

CAUSE&EFFECT



As a male-centric event, the Tailgate Party is a manly day of golf, barbecue, and games, but the mission it supports teaches boys the true meaning of being a man, with the aim to eliminate domestic violence before it starts.

Good Time: The Gentle'men Against Domestic Violence Tailgate Party

Good Deed: The Raising Gentle'men Program

While there are hundreds of local charities, nonprofits, and opportunities to get involved, few Naples groups are as distinctive as the Gentle'men Against Domestic Violence. The GADV supports The Shelter for Abused Women & Children through the Raising Gentle'men Program, an eight-week course dedicated to preventing domestic violence before it begins.

The GADV began in 2008 with a luncheon, then evolved into the tailgate party it celebrates now. More than 150 men attended the 2015 party at Bay Colony Golf Club, where they enjoyed a few games of golf, a barbecue, a cigar lounge, and a live auction. Lieutenant Mark Wynn, a child survivor of domestic violence, shared his story as the event's keynote speaker.

"As far as charity events and fundraisers go, the tailgate party is very different. It is very relaxed, there are no tuxedos, and it ends around 8:30 p.m.," says Ron Ciesla, who chaired the committee for 2015. "And I think part of what makes this event so special is that it's exclusively for men. We're not trying to be exclusionary to women, but we feel it's

important to show the young men in the community that the adult men are invested in this cause and want to transfer their gentlemanly qualities to the youth of the community—and hopefully become a model for the country."

In the most recent tailgate party, the men of GADV raised more than \$300,000, which will be used to support the program's two male advocates who work in Naples and Immokalee. During the 2014-2015 school year, these advocates conducted 187 Raising Gentle'men presentations that reached 3,236 young men and boys in Collier County.

"They [the advocates] go through both theory and practical exercises to reach the young men and boys early on and teach them about healthy relationships and being gentlemen," says Tamika Seaton, senior development officer at The Shelter, "before that whole psyche and attitude sets in—the one that says you have to be aggressive and dominant to be considered manly or macho."