

United
Family
Services

OUR MISSION
Providing Hope and Solutions for People in Crisis



[HTTP://CLTOLIVIAFORTSON.BLOGSPOT.COM/2012/02/ANATOMY-OF-SUCCESSFUL-FUNDRAISER.HTML](http://CLTOLIVIAFORTSON.BLOGSPOT.COM/2012/02/ANATOMY-OF-SUCCESSFUL-FUNDRAISER.HTML)

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2012

Anatomy of a successful fundraiser



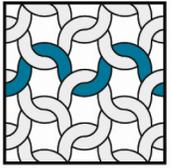
Art With Heart event co-chairs Katherine Daly and Hillary Lacouture deserve a lot of credit for the success of this year's art auction that brought in \$150,000 in one evening for United Family Services and its new shelter for victims of domestic abuse. That impressive number brings the annual event's fundraising total over its history to more than \$1 million.

Of course a lot of hard work went into that one evening. The number of hours Daly, Lacouture and their equally energetic committee members put into the event over the past year are off the charts.

I'm always in awe of the dedication of volunteers in our community. Many of them - including Daly and Lacouture - have a lot going on in their lives already such as full-time jobs, spouses, children and homes to take care of. Yet they care enough to put the effort into finding a nonprofit that's close to their hearts; and are self-aware enough to have figured out their own special talents and how they can be used to help the cause the most.

Art With Heart already had a lot going for it thanks to past event committees: A great cause (stopping the cycle of domestic violence), a great signature event (an auction of quality art at a variety of different price points), a great date (it's in early February when the social calendar hasn't exploded) and a great venue (Founders Hall, which is large enough to comfortably contain the hundreds of guests while still having space to show off all the art).

But like all good gala chairs, Daly and Lacouture wanted to make it even better. Here are four things they added this year that were a hit with guests, and one thing they would do differently.



United
Family
Services

OUR MISSION

Providing Hope and Solutions for People in Crisis



- 1. BidPal.** It was the first time guests were given one of the gadgets that literally bid on their favorite silent auction items for them. Since almost everyone is tech-obsessed now, it was not only fun but practical. Guests enjoyed the evening, and placed more bids, because it made the process so much easier.
- 2. House of Prayer Band.** Any event organizer knows that trying to move guests from one area to another makes herding turtles look like a breeze. When it came time for the live auction to begin, guests were motivated to move by the energetic House of Prayer band that marched in and engaged and entertained guests enough to lead them into the auction's seated area.
- 3. Professional Lighting.** Guests who had been coming for years were blown away by the quality of lighting at this year's event, and how it showcased the art at its best. In the past, volunteers hung the art against black backdrops. This year, United Family Services' president and CEO Phil Kline, the former head of the Mint Museum, recommended that the museum's Kurt Warnke, head of design and installation, hang the art. The difference was dramatic.
- 4. The Best Bar Ever.** In my professional party experience, one of the top reasons guests will get grumpy is if they have to wait in a long line for a drink. No one could complain at Art With Heart because there was a large oval bar in the center of Founders Hall. Its shape meant that guests could order their drink from many different angles so no one ever had to stand in line or wait. Plus, there were several smaller bars set up in the corners. Brilliant.

The dynamic duo has signed on to be next year's volunteer event chairs. And of course they're already planning on how to top themselves. One thing they've decided to add in 2013 are new mediums to the art offerings including blown glass and other three-dimensional works.