes people want to jump in and help. Community supporters and volunteers are just absolutely the backbone and lifeblood of Holly’s House.”

The organization was founded by E. Duff and Tammy Wrobbel after their daughter, Holly, expressed interest in working in the fashion industry. Donato describes Holly as “the sassiest, feistiest little thing you have ever met.” She applied to many stores but was never hired.

The Wrobbels decided to start Holly’s House to provide job training and on-the-job support to young adults who, like Holly, have graduated from the school system and want to work. The organization collaborates with local businesses to set up clients in apprenticeships with a job mentor provided through Madison County. The business pays half the client’s wage and Madison County pays the other half. After a year, Holly’s House “crosses our fingers and toes” that the business will hire the client permanently, Donato explained.

“I wanted to create a place where they could find spaces for these young adults that they cherish them and want them to work there. And thus Holly’s House was born,” Donato said. “There’s really nowhere for to go. And with parents who work full time and can’t just leave their kids at home, they have to find somewhere for them to go to either have the job training or have an activity center. And so Holly’s House has really been instrumental in that way, providing what comes next for a lot of these young adults.”

Holly’s House of Hope also maintains the Holly’s House Free Store, which sells clothing at a low price for people in need. In order to incorporate the free store into the gala, they decided to host a fashion show with outfits designed by Holly.

“We did that last year and it was a hoot,” Donato explained. “Honestly, every single client there is an absolute ham and they love to just get up there and strut.”

The gala will also offer a raffle, with several items donated from local businesses and community members. The raffle will be available online; information can be found at the [official Holly’s House of Hope Facebook page](#).



For Donato and the Wrobbels, it's been exciting to see how many people support the organization. Donato noted that many people know and love someone with a disability, and the free store also helps a lot of community members. The organization aims to provide support, and they hope to have many supporters of their own at the A Day of Hope Gala.

“Man, I’m telling you, the minute that you step in that building and you hang out with those young adults, they are just the coolest people, genuinely the coolest people,” Donato added. “They have just such a love and a drive to not even help themselves with the job trades but to help each other. Holly’s House is all about supporting those who need support in our community...I feel like everybody can see a reflection of something in their life through what we’re doing at Holly’s House, and it makes them interested and excited to jump in.”

For more information about the gala, including how to purchase tickets, visit the official [Facebook event page](#). To learn more about Holly’s House, check out [HollysHouseOfHope.org](http://HollysHouseOfHope.org).



A Day of Hope Gala



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