

Students help with art for masquerade gala

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A new gala to benefit the Northern Kentucky Children's Advocacy Center will be "unmasked" Saturday, March 1, at the Airport Marriott in Hebron.

"Masquerade Madness is going to be fresh, different, and elegant, and we promise an evening of glamorous mystique for our loyal supporters, new friends and guests," said Kimberly Carlisle of Union. Carlisle leads the Advocates, a 40-member volunteer organization which presents the advocacy center's annual gala.

Guests will be surrounded by Venetian opulence with fine dining, dancing, and both silent and live auction items enveloped in a night of allure and mystery.

But a component of the gala's live auction is truly unique, bringing students and local businesses together. Part of the evening's proceeds will come from auction items created by local art students in Northern Kentucky. High school art club students from Beechwood, Dixie Heights, Simon Kenton, St. Henry District High School, and Villa Madonna Academy have created 30 one-of-a-kind pinwheel-themed wind chimes exclusively for the gala's live auction. In addition to the wind chimes, students at Boone County Area Technology Center have developed a pinwheel-themed indoor/outdoor water feature for the live auction's finale.

"Pinwheels are a national symbol for child abuse prevention and a reminder of the bright and carefree future that all children deserve. These talented students are truly giving of themselves to help children of abuse in Northern Kentucky," said Nancy Francis, an advocate for the children's advocacy center. "The wind chimes and water feature are part of our 'Children Helping Children' initiatives with the center. The live auction is always highly anticipated because of the student participation, and raises a significant portion of the evening's proceeds."

Francis said that in the last five years, 16 area schools have created items for the annual fundraiser. This year, St. Henry District High School was a new participant, joined by Villa Madonna Academy in its second year, Dixie Heights and Simon Kenton in their fourth, and Beechwood for all five years. This is Boone County Area Technology Center's second year contributing to the gala.

"I've always said that our students can do anything, and the water feature that they preparing truly amazes me," said Garry A. Harper, principal of Boone County Area Technology Center. "(The students) give everything they have and are quick to tell you they are doing it for the kids that are being helped by the Northern Kentucky Children's Advocacy Center."

The water feature is not just a student creation, but a community business supported endeavor.

The fountain will be made of brass, stainless steel and copper. Building materials were provided by River Metals Recycling LLC in Newport, the largest scrap recycler in Kentucky. Ron Wolfe of Arronco Comfort Air Inc. of Burlington provided the soldering materials. Nancy Francis and her husband, Donald, of Fort Wright donated the water pumps. The water feature will be on display by mid-month at Barnes and Noble at Newport on the Levee.

Well-known local front man Ed Hartman will emcee the event and lead the silent auction. Masquerade Madness expects to draw more than 300 guests and is co-chaired Candice Ziegler of Highland Heights and Shannon Loeffler Wendt of Kenton Hills.

Last year, the Northern Kentucky Children's Advocacy Center served nearly 750 children in a coordinated response to child abuse. It is the only children's advocacy center in Northern Kentucky. It is recognized as a Center of Excellence by the National Children's Alliance.

Tickets for Masquerade Madness are available now at www.nkycac.org or by calling 859-525-1128.

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