



Possible Dreams auction is July 30 to benefit Community Services.

Mark Lovewell

COMMUNITY

# Still Dreaming About Possibilities for Island Needs

Vivian Ewing Thursday, July 27, 2017 - 6:09pm

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Fifty-five years ago, a group of Island clergy and family doctors brought the first full-time psychiatrist to the Island. From that modest start in 1962, Martha's Vineyard Community Services began, and today the agency provides a wide range of services from mental health to day care to support for people with disabilities.

But meeting the needs of the Island's most vulnerable populations costs around \$7 million per year, much of which must come from government funding, grants and donations.

Enter the annual Art Buchwald Possible Dreams Auction, now in its 39th year and the single largest fundraiser for Community Services, whose six programs serve more than 6,000 people over the course of a year. In addition to the Island Counseling Center, the programs include Disability Services, Connect to End Violence, Early Childhood Programs, the Island Wide Youth Collaborative and The Thrift Shop.

The Possible Dreams auction will be held Sunday at the Winnetu Oceanside Resort in Edgartown. Doors open at 3:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$25.

Last year the auction raised about \$400,000 for Community Services.

"It really captured the spirit of the Island and what we love about this Island," said auction chairman Liza May.

Ms. May said this year will mark a shift with a fresh approach for the auction, including a new auctioneer. "Reflecting on our original philosophy I thought, you know what we really need? To go back to the roots of the event," she said. "With this event we really capture the spirit of giving back to our neighbors."

Auctioneer Sherry Truhlar, a career nonprofit auctioneer from Red Apple Auction, will lead the bidding. "She comes to us with a wealth of experience," Ms. May said, noting that Mr. Truhlar researched Community Services, the programs they run and the auction itself over the course of the past six months. "She's vested in this," she said.

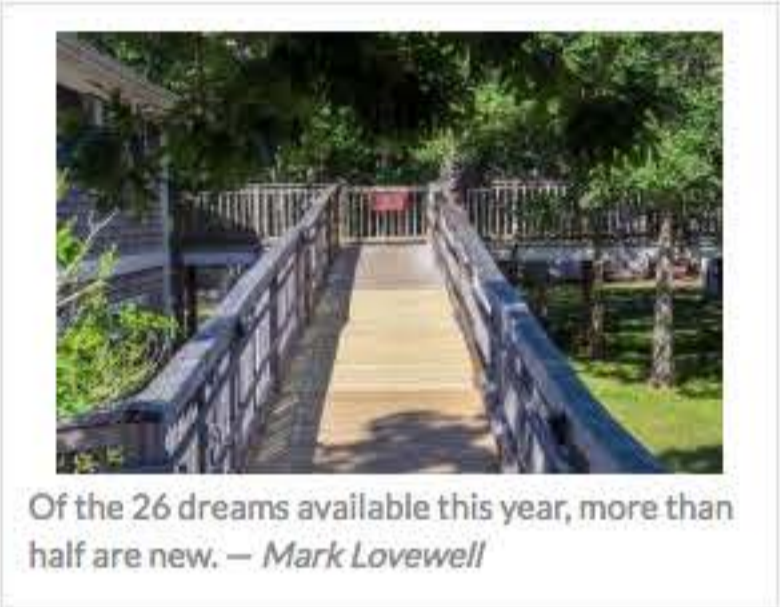
Dreams to be auctioned off Sunday include a round of poker with actor Tony Shalhoub and director Peter Farrelly, a party for 50 at the Ritz with Johnny Hoy and the Bluefish and a sail on a Black Dog tall ship.

Of the 26 dreams available this year, more than half are new. A complete [list can be found online](#).

Tickets to the Patriots and Taste of the Vineyard, a two-night stay for two people at the Nantucket Hotel, and an array of gift certificates for art, jewelry, clothing, and food and wine packages are among the many items available through raffles and a silent auction.

All proceeds will benefit Community Services.

Ms. May said a special fast-paced auction-within-the-auction called Fund-A-Need will raise money this year to benefit the Community Services recovery coach program. To date, 23 coaches have been trained to support people who are recovering from drug or alcohol addiction. A new session is set for September to train 15 more coaches.



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Artist Traeger di Pietro displays a piece of his art auctioned off at last year's fundraiser. — Ray Ewing

But program administrators work in an office that Ms. May estimated is about eight by 10 feet long. "Their computers are totally antiquated," she said.

"Last year we did it for Early Childhood Programs," said Ms. May, speaking of the fast-paced mini-auction. "In less than four minutes we raised about \$20,000."

Also new this year is the ability to bid by proxy. "If you're not able to be here, you can call into Community Services and tell us what you want as your top bid," Ms. May said. Board members will bid on behalf of those unable to attend.

And finally, this year will mark a special tribute for Judy Jahries, a former longtime volunteer who died in May. Mrs. Jahries volunteered at Community Services for 38 years and was a member of the auction committee.

"Judy was the 'wrangler' of our amazing team of runners," wrote Jan Hatchard in a moving tribute to Ms. Jahries circulated online this week. "She made sure that the Clifford costume was stage-ready every year and that someone tall enough was wearing it and staying hydrated. She rarely missed a planning meeting and in keeping with her giving nature, handcrafted beautiful name tags for the committee each year . . . Judy was an amazing woman who cared deeply for her family, the Island community, and for MVCS. She was a truly beautiful spirit."

The artist Wendy Weldon has donated an original painting titled Old Friend, selected by Judy's daughters Sarah and Emily.

Online bidding began this week. On Sunday, the painting will be the last item up for bid during the live auction.