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Celebrating twenty years of Hope

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By MARY SAMPAS

Back in 1985, when the House of Hope opened its doors to help homeless families, it didn't dare dream of big successes and happy anniversaries, but the years have flown swiftly by, hundreds of needy families have been served, and on the horizon now is a glittering anniversary. Plans are afoot to make the 20th very special for the many good folks who have supported and advanced the organization's aims.

On Saturday, Oct. 14, the John Nesmith house on Andover Street -- the jewel in the crown of Lowell homes -- will be the setting for the gala "Twenty Years of Loving Service" celebration. The 6-10 p.m. party will begin with an open-bar cocktail interval, followed by "Chef's Choice Dinner and Dessert" by Bianco and Sons Catering and Two Chef's Catering, with top choice foods. Calories may be energetically worked off later by dancing to live music under the direction of Ralph Graham. As this is a salute to the many friends who have guided the House of Hope to success, the aim is to make the evening special and elegant. Dress is "black tie optional," valet parking will be provided and the ambiance will be gracious. Admission is \$95 per person, with proceeds going to the House of Hope shelter.

House of Hope has established itself as "one of the most effective and efficient family shelters in the commonwealth," says executive director Deb Chausse, who credits the "courageous board of directors, led by humanitarian Nels Palm," for embracing the creation of permanent housing for very poor families as the principal product line to pursue for the next 20 years. Information about this can be found on their website at www.hopelowell.org.

Chausse says the organization is especially grateful to the Thibault Foundation for generous support of this anniversary event, and to the individuals and companies purchasing space in the commemorative ad book.

The party committee is chaired by Deb Lemos, and it includes Elaine Thibault, June Messina, Deb Chausse and Jill Cole of Vario Creative. As space for this event is limited, admission will be by RSVP only. Those interested can call 978-458-2870 before Oct. 6.

Because you don't want to miss out on some special events, please mark your save-the-date calendar with the information that the third "Lamp of Liberty" award -- by the Lowell Community Health Center and the International Institute of Lowell -- will go to Lowell High Headmaster William Samaras on Nov. 9 at the Vesper Country Club. Call Eileen Boudreau at LCHC, 978-746-7870 for more information.

The popular "Mike Zammitti Italian Night" to benefit the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lowell in the name of its late, great benefactor, takes place on Monday, Oct. 9, at Vincenzo's Ristorante in Chelmsford. On the menu is an "intimate and authentic five-course Italian feast, including wine and antipasto -- graciously donated by Vincenzo's Ristorante." The tab is \$75 per person; seating starts at 6:30 p.m. and is limited, so get there early.