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Actor Forrest Landis, who has appeared in "Cheaper by the Dozen" as well as its sequel, laughs after he runs up, hits the target and knocks his friend into the dunk tank during Ben & Ari's Putt Putt Palooza event benefiting Cares for Kids Inc. Saturday evening.



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## Fishers nonprofit organization hosts inaugural fundraiser

By Robert Herrington  
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Despite the rain, laughter and smiles were on the faces of parents, children and volunteers attending the inaugural Ben & Ari's Putt Putt Palooza event benefiting Cares for Kids Inc. Saturday evening.

The raindrops that fell could not stop those in attendance from playing a round of miniature golf, jumping in an inflatable bounce house, grabbing a burger or hot dog, or even making sure someone was completely soaked by sinking them in a dunk tank.

But when the rain started to come down hard, the outside tent had plenty of games, vendors and silent auctions for patrons who took shelter and waited for the storm to pass. All items for the silent auction - which included numerous Super Bowl Champion and autographed memorabilia - was donated to the fundraiser from local businesses.

"I'm overwhelmed at how much we're got-

ten from the community," Erica Wanous, vice president of Cares for Kids Inc., said.

The rain affected the number of people who arrived without any prior knowledge of the event. The organization was able to sell \$700 worth of tickets online before Saturday's event. Wanous said Cares for Kids gave a percentage of the advance ticket money to the Fishers High School Key Club to further promote philanthropic efforts in the community.

"I think the rain dampened (the turnout) a little bit," Wanous said. "The first year is always the toughest. I'm really pleased we were able to pull this together quite nicely. I think everyone's having a good time."

Enjoying the fun and the activities were some local celebrities, including actor Forrest Landis of the "Cheaper by the Dozen" movies, Julia Moffitt of Channel 13 News and members of the Indiana Pacers Pacemates.

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## FUNDRAISER

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Wanous said the organization is comprised of all volunteers, 40 of whom were in attendance Saturday at the event.

"We operate completely out of people's compassion for helping children," she said.

Cares for Kids was created under the financial support of Telliss LLC, a progressive telecommunications provider located in Fishers. The owners of Telliss, Terry and Phyllis Ballantini, felt they had a corporate social responsibility to fulfill and sought numerous ways to use their resources to make a difference.

Wanous said Cares for Kids is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving less fortunate children around the world with the essential means to fulfill a healthy and educated life. Cares for Kids' main mission is to assist orphaned children overseas, who typically suffer from emotional, physical, mental and/or financial issues. The organization also benefits United States-based organiza-



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Cares for Kids Inc. co-founder Terry Ballantini, from left, actor Forrest Landis, Vice President of Cares for Kids Erica Wanous, Channel 13 News anchor Julia Moffitt and Children's Advocate for Cares for Kids Nakeya Boyd smile as they enjoy the inaugural Ben & Ari's Putt Putt Palooza event benefiting Cares for Kids Inc. Saturday evening.

tions.

"One hundred percent of our

funding goes directly toward projects," said Wanous. "We really do

our best to give them their needs."