



Tanna Kinnaman/DN

Jim Spahr and Kathy Brusnahan examine auction items, including NU football tickets, a Danny Nee tie and a signed NU football, during Friday's Rock the Block Party. More than 48 contributors donated to the silent auction held to raise money for the Lighthouse.



Three young girls get down Saturday to the sounds of Raw Nerve at a fundraiser

Bash for cash

The Lighthouse's annual moneymaker put the "fun" back

By Joshua Gillin
Senior Editor

Pete Allman was hoping this year's Lighthouse fundraiser would be a success.

He wasn't expecting anything like this.

The first Lighthouse Rock the Block party, held Aug. 2 at the corner of 27th and Eastgate brought in more than \$13,000, all of which will be used to help the safe home for teens continue operation.

The Lighthouse, 2530 N St., is a non-profit organization staffed primarily by volunteers. Open from 2:30 to 10 p.m. during the school year, the purpose is to provide a safe place for troubled teens to stay after school where they can receive counseling or simply relax.

More than 600 people attended the event, which had activities for the entire family.

At one end of the block, the local band "Raw Nerve" set up on the back of a flatbed truck and played popular rock and pop tunes. Food vendors sold their goods along the streets. People bid to buy prizes at an auction. A clown tied balloon animals for children.

And Allman smiled he saw the fun everyone was having.

"This was really different from what we've done in past years," he said. "This was much more family-oriented. Still, we didn't expect to have this many children."

Fund-raising events for the Lighthouse in the past have included formal dinners and open donation soliciting, but Allman said the block party has been the most popular fundraiser by far.

"The best we've done before this was a dinner with 100 couples," Allman said. "This totally blew everything we've done out of the

water."

Debbie Basler, chairwoman of the Lighthouse fund-raising committee, said people were very willing to be involved with the block party.

In fact, Basler let the band play on her front lawn.

"The response to this idea was great," Basler said. "The vendors, the companies who donated to the auction, even the people who were just walking by and bought a ticket — they all made this party a huge success."

The party was the product of weeks of planning: selling tickets, calling vendors, soliciting prizes for the auction and so on.

Vendors such as Runza and Valentino's sold food at the party, while stores and restaurants like Jabrisco's, Younkers, Borsheims and the Nebraska Bookstore donated items to the auctions. A portion or all of the proceeds

went to aid the Lighthouse.

"We had a real problem with publicity," Basler said. "We don't quite have the money or resources to really advertise events like this; word just kind of has to get out."

Allman said waiting for the word to get out was the hardest part of planning the party.

"Not too many people buy tickets to things like this three or four weeks in advance," he said. "We were really worried about ticket sales until they started to pick up a few days before (Aug. 2)."

And pick up they did. Allman said after auction sales and donations were tallied, the block party may have raised more than \$13,000.

Both Allman and Basler said the money will be used for roof and air-conditioning repairs on the Lighthouse building, and will hopefully provide a base for starting a meal