

Having a ball!

Cornucopia's success spills over in 2nd year

BY WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Nothing succeeds like success.

And the second annual Cornucopia Ball is clearly in that category.

Saturday's benefit ball for the Farmington Hills Community Foundation for Children, Youth and Families was more successful than the first in providing money that will help support programs including the city's decentralized youth program.

"Last year, our first year, we grossed just over \$50,000," said Richard Daguanno, chairman of the Farmington Hills Commission on Children, Youth and Families. "It looks like we're going to raise about double the amount this time. I think next year there will be a significant increase. Word's getting out that this is the social event of the year."

Those attending the event took part in auctioning while enjoying cocktails and then sat down to a gourmet dinner.

The gourmet dinner included escargot, appetizers, herb encrusted roast beef tenderloin with Madagascar sauce and baked Norwegian Salmon, desert and cafe au lait.

Music and dancing began after dinner with Steve King and The Ditties provided the music.

"It was absolutely wonderful," said event co-chairwoman Joanne Smith. "We had 250 people (the goal) who were dressed in their finest. The music and decor were superb and the bands were wonderful. People danced and danced."

Smith said the hard work by volunteers paid off when people saw the beautiful decor at the William Costick Center. She and Daguanno agreed that the event's overwhelming success will carry through.

"I was thinking about how much work was involved and that I wouldn't do this again," Smith said. "The next day at lunch we were planning next year's."

Daguanno said after the event's initial success, sponsors have been joining, with more ready to take part next year.

This year, Botsford General Hospital, the Observer and Eccentric Newspapers and Michigan National Bank were the honorary hosts.

"Undoubtedly our tax exempt status this year has helped," Daguanno said. "And we will qualify as a community foundation next year and be eligible for a Michigan income tax credit as well."

There were plenty of generous bidders on the many travel packages, sports memorabilia and other items at the auction. Items at auction included Red Wings tickets, a catered Gourmet Express dinner, a Grant Hill autographed basketball, a chance to be a Farmington Hills firefighter, police officer, state senator for a day, jackets, golf memberships, golf equipment, theater passes, dinner packages and weekend getaways.

And the event's success could translate to more donated items for next year.

"Everything was positive," Daguanno said. "The volunteers are a little stressed. And we still don't have final numbers from the auction."

The foundation was created to help raise money to help the city's children, youth and families. One of the main benefactors of the foundation will be the decentralized youth program.

The program, which began at the William Costick Center in March, is geared towards middle school students. It provides activities and study aids after school including athletics, games and other activities.

The program provides unstructured time after school that allows children to socialize, enjoy themselves and avoid trouble.

The YMCA is also a site for activities and the ice arena's upstairs will also be used for the program.

Daguanno said it appears that the event could gross \$100,000 or more.



Making their points: The Cornucopia Ball in Farmington Hills Saturday was attended by people with money to spend for a good cause. In the photo above, Cathy Webb handles the bidding as Richard Daguanno holds up a hockey stick used recently by Red Wing goaltender Chris Osgood. At right, Paul Blizman bids for the services of Gourmet Express, the company that catered the charity ball.



Staff photos by
Sharon LeMieux



Dancers and lookers: At right, Jody Soronen, Chamber of Commerce director, has a dance with husband Rusty. Below, Debbie Brock and Mary Ellis look over some of the items slated for the silent auction.



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