

## Still Marching Forward for Dorais Field

Special to *Chippewa Herald* – Peg Leinenkugel, Co-chair, Marching Forward Campaign

*How's the campaign going? Have we reached our goal yet?* I've been asked these two questions many times since the campaign for the renovation of Dorais Field began last April. Each time I'm asked, I'm moved by the fact that each individual asking the questions uses the word *we*. *Have we reached our goal yet?* It's immediately obvious they understand the power that lies in the WE.

Like most kids growing up in Chippewa, we enjoyed our family gatherings at Irvine Park with our parents. It was great fun when my dad would get on the teeter-totter and challenge my sisters, brother and me to tip him upward. Two of my siblings would climb on the other end and it still wasn't enough. Although I was the youngest and lightest, I always took great pride in knowing that, sometimes, just adding my little weight was all that was needed to tip Dad upward. They couldn't get the job done without me; that was cool. It wasn't until I was older that I realized it wasn't just me but all three of us (the we) that was needed to get the job done.

A couple of weeks ago I was at a Junior Legion baseball game with our 16-year-old daughter. While we were watching the game, a father of one of the baseball players asked me – you guessed it – *How's the campaign going? Have we reached our goal yet?* After I told him about the campaign's progress, my daughter said, "Mom, I want to give." I told her I had a pledge form at home that she could fill out (or she could cut it out of the *Chippewa Herald*) and send to the Community Foundation of Chippewa County. Then she said, "How much should I give?" After a quick discussion, she discovered only she could answer that question. Her level of giving would need to be based on what in life she cherishes, how important the new field is to her, how deeply she deems the field's importance to the quality of our community to be, her savings, her present financial commitments, and the money she makes babysitting and doing odd jobs for others.

She turned in her pledge card last week with her first of three payments. She made her first payment from the babysitting money she had saved. Then she decided she'd dedicate the money she earned from four babysitting jobs each year for the next two years, too. It brought tears to my eyes to present her with the *I gave to Dorais. Did you?* button. As a teenager, she's already discovered that she can make a difference within the community.

It's true that her financial contribution is far less than those of the Casper Foundation, Mason Companies, Rutledge Charities, Northwestern Bank, and others. Yet she understands that her smaller contribution, combined with the gifts of others like her, will help to finally tip the load to get the work of the renovation completed. She understands WE power. Now that's cool!

So, ***how is the campaign going, and have we reached our goal yet?*** We've reached almost 85% of our goal to pay for the Dorais Field improvements and renovations. Over 350 businesses, foundations, families, and individuals have made contributions so far, as recognized in the Chippewa Herald's weekly *Marching Forward* page. Many are making gifts in honor or in memory of loved ones. Such tributes are meaningful expressions of individuals' and families' caring that reflect the community-wide character that makes this campaign unique and special.

Others have challenged classmates to donate in honor of their graduating class so their class can reach the \$1000 level and be permanently recognized on a plaque prominently displayed at the new Concession/ticket building at the field. Some made their pledges payable over three to five years so they could increase their gift. We've even had some folks increase their initial pledge or contribution!

We're thankful for the generosity of each contributor. All gifts, large or small, are needed to renovate Dorais Field so it can become a new multi-purpose, enhanced venue that Chi-Hi and McDonell students and our entire community - young and old – can utilize, be safe in, and celebrate all that is great about living in Chippewa Falls!

But our WE work isn't done, yet. WE still have \$321,000 to raise. If you've been meaning to give and just haven't gotten around to it, simply cut out the pledge form from the bottom of the *Marching Forward* page in this edition of the Chippewa Herald, fill it out and send it in to the Community Foundation of Chippewa County address listed at the bottom of the form. **WE can do it, together.** Remember that it just may be your pledge and contribution that tips the load and completes the work!