

FAMILY LIVING

JANUARY 15, 2015 • 12

Brian E. Wagner Scholarship Fund's 5th annual 'Bags for Wags' Fundraiser Jan. 31

The Brian E. Wagner Scholarship Fund (BEWSF) will host its annual "Bags for Wags" Bean Bag Tournament on Saturday, Jan. 31.

The charitable event will be held from 5-10 p.m. at Visitation's Valentino Center (851 S. York Road, Elmhurst).

Participants over the age of 16 are welcome to register for the fundraiser. All teams are guaranteed to play in both rounds: the first, round robin and the second, single elimination.

Cash prizes will be awarded to the top teams. Sign up before Jan. 24 to take advantage of the early payment discount for \$75. On-site registration also will be available on the day of the tournament if the event has not yet sold out. Participation fee will then be full price, \$100.

The general public is welcome to join the festivities. Refreshments will be available along with door prizes that include: authentically autographed memorabilia from Chicago sports teams, tickets for upcoming home games and gift cards from local restaurants. Be part of the fun by supporting a commendable cause as a participant, attendee or volunteer.

All proceeds will benefit the BEWSF's annual college scholarship. Last year's event raised over \$4,000, which was used to award three deserving recipients with tuition costs in their first college semester. Every year emerging young leaders in the community who exemplify the leadership qualities of Brian E. Wagner are granted this distinguished honor.

Brian passed away at the age of 16, in a tragic automobile accident during his junior year at York High School.

Brian Doherty, a BEWSF advocate and high school friend said, "Brian



Vanessa Schweih, Tracey Degan and Shannon Degan supporting the BEWSF at the bags tournament.

Submitted photo

Wagner was an energetic, outgoing, and kind person. He wasn't afraid to approach someone he didn't know and introduce himself. Brian was also a loyal and honest friend, and he endeared himself to everyone he met. One of his biggest strengths was an innate ability to unite his family and friends to achieve a common goal. That's what makes the BEW Scholarship Fund so special. It honors students like Brian for making a difference."

For more information on how to register for "Bags for Wags" and to learn

more about the BEWSF visit www.BrianEWagnerFund.org. To become a volunteer for the event send an e-mail to BrianEWagnerFund@gmail.com. Include your name, contact info. (email and phone number) and the hours you are available.

Illinois to have permanent same-day voter registration

SPRINGFIELD — A new law will make voting even easier in 2016. Modeled after a successful 2014 pilot program, it allows same day registration on Election Day and extended early voting.

"Our democracy is stronger when more people participate," said State Senator Don Harmon (D-Oak Park), the measure's sponsor. "Our laws should make voting as easy as it can be. Same-day voter registration and expanded early voting are helping bring Illinois into the 21st century."

Under the new law, people will be able to register and vote on Election Day. In Illinois' larger counties (with populations over 100,000), voters will be able to register at their local precincts. In smaller counties that lack the resources to handle in-precinct registration, same day registration will be available in the county clerk's main office and certain large towns.

Early voting will now be an option seven days per week for the two weeks leading up to the election. On weekdays, the polls will be open from 8:30

a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for the first week. They will be open until 7 p.m. the second week. On Saturdays, polling locations will be open from 9 a.m. to noon, and on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In an effort to reduce fraud and improve Illinois' voter rolls, Illinois will begin participating in the multi-state Electronic Registration Information Center. This program helps states identify voters who have moved or died.

The law also clarifies when and how county election author-

ities can process early voting ballots and requires election authorities to disclose how many uncounted ballots they have in their possession. These changes stem from concerns identified from the recent Treasurer's race, one of the closest statewide elections in Illinois history.

It eliminates the idea of absentee voting from Illinois law. In-person voting before Election Day will simply be referred to as early voting from now on, and traditional absentee voting will now be included in the

general vote-by-mail program, reflecting the way the state conducts modern-day elections.

Twelve other states already have Election Day registration and voting, including Illinois' Midwestern neighbors Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Senator Harmon has long worked to make voting easier in Illinois. In 2013, he spearheaded the effort to allow residents to register to vote and update their addresses online.

The legislation was Senate Bill 172.