

Rotary Club raises thousands for Discovery Museum

By Drew Houff
The Winchester Star

ROCKLAND — The Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum received a strong bit of community support on Saturday when the Rotary Club of Winchester held its annual Kaleidoscope at Shenandoah Valley Golf Club in Warren County.

Kaleidoscope, the organization's annual fundraising event for a local charity, netted around \$60,000 or \$70,000, said Rotarian Tuck White. The final total was not available.

"Last year, we raised \$70,000 [for Winchester Little Theatre and the Wayside Theatre] with the ticket sales, the silent auction, and ads in the program," he said. "With the economy like it is, the silent auction may not have done as well [this year], but we did have a lot of items, so it should be close [to last year's total]."

Peggy McKee, the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum's executive director, said she was in awe of the whole event.



"I was speaking to somebody this week about a barn-raising that is to come," she said. "There is a community attitude: 'We're going to see this happen, and now we are all going to pull together to make sure it does.'"

during the Rotary Club of Winchester's annual Kaleidoscope at Shenandoah Valley Golf Course in Warren County. The event raised \$60,000 to \$70,000 for the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum.
(Scott Mason)

McKee said she was pleased that an organization such as the Rotary Club of Winchester found the Discovery Museum a worthwhile community beneficiary.

"The public relations [from the event] — I can't put a number on it," she said. "It's public relations we never could have paid for."

"There are people here who are community builders. I mean, these people take seriously what it is to be a community and what it takes to make community things happen. And that's why they're here."

McKee said the Rotarians' support for the Discovery Museum did not just start on Saturday.

"A lot of the people who are here tonight have been supporters of the Discovery Museum for 12 years, ever since we opened," she said. "Now they're just extending it on and bringing their friends with them. Now they will get the vision."

McKee said words could not convey the appreciation she had for the Rotary Club of Winchester and its efforts to raise money.

A dozen years ago the Discovery Museum opened in a 7,500-square-foot building on the Loudoun Street Mall at a cost of \$65,000, she said.

Last year, ground was broken inside Winchester's Jim Barnett Park for the future home of the 21,000-square-foot museum building. Work on the new, \$9.8 million facility is expected to begin this year, but no opening date has been determined.

Rotarian David Ervin said the charities that have received funds from the Kaleidoscopes vary, but the overall community support makes each event successful.

Our Health, for example, was the first charity to receive Kaleidoscope backing in 2002.

Ervin said the size of the selected charity has not mattered, as Rotary always finds a worthy recipient that can benefit from the funds.

He said tickets to Saturday's Kaleidoscope, at \$200 a pop, help to raise a good bit of money for the museum, as did the silent auction, which featured items donated by club members.

The event's program, which was placed on each of the dinner tables, featured 53 pages of ads, and those proceeds also go toward the Discovery Museum.

Bernie Demski, president of the Rotary Club of Winchester, said it was a worthwhile evening for all involved.

He said the money raised will go toward the Discovery Museum's building program, increasing public awareness for the project.

McKee agreed, adding that others will see how vital the new facility is for the overall success of the museum.