

10/31/2007

Johnson: I'll donate salary to fund classes

By TED REINERT , The Saratogian

SARATOGA SPRINGS - Republican mayoral challenger Scott Johnson pledged Wednesday to use his \$14,500-a-year salary as mayor to fund GED classes at the Ford Community Center at Jefferson Terrace, where he was raised by a divorced mother.

"I witnessed firsthand how difficult it can be for many single parent mothers, or those with limited education, to escape economic hard times and provide a better life for their families," Johnson said. "Hopefully, this program can level the playing field for some, and, in turn, help our entire city."

He has gone door to door at the subsidized housing complexes Jefferson and Vanderbilt Terraces with his wife Julie.

"I used to live there. I have an affinity for them," he said. "I wanted to see what their concerns presently are."

Johnson found that many single mothers wanted to get a GED but were having trouble managing with transportation and child care issues.

The salary would cover the salary of a teacher and class materials.

"I want to offer this to the residents of the terraces and I will fund it," he said. He said he would not abandon the program at the end of his time as mayor, but would have secured an alternative funding source or continue to fund it himself.

Mayor Valerie Keehn, a Democrat running for a second two-year term, said it was a fine idea.

"It's my understanding that Scott Johnson is a retired millionaire and thus I'm sure he can afford to give this salary if he is elected," she said.

"I'm not a millionaire so I'm not going to make that commitment."

Keehn suggested that Johnson commit to funding the program regardless of whether he is elected.

Gordon Boyd, running for the office on the Independence and Conservative party lines, said while "it's certainly a great gesture and a good idea" for Johnson to give his salary to a good cause, it does not address the top issues facing the city, which he said are a precarious fiscal conditions based on Keehn's misrepresentation of the reliability of Video Lottery Terminal aid and the future of thoroughbred racing.

Advertisement



A red banner advertisement for LendingTree. On the left, a hand is shown pointing to the LendingTree logo. The text in the center reads "Refinance Your Home \$200,000 Loan for only \$938/Month*". On the right, there is a white button with the text "Start Now". At the bottom right, in small text, it says "*Terms and conditions apply.".

©The Saratogian 2007