

ENTERTAINMENT

Tour for the Cure takes the stage Saturday

Effort headed by Falls native

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

In an effort to raise money toward the ongoing fight against cancer, International Falls native Jonny Bird is bringing acts from the stage of Las Vegas and Motown to the stage in Borderland.

As part of the 2014 Tour of the Cure, The Fabulous Vegas Guys and The Motown Experience will take the spotlight at Backus Community Center Saturday at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m., respectively. Proceeds from the event will be donated to the Koochiching County Relay for Life effort.

“We’ve done about 10 shows so far,” Bird, owner of Birdland Productions and Phoenix Studios, said of the tour. “(The International Falls) show kicks off the fall season.”

The idea behind the tour sprouted after Bird’s close friend and business acquaintance, Jim Allen, lost his battle to cancer last year.

“We worked together for 10 years doing shows together,” Bird said. “We got really close...Jim was the type of person who would leave you better off than when you came.”

After Allen’s death, Bird said within 18 months he lost three more friends to cancer-related deaths. After that, Bird said he knew he had to do something.

If you go

What: Tour for the Cure featuring the Fabulous Vegas Guys and The Motown Experience

When: 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday

Where: Backus Community Center auditorium

Why: To raise money for the Koochiching County Relay for Life

Cost: Advance tickets for each show are \$15; \$20 at the door. All-show passes are available for \$25.

Inspired by the Eagles Cancer Telethon in Rochester, Minn., Bird got the idea to raise money to donate to cancer research and used his entertainment company’s abilities to get the idea off the ground.

“I probably made more than 1,000 calls,” Bird said of putting the tour together. “Our goal was to raise \$10,000. As we started picking up more shows, that goal changed...I think if we have a good turnout and good community support, I think we could earn somewhere in the neighborhood of \$50,000 for cancer research (through this tour).”

Bringing it home
Bird was born and raised in International Falls and said the community is near and dear to his heart. When putting the tour together, he knew a stop in his hometown was a must.

“If anything comes out of

About the performers

The Fabulous Vegas Guys

According to a release, the Fabulous Vegas Guys are a musical, comedy and impressions duo with two of the Midwest’s finest entertainers, Don Tersigni and Jonny Bird. Each show highlights the Fabulous Vegas Guys impersonating some of the biggest names in entertainment, from Robert DeNiro, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Johnny Depp to Tom Jones, Neil Diamond and Elvis Presley, with special appearances by Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra.

The Motown Experience

The Motown Experience with Funktion Junction aims to have audiences bouncing to the stories and the sounds of Motown, featuring an eight-piece group with three lead singers. The Motown Experience will bring audiences back to the beginnings of Motown and the artists they influenced with hits by The Temps, The Tops, Stevie Wonder, The Jackson 5, Aretha Franklin, Marvin Gaye and many more.

this, I want my hometown to know I’m counting on them to kick off this last leg, and show everybody in the country we can do it when we put our minds to it,” he said. “When I lived there, people complained all the time about what they didn’t have and they didn’t want to do anything about it. This made me want to do something about it.”

Bird said both acts coming to Backus are world-class shows that have performed for sell-out crowds all over the country.

“These are some of the best I’ve worked with in the business,” he said of The Fabulous Vegas Guys and The Motown Experience. “Borderland is starving for good-quality entertainment and it’s hard to get people up there.”

Bird said it’s his hope that Saturday accounts for “the

biggest night of the year in International Falls with the biggest show Backus has ever seen.”

“People are going to see a great show,” he said of those who attend. “We really have the opportunity to raise money, but not by sitting at home. I’m only asking people to pull a few dollars out of their pockets. I’m out here in the rest of the world trying to bring something home. I don’t think I could sit down and craft out a template for a reason to go to this other than it’s good entertainment, for a good cause and the money stays local.”

Advance tickets for each show are \$15 and tickets at the door the night of the performance are \$20 each. All-show passes are available for \$25. All proceeds will be donated to the Koochiching County Relay for Life.

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Baby Shower Registry

Baby girl Poe

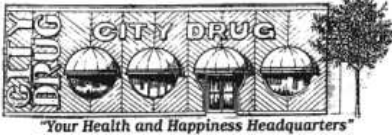
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