

Home > Chicago & Northwest Indiana >
The Right Stuff

Feature

THE RIGHT STUFF

Philanthropy drives Lake Shore Construction owner Bob
McCarty and the Antioch Lions Club

👤 Dave Dondoneau



Members of the Antioch Lions Club gather on the day all of the materials for the pavilion made it to Williams Park.



Tim Johannsen, left, and Orlando Diaz, employees of Lake Shore Construction Inc., work on adding the roof panels to the pavilion.

Brian Parks was serving his term as President of the Antioch Lions Club when it looked like their dream of building the Williams Park Pavilion was not going to happen. The club wanted a place to host its annual Chicken BBQ & Auction fundraiser, and the community needed a good gathering place for community and family events.

"The problem was that we couldn't get the pricing and logistics to work," Parks says. "But that's when Bob stepped in. There is no way this project would have gotten done without him. He's held in such high regard because he does so much for so many. He is the one guy who had the connections to make it all work."

"Bob" is Bob McCarty, longtime Antioch Lions Club member and owner of Lake Shore Construction Inc. in Antioch, a suburb of Chicago. The new pavilion, spacious and inviting, is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to McCarty's philanthropic efforts around his hometown community.

McCarty is one of the leaders who has helped the Antioch Lions Club raise more than \$385,000 through direct fundraisers over the years. He often donates the services and materials of his own company, as well as helps influence other companies to donate materials and work time for projects around the Antioch area.

With the Antioch Lions "Pavilion Project," for example, McCarty donated \$65,000 worth of in-kind services and materials. He and Brian Parks, also set up a GoFundMe page to tell viewers why the pavilion was needed, what it would be used for, and that the club has a 501(c)3 called the Lions Club of Antioch

Foundation. This allows businesses and community members the advantage of writing off their donations as charitable contributions on their taxes.

Giving Back

It isn't the first time the Antioch Lions Club has given back to its community, by any means.

With McCarty and other Lions Club members leading the way, they built and donated a baseball diamond at Tim Osmond Sports Complex as well as built the original Antioch pool and helped fund the replacement pool at Williams Park, the home of the Lions Pavilion. Other funds raised have gone to help the local fire department, college scholarships for graduates of Antioch Community High School, holiday dinners for the underprivileged and elderly, and to help the visually and hearing impaired.

The pavilion stands out because of how the community came together by generously donating its time and materials. Upon finishing the steel pavilion, the Lions donated it to the village and community. It is now a multi-use facility where families and community can congregate for parties, events and special occasions. For the project, the club raised funds, in part, by selling the walkway's bricks now etched with the names of the contributors.

As previously stated, the pavilion is especially handy for the Lions when they host the annual Chicken BBQ & Auction fundraiser.

"We cook 2,200 dinners in six hours and sell them to the community, along with conducting our auction," McCarty says. "This fundraiser brings in about \$50,000 annually and that money goes right back into our community through different projects, along with helping the sight and hearing impaired."

The pavilion would have cost more than \$250,000 had it been built under conventional methods, but McCarty said trades businesses in the area donated their time and materials at a reduced cost or for free. This allowed the project to be completed for about \$42,000.

"We could not have done that without every trade giving back to our village and community," McCarty says.

Mike Parks, Brian's brother and a Lions Club member for the past five years, was one of the key contributors. A truck driver by trade, he asked T.H. Ryan Cartage Company if he could rent a truck to go to Tennessee so he could pick up essential materials.

"They couldn't believe that after driving 70 hours a week for them that I would want to make a run to Tennessee for this cause," Mike Parks says. "They got behind the project and paid the fuel and tolls and backed me 100 percent."

Mike was impressed that McCarty brought his whole crew out to construct the pavilion, noting, "He paid all assembly costs. That's who he is and why people are willing to help him. He does a lot for others."

From The Heart

McCarty calls his construction company an extension of himself, and his philanthropic approach in life isn't hard to trace back.

His dad belongs to the Antioch Lions Club and instilled in him the desire to help out and give back.

"Family is the most important thing in our life," McCarty says. "With that in mind, I needed to let my family know how much it meant to me to 'pay it forward.' I joined the Antioch Lions Club in the year 2000 and have been giving back ever since."

McCarty has also served on the Antioch Village Board, the Planning and Zoning Board and on the Lions Club board of directors during the past 15 years. All this, McCarty says, "gave my six kids a chance to see how to give back to your community."

McCarty's own firm, Lake Shore Construction, is celebrating its 20th year in business in 2018.

It's not overly big and that's by design. He started it when his first wife, Laura, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. They had two kids together and he wanted to create a job flexible and profitable enough that he could take care of his family. Laura passed in May 1999 and Bob has since remarried Dawn. Together, as a combined family, they have raised a total of six children.

"Dawn and I have raised all of our kids as brothers and sisters under our roof," McCarty says. "There is no such thing as a stepsibling in our family. Laura's cancer started as breast cancer and spread from there. She was diagnosed at the age of 34 and fought hard for three years, but lost the battle in the end."

"I started my business because I needed more time to be there for the kids at first. It paid off with my ability to run the business and have time for everything the kids needed: sports, school, special events, etc. Then, the business took on its own life and, at the same time, I was giving back to the community through my different activities."

McCarty's father is still the biggest influence in his life, and now he hopes his philanthropy filters to his children and beyond.

"My dad is always there for anyone who needs a hand, each and every day of his life. This has given me the best teaching lessons of my life for my family and my company," McCarty says. "Show, teach, mentor and be there for them first. Then they will be there for you when you need them."



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Dave Dondoneau is a freelance writer who recently relocated from sunny Honolulu to balmy Grand Forks, North Dakota.

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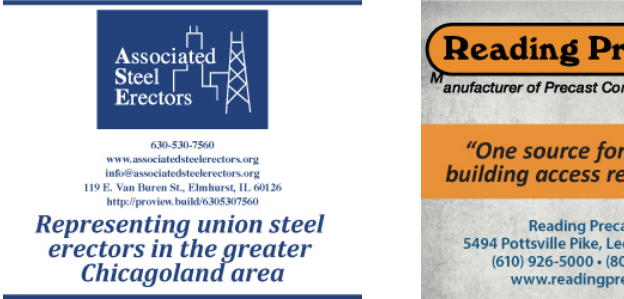
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