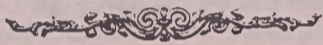


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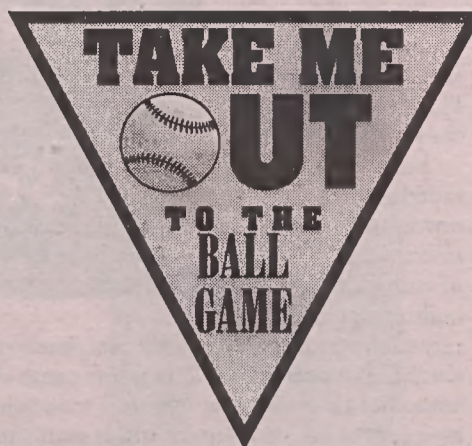
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## Baseball fundraiser hits a homer with attendees

by David Stout  
Special to Q-Notes

CHARLOTTE—In the weeks leading up to "Gay Nite at Knights Castle," some folks complained that gays and lesbians had no business openly attending a game at the city's "family-friendly" baseball park. They contacted Charlotte Knights management and the media in an effort to stop the event from proceeding. On the night of the game, it was clear that they had failed.

Despite — or because of — the controversy, 168 tickets were sold to the August 30 baseball game against the visiting Richmond Braves. And there was no evidence of hostility or protest to be found among the 11,000-plus fans at the Castle. Gay attendees enjoyed a thrilling Knights victory, campy musical performances by The Blues Brothers and a fabulous fireworks display right along with the rest of the crowd.



The evening was deemed a rousing success for the fun and visibility it generated (the scoreboard welcomed "Lesbian and Gay Fans" twice during the game), but organizers were

most pleased by the amount raised for Charlotte Pride Alliance, the beneficiary of "Gay Nite."

All proceeds from the event were earmarked for Charlotte Pride Alliance, the city's new political advocacy group, and once the final numbers had been tallied, *Q-Notes* Publisher Jim Yarbrough announced that \$441 had been raised from ticket sales and donations. He cheerfully stated, "We're thrilled to have raised this much money for Charlotte Pride Alliance while participating in America's favorite pastime and having lots of fun. We definitely exceeded our goals for this first-time event."

In post-event discussions, *Q-Notes* staffers expressed overwhelmingly positive feedback about community participation and the successful fundraising aspects of the gathering. Tentative discussions have been held regarding the possibility of organizing similar events. ▼

## Carolina Celebration fundraiser readies for 98

by Brian D. Holcomb  
Q-Notes Staff

CHARLOTTE—Each June, the Carolina Celebration fundraiser is held to benefit the Dennis Fund of the Metrolina AIDS Project. Since 1991, over \$130,000 has been raised for the fund, which is dedicated to providing direct financial assistance to individuals who need to purchase food, medication, or need help meeting rent or transportation expenses. Because of its specific mission, and the requirement that 100 percent of the fund be distributed to those in need — as opposed to paying for overhead costs — the Dennis Fund has become a favorite cause for many individual and corporate sponsors.

Recently, the Carolina Celebration Board held a party to thank sponsors of the 1997 event and to begin the campaign for June of 1998. Erin Sullivan, president of the 1997 Board, graciously opened her home to the sponsors and hosted a party that was intended to hand out much deserved thanks and to energize the new

Board for the year to come. The 1998 Board, including President Robert Carta, were approved and installed and the sponsorship drive was formally begun.

The Dennis Fund was established in 1991 by Jerry and Honey Thaw, parents of Dennis Thaw. Dennis was a client of MAP and a beloved son and community member. Honey Thaw attended the party to thank all of the sponsors and to share loving memories of her son. She reminded the crowd that the first Carolina Celebration raised only \$11,000, an amount that has been tripled by this year's \$32,000 total. She told the sponsors, "I know my son is jumping for joy. I'm thankful." Although her husband Jerry passed away this year, he was instrumental in establishing the fund, and Mrs. Thaw continued to speak for him, "We thank you every day. It's what Dennis would have wanted. He was very specific about how he wanted [the fund] set up."

Were the Carolina Celebration sponsors a different group of people, the evening may have

focused upon achievements. This group made no effort to disguise the fact that they are well under way for the next event, which they hope will once again be a record-setting year. Sponsorships are available for both individuals and corporations and the momentum is already building. Mrs. Thaw herself was indicative of the nature of the group. She could have held court and presided over the evening. Instead, this loving woman greeted all who came to speak to her. She would share stories of Dennis, but was much more interested in hearing about the lives of those at the party, who were instantly new friends. Most importantly, she spoke of the work to be done and the good that can come from her son's life.

The 1998 Carolina Celebration will be held on June 13 at the Grady Cole Center, Charlotte. For information on how to become a sponsor, or to be involved with the Dennis Fund, call MAP at (704) 333-1435 or write Carolina Celebration, PO Box 22071, Charlotte, NC 28222. ▼

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