

Country Fest a Huge Success

By Kirsten Bobber

The St. Mary community enthusiastically welcomed the first-ever Country Fest, a newly reimagined pork and corn roast. More than 1,000 people attended on Aug. 6 to enjoy a delicious country-style feast and Filipino culinary favorites. Hay rides bounced happy children around the St. Mary grounds, music filled the big top tent, Baggo bags were tossed, Bingo numbers were called, and pristine antique tractors, cars and Mundelein's Old Number One Fire Truck lined the gravel country road for admiration by all.

Gary Gunther, Country Fest Chair, and John Gannon, Co-Chair, remarked, "The community building within the parish and within the greater Mundelein and Lake County area turned out to be fantastic. People appreciated the return of antique vehicles, the addition of hay rides, and the connection to the County Fair and the agricultural heritage of the parish and county."

Proceeds from Country Fest were up significantly compared to the Harvest Fest. The net proceeds from 2017 were approximately \$40,000 compared to about \$5,000 from Harvest Fest in 2016. This was the highest profit since 2010. Country Fest 2017 served over 900 adult meals, about 250 child meals, and more than 750 desserts. Expenses were kept low thanks to the substantial contributions of donors who funded the costs of the hogs and the roasting/carving and by those who provided silent auction items. The parish is extremely grateful to the eight generous sponsors who contributed almost \$6000 to the bottom line.

"Clearly there was an energy and excitement about bringing back some of St. Mary's time-honored traditions. Our parish is greatly blessed with the financial success of the event and community-building which took place. I am grateful to those who volunteered to make Country Fest a success and to all who attended and supported the event in any way." Fr. Jerry Jacob

Planning will begin soon for the 2018 Country Fest. Anyone interested in volunteering on the steering committee is encouraged to contact the 2018 Country Fest Co-Chairs John Gannon at jfgannon74@gmail.com or Chuck Stoffel at chuckstoffel@yahoo.com.