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Sue Hagan, her husband, Pát, and daughter, Rachel Perkins, of Fins Bar and Grill came up with the idea to create a fund to help residents with the cost of cleaning up from this summer's flooding. A fund-raiser Saturday at Fins includes music, food, raffles and drink specials.

Cash for cleaning: Charity raises money for Rock River shoreline

ANNA MARIE LUX
BETWEEN THE LINES

NEWVILLE

Neighbors and strangers alike stepped up to help each other when the Rock River rose and ruined homes in June.

Now a nonprofit group of Newville business owners is continuing in the can-do spirit. They have set up a fund to kick-start the hard work of cleaning up the shoreline from Indianford to Blackhawk Island, including the Rock River and Lake Koshkonong.

But first, they want you to party.

A shindig at Fins Bar and Grill in Newville on Saturday boasts ribs, brats and drink specials; raffle drawings for a johnboat, motor and trailer and a three-passenger watercraft; and lots of live music.

All money from the event and donations will benefit the Shoreline Recovery & Restoration Fund, a component of the Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin.

Proceeds will be used to

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Shoreline/Restoration of lakeshore is goal

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clean up neighborhoods, where sandbags and flood-related waste, including water-soaked insulation, mold-riddled drywall and contaminated carpeting, need to be disposed of safely.

"We know a lot of our neighbors are not capable of cleaning up the mess," says Christa Bowers of the Shoreline Recovery & Restoration Committee, which has been meeting regularly to iron out details.

"Some are too old," she explains. "Some don't have the funds to get a Dumpster. So we want to raise money to help them. There are so many houses and so much destruction. We could have a million dollars, and it probably wouldn't be enough."

The fund supplements and stretches efforts of individuals and government agencies. When the money is gone, the fund will close.

Lorri Nastala, one of the owners of Rock River Marina and a committee member, says the committee ambitiously hopes to raise $100,000.

After the fund-raiser, committee members will review calls to its help hotline, travel to residences requesting a hand and make arrangements to get the work done. The group is looking for contractors willing to donate time and equipment.

Sue Hagan, her husband, Pat, and daughter, Rachel Perkins, of Fins Bar and Grill came up with the idea to create a cleanup fund. Every dollar raised will be used to beautify Lake Koshkonong and the Rock River shoreline.

"We want to put the lakeshore back to the way it was before the flooding, so it is attractive to residents and tourists," Sue says.

"Everyone around here has felt a terrific impact from the lack of summer traffic. When the boats came off the lake, there was no incentive for people to vacation in the area."

People finally are getting their docks back in place, some boats have returned and out-of-town business picked up last weekend.

But much of the summer is lost.

The Hagans bought Fins in October 2006 and opened it in March 2007. Like other business owners, they have been dealt record snowfall, historic flooding and a bad economy all in less than a year.

"It's really quite an adventure," Sue says.

She and her husband moved to Rock County from Chicago, love their new community and are driven to help.

She is not surprised by the compassionate business owners and others who readily step forward to help their community.

"People respond when given the opportunity," Sue says.

"Everyone wants to feel like they are making a difference."

Anna Marie Lux is a columnist for The Janesville Gazette. Her columns run Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Call her with ideas or comments at (608) 755-8264, or e-mail amarielux@gazettextra.com.

HELP HOTLINE

If you need help removing sandbags or waste on shoreline property from Indianford to Blackhawk Island, including Lake Koshkonong and the Rock River, call toll free at 1-888-905-1116 and leave a detailed message. Donations for shoreline cleanup can be made payable to "Shoreline Recovery and Restoration Fund." Send check to the Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin, 26 S. Jackson St., Janesville, WI 53548.