

## **A meal that matters**

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Editors note: Philip Potempa served as the emcee for Sunday's Meals on Wheels dinner event.

HOBART | Byron and Judy Kuttig, of Valparaiso, decided to donate their time Sunday to Northwest Indiana's Meals on Wheels program.

They weren't delivering meals.

They were among the more than 400 guests at the sixth annual Dine with the Chefs Dinner Gala sponsored by Meals on Wheels of Northwest Indiana at Avalon Manor.

Chefs from restaurants and organizations across the region annually gather their kitchen talent and recipe specialties to raise money for a charity, which is usually on the serving side.

"We just happened to read about this seven-course feast fundraiser in The Times and decided to attend," Byron Kuttig said. "We've never been to this before, but now I know we'll be back."

The event's chairman was chef Jim Galligan, executive chef for Long Beach Country Club, who has helped the event grow and expand each year, making it a favorite for guests eager to help a cause that also helps so many others.

The feast is intended to help reduce a \$650,000 deficit for Northwest Indiana Meals on Wheels' new office and kitchen

facility, which recently opened at 8446 Virginia St. in Merrillville. Meals on Wheels has designated proceeds from the fundraiser to benefit the Building Campaign.

Meals on Wheels provides home-delivered meals to elderly, ill and disabled clients throughout Northwest Indiana, including meal service to adult and child care centers. In 2006, Meals on Wheels prepared a total of 298,727 meals and served nearly 1,200 people daily with the help from 825 volunteers.

Diane and William Harvey, of Munster, have been to five of the six "Dine with the Chefs" events for Meals on Wheels.

"Just when you think the menu and the afternoon can't get any better, somehow the organizers just keep making this dinner bigger and better each year," said Diane Harvey, whose name was drawn during the raffle to win a donated hand-painted ceramic serving platter and matching pitcher.

"There's a reason we come to this every year. We're helping good people with a good cause," she said.

Melissa Castle-Kirincic, Northwest Indiana Meals on Wheels community relations director, said even though so many people like herself do not have family members and friends using the Meals on Wheels service, most people are aware of how important it is to maintain the region's 30-year-old program for feeding those in need.

"The key to remember is there will come a time when most people out there will have someone in their family or circle of friends who will need Meals on Wheels," she said.

"And when that time comes, we want to be ready and waiting to serve."