

Pulling for each other

On Saturday, Mike Murray and nine other Auburn Correctional Facility corrections officers came out in the rain and mud to pull more than a fire engine.

The team was pulling for New York State Special Olympics in a benefit that not only showcased the brawn of the men; It also showcased their heart.

Murray and the other officers who pulled the 44,120-pound fire engine 20 feet, didn't ask what was in it for them. They didn't even win the competition; a team from Attica beat them.

But it really didn't matter.

The ACF group knew what was in it for the Special Olympics participants, who depend on such events to raise money to continue their competitions.

They stepped up to the plate, or in front of the fire engine, simply because it was the right thing. It was a way to help the community be just a little bit of a better place.

Melinda Greco was thinking along the same lines Saturday.

The Cato Hotel owner hosted an eight-hour benefit for 13-year-old Tasha Hawker, a Jordan-Elbridge Middle School student who has a brain tumor. The teenager is scheduled to have life-saving surgery

July 13 in Phoenix, Ariz. Greco wanted to help defray the cost of the operation, and Hawker's family's expenses. Hence, the benefit.

The team from ACF and Greco are representative of what we see as a growing number of Cayuga County residents who, even in these tough economic times, put themselves forward to help others. They contribute time and money for people in need without worrying about what they'll get out of it personally.

The question they ask isn't how they will benefit, but what they can do to make someone else's life a little bit easier.

The dollars help, of course. But really, what these benefits do is paint a picture of communities where residents care for each other.

There are always complaints that the economy is terrible, that there is nothing good in Cayuga County anymore.

But we find this isn't true. There are many people who devote countless hours to doing for others. It's not a chore; it's a way to make the fabric of our community richer.

The spirit of volunteering, of putting others first, is more than alive and well in Cayuga County, and that's quality of life that money can't buy.