

Leprechauns bring pot of gold to disabled

FUND-RAISER

The hunt will raise money for agencies that help the physically and mentally disabled.

By Jeannine Pisowicz

Correspondent

ROLLING PRAIRIE — The luck of the Irish will shine on the few who spot a leprechaun Sunday.

And while those capturing the leprechaun's pot of gold during the Share Foundation of Michigan City's second annual Leprechaun Hunt can walk away as much as \$1,000 richer, the funds raised benefit Northwest Indiana's physically and mentally disabled.

Last year's hunt raised \$22,000 and the Rev. Dennis Blaney, Leprechaun Hunt coordinator and founder of Share Foundation, hopes to beat that total this year.

"We could stand to make another \$22,000 or even \$44,000," he said.

Share Foundation supports small agencies that work primarily with the disabled. Deaf Services of Northwest Indiana, Respite Care of Porter and Lake counties, Parents and Friends Inc. and Down Syndrome of Northwest Indiana are among the agencies that benefit from the Share Foundation as well as Group Homes and Sharing Meadows, a camp facility for the mentally disabled.

The 23 hidden Leprechaun figurines hidden throughout the 184-acre Sharing Meadows in Rolling Prairie have a cash prize value from \$50 to \$1,000 with total prize value of \$4,250. And while fishing, if a tagged fish is reeled in, the favored fisherman will receive \$200.

While in Ireland, Blaney participated in a similar event. Bringing the idea back to the United States, Blaney set out to raise much needed funds for group housing and camp facilities.

Backed by Blaney's energy and determination, last year's successful event will certainly be topped this year, said Respite Care of Porter County Coordinator Laurie Custer.

"He instills such a fervor. You want to go on and make it bigger and better and to touch more people," Custer said.

The cost of the Leprechaun Hunt is \$35 per person over 18, children are free. The cost includes roast beef and lamb, corned beef and cabbage, soft drinks, beer and wine, Irish entertainment, hayrides, boating and fishing.

"The Leprechaun Hunt is great fun and it's as exciting for the children to go on this treasure hunt as it is for the adults," said Dianne Vass of Valparaiso, who volunteers each summer at Sharing Meadows. "We're very dependent on the money that is raised."

IF YOU GO:

The Leprechaun Hunt will be held from noon to 6 p.m. Sunday at Sharing Meadows camp. Admission for adults is \$35, children under 17 are free. For reservations, call the Share Foundation at 872-2866.

DIRECTIONS TO SHARING MEADOWS:

Take I-94 east to the LaPorte-South Bend exit, east on U.S. 20 to 300E. Turn north on 300E to Mandich Boulevard. The camp is on the corner of 300E and Mandich Boulevard.



MICHAEL McARDLE/Post-Tribune

The Rev. Dennis Blaney, founder of the Share Foundation, will be hiding 24 miniature leprechauns, including one that will be worth \$1,000, on the grounds of Sharing Meadows Aug. 4.