

Milton Foundation for Education

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By Ed Hayward

Celebration for Education is Amazing!

More than 800 Milton residents, local officials and friends of the town's public schools turned out at Lombardo's in Randolph on November 22 to raise more than \$200,000 and make the 5th Annual Celebration for Education the most successful fundraiser ever for the non-profit Milton Foundation for Education.

Proceeds from this year's Celebration will supplement health, athletics and physical education programs in all six Milton schools and support the ongoing work of the foundation. In its four prior events, the Celebration raised roughly \$350,000.

"The results of this one night are the product of hundreds of hours put in by tireless volunteers who made this year's Celebration a huge success," said Steve Windwer, a co-chairman of the event. "Our volunteers and donors care deeply about our schools and this year's event showed that support is as strong as ever."

Windwer was joined by fellow co-chairs and Foundation board members Maureen Ellis and Gary Kelly. They coordinated volunteers who sold raffle tickets, printed and distributed fliers, solicited donations, designed prize packages, decorated Lombardo's and coordinated the auction, sales and receipts.

"We asked and these people did," said Ellis. "We have volunteers who have done this for five years and they can do it in their sleep. We also had a lot of new volunteers this year, which bodes well for next year's event and shows great support for the schools."

Among the big ticket items sold during the live auction portion of

the evening were six tickets to a Jimmy Buffett concert, use of an RV and a catered tailgate party prior to the concert. The package went to Linda Rezendes Walsh for \$4,300 following the most competitive bidding of the night. A home theater, donated by David Lyons and Cathy Cunliffe of Sonic Circus, sold for \$6,500 to Steve and Eileen Dinn. Milton resident Donna Morash was the winner of the grand prize raffle, a trip for four to Ireland for a stay in the vacation home of Denis and Mary Keohane and two rounds of golf at the Old Head Golf Links in Kinsale, County Cork.

Over the past four years, proceeds from the Milton Foundation for Education's annual Celebration for Education fundraiser have provided significant support to the science, technology, math and arts programs in the Milton Public Schools. Funds are awarded throughout the year. A second round of grants connected to last year's Celebration is scheduled to be announced in the coming weeks.

This year's Celebration worked under the theme of "Focus on Fitness", in part to connect the event to the new gymnasiums being built as part of the school construction project.

Milton's Acting Superintendent of Schools Mary Gormley said raising funds for physical education comes at the right time.

"Health education, gym classes and school sports are integral components of our educational programs," said Gormley. "I look forward to the creative ideas our teachers and administrators will propose to enhance these programs in our schools. Our students will no doubt see great benefits from the generosity of their parents, neighbors and friends."

Co-chair Gary Kelly thanked the people and businesses who contributed funds or auction items to the evening.

"I was just overwhelmed by the creativity and the generosity of the responses we received to our call for sponsors," said Kelly. "Our teachers and principals are so talented and our schools are so highly respected. I think those factors inspire people make their contributions to such a worthy cause – the children of the town."

A \$10,000 gift from an anonymous donor topped the list of event sponsors. Other major sponsors included \$5,000 Pinnacle sponsors Nstar and RBC Dain Rauscher Foundation; \$2,500 Forever Fit sponsors Caritas Carney Hospital, Tim and Mazie Colton, Curry College, J. Barry Driscoll Insurance Agency, Fallon Ambulance, Gilbane Project Team for the Milton Public Schools, the Marvin A. Gordon family, Infinity Mortgage Co., Jean and Gary Kelly, Konditor Meister, the Lussier Family, Milton Town Club, Stephen J. Pelleriti, State Street Global Philanthropy Program, Marc A. Susi Scholarship Fund and Joan and Steve Windwer; and \$1,000 MVP sponsors Boston Sand and Gravel, Drummey Rosane Anderson, the Gannon family, Ruth Heiden of Coldwell Banker, the Holland family, Thomas P. Oneill, Jr. of Success! Real Estate, Shaw's Lower Mills, Suffolk Construction, and Lynn and Michael Wilcox.

For the second year in a row, Traverse Real Estate owner and Milton resident Paul Traverse, a veteran auctioneer with 25 years of experience, donated his services to ensure an exciting auction.

The Celebration also marked the kick-off to a multi-phase fundraiser called Pathways to Fitness, which will construct walkways at the new high school and its Copeland Field House with engraved bricks and pavers now being sold.

For more information about Pathways to Fitness or the Milton Foundation for Education see the foundation website at www.miltonfoundationforeducation.org.