



Possible Dreams auction raised \$445,241 for Community Services.

Ray Ewing

COMMUNITY

Sweet Dreams, Generous Bids at Possible Dreams Auction

Vivian Ewing Sunday, July 30, 2017 - 10:33pm ▶ UPDATED Thursday, August 3, 2017 - 7:30am

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Paddles popped up like daisies under at Winnetu Oceanside Resort in Katama Sunday for the 39th annual Art Buchwald Possible Dreams Auction. The auction brought in more than \$450,000 for Martha's Vineyard Community Services, with checks still arriving by mid-week.

"Honestly, I'm over the moon," said auction chairman Liza May, who reported another check for \$10,000 had just come in on Tuesday. She said attendance at the auction was up this year, with some 500 people under the tent.

"I'm humbled by how generous people were both leading up to the event and the day-of," Ms. May said.

Twenty-six dreams were sold to the highest bidders by off by professional auctioneer Jenny Truhlar, including an aerial photography ride over the Island with Bill Brine in his bush plane, a trip to the set of Late Night with Seth Meyers, and a private dinner on the third floor of Offshore Ale overlooking the Oak Bluffs summer fireworks. The dream, called Your Room With A View, raised \$18,000 — this year's live-auction record.



Eric Adams and Brian Morris spoke about new Recovery Coaching program. — Ray Ewing

Funds raised will benefit the six main programs of the Vineyard's oldest social services organization: Island Counseling Center, Connect to End Violence, Disability Services, Early Childhood Programs, Island Wide Youth Collaborative and the Thrift Shop.

The programs serve more than 6,000 year-round Islanders.

Before bidding began Sunday, representatives from each of the six programs greeted guests. Heather Quinn, a former Vineyard preschool teacher who recently took the helm as director of Early Childhood Programs, stood by an informational banner. "Sometimes people are only familiar with one of the branches of Community Services," Ms. Quinn said. "We're here to spread awareness."

While the Possible Dreams auction has always credited the hard work of the staff, this year continued a trend of putting the focus squarely on them.

At 4:55 p.m., with five minutes left to go before the silent auction closed, more than 10 items had already been sold with a guaranteed bid. Ms. Truhlar circled the tables, slowly pulling bid sheets. "I've got some smart shoppers that are standing next to their bid," she said. "I like that."

The Recovery Coaching program, a new initiative through the Island Counseling Center, received some extra attention this year. Supervisor Eric Adams said the initiative to pair coaches with those going through the recovery process has already reached about 76 clients between the ages of 15 to 70.

With that, the live auction began. Community Services executive director Juliette Fay asked folks to "bid high and bid early."



Cheers all around for community services. — Ray Ewing

And bid they did. A fast-paced segment benefiting the recovery coach program proceeded the main event. Many people raised their paddles to donate \$1,000, \$750, \$500, \$250 or \$100 in what was called Fund-a-Need. In the first few minutes, one donor broke the mold with a pledge of \$25,000.

Then came the dreams. The visit to a taping of Late Night with Seth Meyers went for \$15,200. Ms. Truhlar kept the energy high with her fast-talking finesse.

Ms. Fay was making note of the winning bids. "The philanthropy on the Island is so wonderful and so welcome," she said.

Photographer Michael Blanchard donated a tutorial that was sold for \$3,250. Mr. Blanchard, a perennial auction donor, said he is a member of the recovery community and credits the New Paths program for much of his success. "When I'm feeling depressed, instead of picking up a bottle, I pick up my camera," Mr. Blanchard said. "It's so healing and I want to share that with someone."



Community Services executive director Juliette Fay urged the crowd to "bid high and bid early." — Ray Ewing



Auctioneer Sherry Truhlar and Liza May get the bidding started for a trip to a Bruins game. — Ray Ewing

The live auction raised \$122,050 and the silent auction brought in another \$35,665. Including the Fund-a-Need and other donations, ticket sales and raffle receipts, total auction-related revenue exceeded \$450,000.