

Annual Blizzard Auction set for this weekend

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January 20,
2020



The 42nd annual Blizzard Auction will soon begin, with local victim advocacy and service organization Sarah's Friends standing to benefit from the auction's offering of a wide variety of items, packages and experiences at the low prices only an auction can offer.

The radio auction, to be aired on WBNO and WQCT, is slated to be held from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Jan. 25. To receive a bid number, go to <https://www.sarahsfriends.org> and click on the 2020 Blizzard Auction link. You can also call 567-210-8669.

"I think there is a little bit for everyone — things from houseware items, designer purses, sports tickets, a lot of gift cards from local and distant eateries and even some spa items," said Sarah's Friends Director Katie Cramer. "We have something in your category."

Items can be picked up at Sarah's Friends' side entrance on Butler Street just east of Main Street in Bryan on the day of the auction.

Sarah's Friends is a non-profit organization committed to empowering survivors of domestic violence and other crime in Williams County to heal emotionally, physically and spiritually.

"Any time things like this come to us, we feel blessed and humbled to be selected because there are so many amazing non-profits in our area and we all have the same needs," said Cramer. "We're all very humbled by it."

And the need is certainly there for Sarah's Friends, as one of its main funding sources, grants generated by the

Victims of Crime Act, received a 30 percent cut in funding in 2019. Additionally, it is predicted the next year will bring equal, if not greater cuts.

“This grant had been funding the majority of our program costs, so losing that income is detrimental at the time being to our organization, which is why having funding coming in like those from this Blizzard Auction is such a blessing to us at this time,” Cramer said.

In 2018, Sarah’s Friends aided 178 local residents with various struggles, including 110 females, 31 males (and 34 individuals whose gender wasn’t reported), 61 adults and 64 children (and 53 whose ages were not reported). Victims include people affected by domestic violence, assault, stalking, harassment, sexual assault, child abuse and neglect, bullying, elder abuse and other issues.

Sarah’s Friends helps in a myriad of ways, from providing temporary financial and logistical assistance, to emotional support, counseling and legal referral, creating a safety plan and much more.

Cramer said funds raised will help with “program costs that we always used to rely on (Victims of Crime grants) for. It’s unclear what the future holds for that,” said Cramer. “For us, this will help give us stability, to know if we keep losing those (grants) while we’re searching for new sources, we can keep everything going.”

For more information on Sarah’s Friends, call 419-636-7272 or email sarahhs@frontier.com.

Each year, the WBNO-WQCT Blizzard Auction commemorates the blizzard of 1978, one of the most powerful storms ever recorded in North America, which brought gusting winds and 14-22 inches of snow to northwest Ohio.

The 41st annual Blizzard Auction, held last January, raised around \$16,000 for Shalom Counseling and Mediation Center.