

Red Hatters rendezvous at Gurnee Mills for 'sport'

BY BETH KRAMER

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GURNEE — Red hats of every shape and variety made an impressive showing at Gurnee Mills on Tuesday. Some were sparkly, some were feathered and others were decorated with ribbon.

All belonged to about 150 Red Hatters — Red Hat Society members — who were at the mall for Red Hat Rendezvous. The event was the second event in the mall's month-long event, Celebrating Women, which is to empower women, according to Michelle Rice, director of mall marketing and business development.

"The Red Hatters are such a big part of our community that ... we're so proud to have them," Rice said.

About 150 Red Hatters were treated to a VIP reception at the mall. Retailers offered specials for Red Hat Rendezvous from clothing to food.

Although many specials were designed for Red Hat Rendezvous, Rice said Red Hatters can also visit the regional mall's Customer Service for Red Hat-related specials through the end of the month.

About 20 chapters of the Red Hat Society were present at Gurnee Mills on Tuesday, according to Barbara Lesiak, Red Hat Society ambassador.

She said attending the event Tuesday supported the society's mission of fun and frivolity.

"Shopping is our national sport," Lesiak joked.

She described the society as a sisterhood of women who reach out to

other women. The idea is to reach out to women who may be empty nesters or widowed or for whatever reason have difficulty meeting other people their age, Lesiak said.

The idea of the group is to have fun, according to Queen Mum Sue Muchowski of Gurnee and Queen Christianne of Purplicious Chris FitzRandolph of Grayslake.

Queen is the title for chapter heads and most queens give themselves a name, they explained.

About a dozen of the Red Hatters present Tuesday were from the Gurnee and Grayslake chapters.

"It's considered a Red Hat pastime, shopping," FitzRandolph said.

"You say there's a Red Hat event and we'll come. We like to get together," Muchowski said.



Ruby Fay Smith (left), 87, of Winthrop Harbor and Mildred Dozier, 82, of Zion pose for a photo being taken by Dorothy Haberek of Beach Park, wearing poodle dresses, red saddle shoes and red hats. Red Hat Society members Smith, Dozier and Haberek were attending a Celebrating Women program hosted by Gurnee Mills. | THOMAS DELANY JR.-SUN-TIMES MEDIA

RED HATS

The social networking community for women has more than 20,000 chapters in each of the 50 states and 25 other countries. It encourages women to support each other and live actively from middle age and older with its fivefold mission: Fun, friendship, freedom, fulfillment and fitness. Red Hat Regalia includes purple outfits and red hats for members age 50 and up and pink hats and lavender outfits for members younger than 50.

Source: www.redhat-society.com