

Fundraiser for freedom.(News)

[Daily Herald \(Arlington Heights, IL\)](#) August 9, 2009

By Tony Gordon

More than 300 people turned out Saturday to tour an established Lake County landmark and to raise funds for a new one.

Tours of the Onan family pyramid house on DilleyAes Road in Wadsworth took place for the first time in 11 years to benefit a drive to build a monument to fallen soldiers.

The 17,000-square-foot house is 55 feet tall and is surrounded by a moat. It is filled with antiques and artifacts that homebuilder Jim Onan collected from throughout the Middle East.

A \$20 admission fee was charged for each of two tours and the proceeds are being donated to the foundation seeking to complete the Heroes of Freedom memorial in Gurnee.

Kirk Morris, a Gurnee village trustee whose son Geoffrey was killed in Iraq in 2004 while serving with the Marines, said the event was just one of many planned to support the memorial.

The memorial, set on the site of the former Gurnee police station on Old Grand Avenue, has been in planning for more than three years.

It currently features nine flags representing each branch of the military and lights, but Morris said another \$200,000 to \$300,00 will be needed to complete the project.

When complete, the memorial will feature sculptures of Geoffrey Morris; Marine Sean Maher, a Warren Township resident killed in Iraq in 2005 and LibertyvilleAes Wesley Wells, killed in Afghanistan while serving with the Army.

The memorial park will also feature a garden and a walkway, Morris said.

Linda Onan said she and her husband never hesitated when asked to open their home to a fundraising event for the memorial.

"We believe in supporting the troops," she said. "Even though it has been a long time since we have had tours, we were more than happy to open up today."

Rick and Judy Hernke of Mundelein said they saw the event as an opportunity to accomplish two things.

"I have been wanting to see the inside of this house for years," Judy Hernke said. "At the same time, it is an opportunity to support a really good cause."

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