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BROKERS GO FOR BROKE IN BENEFIT FOR KIDS EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE

A 6-year-old girl cooked herself dinner for six straight months.

A 5-year-old boy took care of himself and his siblings because his mom and dad just weren't there.

Eleven of 12 kids talking about their past revealed that a family member had suffered a violent death.

"It is an understatement to say that these kids have reached the end of their rope," Robert M. Cooper, executive director of the Colorado Christian Home / Tennyson Center wrote on behalf of the "Brokers for Battered Kids" fund-raiser.

The sixth annual event - featuring athletic competition between commercial real estate brokers - will be Sept. 13 at the Inverness Recreation Park.

The goal is to raise \$225,000 for the Colorado Christian Home and about a dozen other local charities. Last year, the event raised \$196,000. The Denver Nuggets Community Fund will match 50 cents on every \$1 raised. The money is distributed through the Denver Active 20-30, a nonprofit group.

"It is the one opportunity for the real estate industry as a whole to provide a needed community service," said Brad Neiman, a broker at CB Commercial.

Steve Leonard, president of Pacifica Holding Co., which heads a \$500 million commercial real estate portfolio in the Denver area and Colorado Springs, brought the concept from California in 1991.

Initially, it was solely brokers competing for gold, silver and bronze medals in volleyball, soccer, basketball, Ultimate Frisbee and team relays. Since then, the competition has been opened to anyone who wants to participate.

"Imagine brokers gritting their teeth, stretching their limbs, getting filthy dirty, all in an effort to run faster and jump higher than their weekday counterparts," Leonard and two main sponsors from Northland Financial and Land Title Guarantee wrote in a letter to prospective participants and sponsors.

Money comes from three sources: major sponsors, such as banks, law firms and contractors; a \$500 fee for each team; and brokers who raise money from tenants, developers, and clients.