

Fired up

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The Roxana Fire Department Ladies' Auxiliary has two main goals - support the village's firefighters and support their community.

"This organization makes me proud, not only being associated with this group of women, but to know I am playing an active role in making Roxana a community that is close-knit and known for taking care of its residents," said Amber Carter, who serves as the auxiliary's president and whose husband, Josh, is a Roxana volunteer firefighter.

The Roxana Fire Department Ladies' Auxiliary was reorganized and brought together again to form the nonprofit organization in 2008, created to support the village's firefighters and the community. The auxiliary's volunteers provide aid to the fire department when on emergency calls for long periods of time.

"Many of the wives of the fire department wanted to pool their resources together to start the ladies' auxiliary to benefit the fire department," said Danielle Trask, auxiliary treasurer and wife of Roxana Fire Chief Daryl Trask.

"It all started with a letter being sent out to all of the wives of the current fire department from the fire chief. After the department's wives voiced interest in the creation of a ladies' auxiliary, the fire chief took the first step and got us all together."

Since the Roxana Fire Department is a small department and does not need much "on scene" aid as other fire departments, Trask said the ladies' auxiliary decided to extend their support into the village.

The auxiliary holds several events throughout the course of the year to raise money to support its mission of helping the community. The events include a fall costume party, a dunking booth at Roxana Homecoming, a mouse race, letters from Santa, doughnut sales and, most recently, a firefighter's prom last spring.

Through its fund-raising efforts, the auxiliary offers college scholarships to Roxana High School students, sponsors blood drives, donates food gift cards to families in need at Christmas and Thanksgiving and assists needy families by purchasing items on their "wish lists" for Christmas.

"We are so thankful for the support we have received from local businesses, community members, family and friends, who come out and help us with our cause," said auxiliary secretary Stacy Kelly, whose husband, Rob, also serves on the fire department.

"I believe they too find enjoyment in being able to provide holiday meals, Christmas gifts, scholarships and school supplies to children in need and knowing the parents can breathe a little sigh of relief, knowing that a helping hand isn't out of reach."

Recently, the auxiliary donated backpacks loaded with school supplies to Central Elementary School in Roxana to help students who needed supplies on the first day of school.

"Our organization wants to bring our village together and help as many families in need as possible," Trask said. "That is what a community should be about, and the ladies' auxiliary has given us the opportunity to reach out to families in need as a group, whereas we may not be able to do so as individuals."

Criteria to become a member of the auxiliary include residing within the Roxana Fire District, sharing a common interest in the objectives of the organization and the ability to attend regular monthly meetings.

For more information about the Roxana Fire Department Ladies' Auxiliary, call the fire department at (618) 254-8293 or email rfdlax@yahoo.com.