

Birdhouse auction showcases artists, philanthropic spirit

Written by By Melinda Russell Sun Correspondent
Friday, 08 May 2015 00:55



Once again, Gallup proves itself to be a multi-talented community. The 8th Annual Birdhouse Auction sponsored by the Ups and Downs team from the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life hosted a fun and quality event at Sammy C's May 3.

Over 60 people gathered to take part in the fun when the auctioneers, Joe Hibbard, John Hornbeck and Patrick Moore got the evening under way.

"Who'll give me 20? 20? 20?" was the starting call for many of the sales.

Some, quickly developed into bidding competitions and turned into big donations for the American Cancer Society.

Gallup High School science teacher, Mary Ann Seslar was inspired by a photo of an old watch. She started creating a steampunk birdhouse by assembling copper pipe, broken toy gears, clock dials and lenses to give them new life in an 1880's futuristic fashion that raised \$ 275.00 for the charity.

Seslar explained her mother is an 8 year breast cancer survivor.

Participation "is my way of helping somebody else's mother," she said. "I know this group will get the money to the right place."

Birdhouse auction showcases artists, philanthropic spirit

Written by By Melinda Russell Sun Correspondent
Friday, 08 May 2015 00:55

Tom Hall taught in Gallup for 30 years and has recently retired in Albuquerque. He comes back to the auction every year and with good reason.

“It is a great cause, and it’s sort of fun to do,” he said.

Hall has participated by making birdhouses for the auction seven years. This year’s entry was a beautiful prefabricated birdhouse standing about 2-feet tall. Hall added rock work, copper and turquoise patina to make the sculpture stand out. It was a crowd favorite causing the biggest of the evening’s bidding wars.

In the end, Jeannie Colaianni prevailed with a bid of \$330.00 for “Copper-Roofed Beauty.”

“I love the architecture, the rustic look,” she said.

Gallup High School art teacher, Debbie Thomas was on hand to watch the handy work of her students go up for bid. Eleven Gallup High School art students donated ceramic and wooden originals to the auction. Some of the youth also donated their time, helping to show the artwork during the auction.

Linda Shelton, event coordinator, said they have several people who have created birdhouses every year for the auction. Kathe Noe, Debbie Thomas, Anita Palenschat and John Wells are few of those dedicated community members. Other popular works were “Where’s da Sheep,” by Irving Bahe, and “Monarch” by Ambrose Begay. People were happy to bid on works by lesser known artists as well.

Six-year-old Mary Helen Brown has contributed her artwork the past 3 years. Artists range from extremely talented to beginners. There were a total of 88 birdhouses donated this year – a birdhouse available for nearly every taste and interest. There was also a quilt donated by Mary Pacey from Olathe, Kansas. This is the third year she has made and donated a quilt for the auction.

Birdhouse auction showcases artists, philanthropic spirit

Written by By Melinda Russell Sun Correspondent
Friday, 08 May 2015 00:55

According to Shelton, Sammy C's has been the official venue for the event all eight years.

"I love Sammy Chioda," she said. "He has been so good to Relay for years. He's just the nicest man."

This year's auction netted about \$5,700. You can view the 2015 selection of bird houses at www.gallupbirdhouses.com. If you would like to create one for next year, contact Linda Shelton at (505) 722-2175 or email: adnil.notlehs@gmail.com.