

Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale gives globally while staying close to home

All over the world people are hurting. From war-torn Ukraine to famine in Burkino Faso in Africa, and even closer to home where families in Appalachian areas struggle to thrive, people are hurting.

Mennonite Central Committee understands the plight many families face every day. With a focus on Biblical teachings like John 3:17, which reads, "If anyone sees his brother in need and fails to help, what evidence is there of God's love?" MCC is making an impact and helping those in need.

MCC relies heavily on the compassion and giving of others to support its many programs, and one such even that has been a staple of fundraising over the decades has been the Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale.

This year's 57th sale returns to the Wayne County Fairgrounds Event Center on August 5-6, with a bevy of activities, entertainment, an auction and plenty of chances for people who aren't called to travel globally as missionaries to contribute in other ways.

The event begins Friday, Aug. 5 with an evening open house beginning at 4 p.m. With a smorgasbord of foods available, featuring the traditional Laotian egg rolls, barbecued chicken dinners, homemade ice cream, brats and sausage sandwiches, fresh fruit and fresh-squeezed lemonade, patrons can sit and fellowship the night away, or peruse the many auction items, making a list to bid on the next day when the auction begins.

A large bake sale also begins at 4 p.m., featuring plenty of mouthwatering baked goods, from fresh bread and bakes pies to cookies, Lavonne's rolls and Lovina's ground cherry pie.

Patrons can purchase plenty to take home and enjoy later or open them up and share with others by unleashing the incredible aroma of all that freshly baked goodness.

A relaxing meal or some baked goods and a cup of coffee while listening to the worship music of 4:12 Collective starting at 6:30 p.m. makes for a delightful evening.

The auction kicks into high gear Saturday, Aug. 6, when patrons can fuel up for the big day with a full breakfast beginning at 7 a.m. Featuring pancakes, sausage, sausage gravy, biscuits and scrambled eggs, it's a breakfast fit for royalty or the hungry farmer crowd.

That will get folks primed to participate in the main auction that begins at 9 a.m. Stunning hand-made quilts, Amish handcrafted furniture, tools, outdoor furniture, and specialty items like a museum-quality doll house, zero-turn Toro lawn mower, Traeger grill, Dutcher Door garage door, a certificate for a GE refrigerator from Home Appliance and much more will be on the auction block, with patrons able to bid in-person or take advantage of online remote bidding courtesy of Proxibid.com.

New to the auction this year will be hundreds of gift cards from businesses in Hartsville, Wayne and Holmes Counties.

The annual quilt auction is always a big draw, with dozens of colorfully, lovingly crafted quilts available. Expertly pieced and crafted by Amish and Mennonite church sewing circles, or by volunteers at MCC Connections, Kidron's thrift store, these quilts are of the highest quality and highly sought, with each quilt created with the intention of bringing in funds for the relief sale.

This year's sale features many museum quality quilts, especially two designed by Shirley A. Shenk, an award-winning quilter whose store in Goshen, Indiana was a popular stop in past years.

Quilts and general auction items can be previewed Friday night or viewed online at: www.ohiomccreliefsale.org. In addition, there are select quilts and gift cards available as a "Buy It Now" option online, with these items available for purchase now through Aug. 4.

Quilters, knitters and crafters may want to check out Quilter's Corner, where all types of quilting accessories will be on sale, with accessories, finished pieces, woven rugs, knit hats and even houseplants will be available.

A silent auction will take place on both Friday and Saturday. Who knows what might capture the fancy of guests who can have fun supporting MCC through this portion of the auction.

While the adults support the auction, the kids can have fun with the exciting opportunities awaiting them. Children's games and activities, a barrel train, inflatables and even a children's auction are available for the youngsters.

There will be a 1K fun run/walk Saturday morning at 7:30 a.m., a timed 5K starting at 8 a.m., with both being open to all ages. Registration is at ohiomccreliefsale.org.

While the big money supports the auctions, there is a golden opportunity to nickel, dime and quarter the sale's effort to raise funds.

Specially designated to support MCC's Clean Water Project is the spare change collection. Guests can save spare change, or also checks and \$100 bills, and drop them off at the Relief Sale Keep the Change collection site. The old adage "every penny counts" is true when it comes to this project. This challenge raises upwards of more than \$100,000 annually for the project.

Staffed solely by volunteers, the Relief Sale's proceeds go to Mennonite Central Committee, a relief, service and development agency of North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Churches. MCC seeks to demonstrate God's love through committed women and men who work among suffering people.

Admission and parking are free, and parking and wheelchairs are available. The event is held rain or shine.

For additional questions or interviews, please contact Board Chair, Brenda LaTulippe at 330-933-6372.

For photo requests, please contact Beth Miller at 330-473-2253.