

WOMAN'S LIFE, COMMUNITY SUPPORTS LOCAL CHARITIES IN HONOR OF 115 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

October 17, 2007

PORT HURON, Mich. -- More than \$7,700 was donated to almost two dozen local charities following an open house and fund raiser held in honor of Woman's Life Insurance Society's 115-year anniversary.

The open house featured dozens of vendors who sold a wide range of items such as jewelry, greeting cards, soaps, candies and other female-oriented items. All vendors were asked to donate 10 percent of their sales to a local charity of their choice. Woman's Life matched those donations, dollar for dollar.

"This is just an example of the kind of community service and support that Woman's Life members provide to their communities all across North America," said Janice Whipple, national president of Woman's Life. "We are proud of the fact that for more than 115 years, Woman's Life has been able to offer women financial security, fun, friendship and the opportunity to serve their community in a variety of ways."

Members of Woman's Life Insurance Society have, for the past 115 years, enjoyed a wide range of fun — and even more serious — activities and adventures together as a result of their unity as members of a fraternal benefit society whose foundation is firmly grounded as an organization bringing the opportunity for fun, friendship and financial security to all members.

In the fall of 2007, Woman's Life is proud to celebrate its 115-year anniversary. While as a fraternal benefit society — a non-profit financial company licensed to sell life insurance and annuity products to its members — Woman's Life offers its members a wide range of products, services and membership opportunities not offered by traditional commercial insurance companies, it also prides itself on its unique history and longtime dedication to serving the needs of women, particularly during times in history when other companies did not see value in serving that market.

Founded to Meet a Woman's Need for Financial Security

In 2007, most members of Woman's Life are likely involved with the Society as members due to the financial protection they receive from the purchase of life insurance or annuity products.

Indeed, a woman's need for that kind of protection was not widely recognized in 1892, during a period when women were not seen as a good life insurance risk due to their high mortality rate during childbirth.

However, a 25-year-old schoolteacher named Bina West from Capac, Michigan, saw firsthand the devastation that was bestowed upon a family when a parent died unexpectedly and young children were withdrawn from school. She noted it was particularly devastating when the deceased parent was a mother, as most women were uninsured and families faced difficult financial circumstances.

So young Ms. West was intrigued when she attended a community picnic organized by a local fraternal benefit society for men. The gears began turning as she learned that the

men had banded together to meet both community needs through volunteer work and by planning social events, along with organizing a dues-payment structure to help protect one another's families with what today we know as life insurance.

Certainly, she determined, women should be entitled to the same kind of financial protection.

So, with a \$500 loan and borrowed office space in the basement of a building in Port Huron, Michigan, Ms. West set about establishing a fraternal benefit society for women that would eventually become known as Woman's Life Insurance Society.

Changing Times

Throughout the early years of the Society in the first part of the 20th century, as the founder traveled across the country establishing local chapters for her new and fledgling organization, the activities of the members were reflective of what other similar organizations were doing.

With no radio, television, internet or other forms of technical entertainment, fraternal organizations of all kinds created their own entertainment and also a bond between members with the establishment of formal rituals and pageants. Though many local chapters conducted rituals at every meeting, there were also larger pageants held when members gathered regionally and nationally at conventions. Additionally, drill teams and musical groups also became popular within the ranks of members.

In the early part of the 20th century, belonging to a local chapter gave women the opportunity to meet and socialize with other women within their community, and also provided them with the opportunity to volunteer and care for others in their communities as an organized group.