

## DRIVE-IN MOVIE POWERED BY ELLICOTT CITY ROTARY

By Charles Kyler, President, Ellicott City Rotary Club

In a few hours, the empty grass parking field at the Howard County fairgrounds was transformed into a pop up drive-in movie theater for 300 cars, a nostalgic view to the past. With a beautiful sunset as the backdrop, parents introduced their children to what they did as kids. For others, it was a date night, and for some, it was a first time experience.

The Ellicott City Rotary Club hosted the first of what they hope will be many drive-In movie nights at the Howard County Fairgrounds. Born out of the desire to do something good for the community, the HoCo Community Drive-In premiered on June 13th, 2020. The goal was to create a way for people to safely get out of their homes for an evening of family fun that supported local businesses by raising funds to assist those being impacted by COVID-19. A spectacular night under the stars was the result.

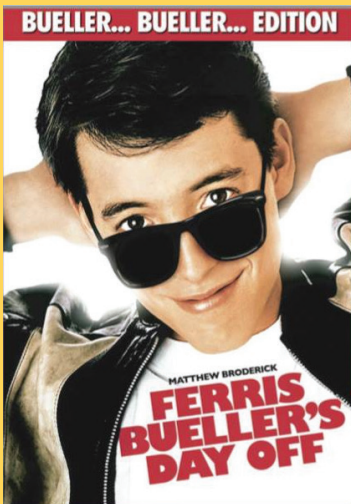
Rotary members, family, and friends volunteered to help park the sellout screening of The Princess Bride. Using an open donation model, community members donated as they were able, and

this allowed those who might not be able to afford a night out with their family be do so. The event, which sold out in just 4 days, was greatly helped by the support of Senator Katie Fry Hester. In addition to sponsoring the first movie, Senator Hester helped the Rotary Club of Ellicott City navigate the state's shutdown/reopening guidelines. With her sponsorship, the event raised over \$3000 for local charities.

The atmosphere at the event was relaxed and friendly. Local restaurants offered discounts; people chatted with others from their cars, and the mood was cheerful. At the end of the movie, everyone started honking their horns with approval. And, in less than eleven minutes, the field was empty again.

The Club is hoping to run the event in July, and may make this an annual fundraiser. The drive-in movie organizer, Charles Kyler, noted the importance of supporting our local community. "It is a Rotary tenant and being able to lift people's moods and raise some relief funds was a bonus." Kyler was pleased to report that, a spectator exclaimed, "My five year old nephew said it was the best night of his life!"

For more information about the Ellicott City Rotary Club's Drive in, email: [hocodrivein@gmail.com](mailto:hocodrivein@gmail.com) or find the cause on FaceBook at HoCo Drivein.



[Above] The next Ellicott City Rotary Club Drive-In Movie is on July 3 and features "Ferris Bueller's Day Off."

