

Relay...from Page 1A

of appreciation and presented with a challenge to raise even more funds this year.

In 2017, Union County Relay For Life raised an astounding \$65,869.29. And this year they have set the bar even higher, hoping to raise \$71,000.

"We had 19 teams last year, and we'd like to increase that number by three this year," said Diane Shillcutt, Relay Fundraising Lead. "So far, we've raised \$9,694 for the 2018 season and 11 teams

have registered. We will be on our way to meeting our goals."

While individual teams work hard each year to raise funds and collect donations throughout the community, the Relay For Life group as a whole hosts fundraising efforts as well.

One of those efforts is an upcoming spring event called Daffodil Days, to be held on March 19 at Allegheny Lodge in Blairsville.

Daffodil Days, which

is part of the Flower of Hope Project, will feature daffodil bouquets of 10 freshly cut blooms for \$5 each.

"These daffodils are shipped in from Washington State," said Allyson McGraw, Relay Youth Champion Lead. "They have no roots on them. We process them and give them out to give hope. The daffodils are the flowers of hope. It's a good opportunity to spread hope, plus it helps us promote Relay For Life."

All donations will go toward the American Cancer Society, and pre-orders must be in by Feb. 28. To order, email Mia Crowe at crowes@windstream.net.

For the remainder of the kickoff evening, the group spent time enjoying one another's company, bonding through "Minute to Win It" games, and getting ready for the 2018 season.

"This is going to be a good year for us," said Upchurch. "I'm so excited for everything we can do this year."

This year's Relay For Life Leadership Team is as follows:

Mia Crowe, Event Lead; Sue Upchurch, Logistics Lead; Vee Laffoon, Entertainment Lead; Barbara Richardson,

Entertainment Co-Lead; Stacy Head, Survivor and Caregiver Lead; Betty Moshier, Survivor and Caregiver Lead; Allyson McGraw, Youth Champion Lead; Wendy Holden, Luminaries Lead; Sharon Penner, Sponsorship Lead; Diane Shillcutt, Fundraising Lead; Paula Pendleton, Team Ambassador; Elizabeth Woods, Committee Member; Mary Ann Lockaby, Committee Member; and Janie Holbrook, Committee Member.

Relay For Life of Union County will be held on May 19, from 4 p.m. until 10 p.m., at the Union County Farmers Market.



Mia Crowe is the event lead for this year's Relay For Life. Photo/Lily Avery



Those gathered in the name of finding a cure played "Minute to Win It" games during the January 25 kickoff event. Photo/Lily Avery

Legion...from Page 1A

funeral service and is usually presented to next of kin after burial.

A veteran who is cremated may still receive a burial flag, but that flag never covers him or her in death. Instead, the flag accompanies the veteran's urn and is usually presented to next of kin after inurnment.

Cochran Funeral Home, under the guidance of Managing Director Brandon Burkhead, has figured out a way to honor cremated veterans in a way similar to their buried brethren.

According to U.S. Flag Code, "The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning."

In Burkhead's mind, what could be more dignified than to dispose of a well-loved but weathered American flag with a U.S. veteran during cremation?

"The biggest concern that I had was a steady supply of flags," said Burkhead. "I didn't want to offer something and then not be able to do it for every veteran."

Burkhead, himself an Iraq War Veteran, reached out to his fellow veterans and got in contact with the local American Legion Ira Weaver Post 121.

The members of Post 121 independently operate a Flag Replacement Program for the people of Union County that honors the flag code, and they usually have a backlog of flags awaiting respectful retirement.

So, when Burkhead made his proposal, the post members eagerly accepted, and the Cochran/American Legion Flag Retirement Program was born.

"When the families decide to indeed have a cremation of their loved one, it shows respect for the flag to the veteran, and the veteran to



American Legion Ira Weaver Post 121 Flag Drop outside the Union County Courthouse in Blairsville. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

the flag," said Post 121 Past Cmdr. Don Sullivan. "That's the last thing that we could do to pay our homage for the time and effort that they've put in to protect our country."

Here's how the program works. When a veteran dies and the family chooses cremation, "permission will be sought for an unserviceable flag to drape that veteran for retirement in the most dignified manner," per literature provided by Cochran.

"Upon receipt of the cremated remains of their veteran, the family will receive a certificate stating the 'Last Deed of Service' for that flag, which was to drape their veteran during the cremation process," continues the literature. "A swatch of a single star from the flag being retired will accompany the certificate."

Along with a burial flag provided by the VA, Cochran will also assist families in receiving a Presidential Memorial Certificate in the name of their honored veteran as part of the program.

Cochran is offering this Flag Retirement Program at all five of its locations, and at no

cost to families of veterans.

"By ensuring that time-worn flags are disposed of properly and that no veteran in our care is cremated without a red, white and blue tribute, Cochran Funeral Homes & Crematory honors the two most treasured symbols of American pride: Veterans and the Flag of the United States of America," according to Cochran.

Residents looking to donate well-flown flags for the retirement program can drop them off at any Cochran Funeral Home.

Furthermore, the American Legion Ira Weaver Post 121 has a patriotically repurposed U.S. mailbox acting as a flag receptacle posted outside the main entrance of the Union County Courthouse.

"One of the basic tenets of the American Legion is helping out other veterans, and that's the last thing you can do for them," said Post 121 Adjutant Jack Waters of the program.

For more information on the American Legion Ira Weaver Post, visit LegionPost121.org.

Williams...from Page 1A

arrested initially for invasion of privacy and peeping Tom, both of which are felonies," said Lt. Mangifesta.

The investigation continued following Williams' arrest, leading investigators to believe that Williams' criminal invasion of privacy was more far reaching in nature, according to Mangifesta.

Indeed, the case against Williams grew after Lt. Mangifesta served a subpoena on Apple Computer for information related to Williams' account, according to Lt. Mangifesta.

"Apple Computer replied back with 14 individual video files," said Lt. Mangifesta. "I've got the date, the time, the duration of each video. I also received a certificate of authenticity from Apple that said the videos that were uploaded came from his cellphone."

"Those 14 videos resulted in 14 additional counts of invasion of privacy and 14 counts of peeping Tom. What the district attorney elected to do, rather than getting 30 arrest warrants, we just presented the entire case to the last Grand Jury."

Williams bonded out after his October arrest, though he has since been arrested

again and is currently being held at the Union County Jail, according to Lt. Mangifesta.

"He was indicted Jan. 10, we arrested him Jan. 11, and he's still being held on \$50,000 bond," said Lt. Mangifesta. "This is the first time I think any of us have heard of anything like that in Union County."

According to Georgia law, the term "peeping Tom" refers to "a person who peeps through windows or doors, or other like places, on or about the premises of another for the purpose of spying upon or invading the privacy of the persons spied upon and the doing of any other acts of a similar nature which invade the privacy of such persons."