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Brokers to do battle to benefit battered kids

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It's the one time of year when a little mudslinging is acceptable among commercial real estate brokers.

The seventh annual Brokers for Battered Kids charity event, which pairs brokers against each other in an obstacle course and such sports as volleyball and ultimate Frisbee, happens Saturday at Inverness Business Park.

About 24 teams of 250 brokers - featuring such locally famous people as CB Richard Ellis, industrial broker Jim Bolt and CarrAmerica guru Austin Lehr - will give up a few hours on Saturday for charity. Seventeen charities, chosen by the nonprofit organization Denver Active 20-30, will benefit from pledges made at the event.

Terry Claassen at Mack-Cali Realty Corp., one of four main sponsors of the event, said organizers expect to raise at least \$250,000 from the competition. Other big sponsors are Northland Financial Co., Land Title Guarantee Co. and First Industrial Realty Trust.

It's a major fund-raiser in the real estate community, he said.

"We wanted to pick a charity where the people benefiting didn't have a choice about the place they're in now," said Claassen of Brokers for Battered Kids, which is intended to benefit abused children.

One of the event beneficiaries, the Colorado Christian Home/Tennyson Center for Children & Families, has served children such as a six-year-old girl who cooked herself dinner for six months and a five-year-old boy who cared for his siblings because the parents weren't around.


"It is an understatement to say that these kids have reached the end of their rope," Robert Cooper, executive director of Colorado Christian Home, wrote to participating brokers. "With our partnership with the Denver Active 20-30 through events such as Brokers for Battered Kids, we have the opportunity to serve even more children in an even more effective manner."

Brokers for Battered Kids was started in 1992 in the Denver area by former Pacifica Holding Co. President Steve Leonard, which he patterned after similar events elsewhere in the country. Leonard has since left the Denver market to pursue a new career in southern California.

People who want to pledge money to the event can call Tina Rutherford at the Mack-Cali offices at 721-7600, ext. 100. Brokers for Battered Kids is an event of the Denver Nuggets Community Fund, which means the Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation will commit 50 cents for every \$1 raised through pledges.

Or, if a donation isn't what you had in mind, check out the competition. It'll be fierce, Claassen said.

"You're talking about a bunch of brokers," he quipped.



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