

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the Gala and Auction?**

The Gala and Auction is the largest fundraising and community event of the year for the Congressional Schools of Virginia. The online auction runs February 8 – March 8<sup>th</sup> and the Gala and Live Auction takes place on Saturday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. The Gala is an adult evening including a cocktail reception, seated dinner and dancing.

### **Where will the Gala be held?**

The Gala will be held this year at the Westin Arlington Gateway. It is a beautiful hotel located close to I-66 in the Ballston area. It is located at 801 North Glebe, Arlington, Virginia.

### **Where do the proceeds go?**

This year, the proceeds of the Gala and Auction will be allocated to the following two areas: **Professional Development** and **Financial Aid**. Both of these causes will benefit everyone at Congressional.

- **Professional Development:** 50% of the 2010 Gala and Auction proceeds will be used to support our teachers' continuing education. Outstanding teachers are a key ingredient in academic excellence. We feel that this will have a direct impact on the continuing improvement of the quality of education we offer our students.
- **Financial Aid:** 50% of the 2010 Gala and Auction proceeds will support Financial Aid. Many families who are experiencing a temporary financial setback and who love Congressional have applied for financial aid so that they can continue to participate in our community. To qualify for assistance, families complete a national standardized application through the School and Student Services and submit additional paperwork directly to Congressional.

### **What is "Raise the Paddle"?**

During the Live Auction we will be making an additional appeal. Attendees can 'raise their paddle' and make a 100% tax-deductible contribution to the creation of the *Tripps Run Outdoor Learning Center & Discovery Trail*. This campus enhancement will benefit every child at Congressional for many years to come through creative improvements to our outdoor spaces with the addition of a learning center and improvements to our trail system for student exploration, fitness, and play. The Auctioneer will announce various dollar amounts and you can 'raise your paddle' to contribute that amount.

### **Does Congressional make money from tickets to the Gala?**

No, your Gala ticket covers the cost of the event. Congressional raises money from the online, silent, and live auctions as well as 'raise the paddle', raffles, party boards and mystery wine. The Gala and Auction also raises money through catalog advertising, underwriting and sponsorship. Of equal importance is that the Gala is a great community event providing an opportunity to spend time with the Congressional community.

### **Who is invited?**

Current Congressional families, grandparents, alumni parents, adult alumni, camp families, faculty and staff and more are all invited to attend. All are encouraged to invite family and friends to join them for this fun and elegant event.

### **Is there anything to bid on at the Gala that isn't really expensive?**

Yes, there are items and opportunities starting at \$25.

### **What is the Mystery Wine?**

During the Gala's cocktail reception you can purchase a 'mystery' bottle of wine. The wine will be disguised so you won't know exactly what you are buying. It could be a great everyday bottle or a special occasion wine. Each bottle will cost \$25...take a chance! Wine donations will be held at drop-off at both the L & M Schools and Early Childhood Programs Building in mid-February. Please consider donating a bottle of your favorite wine!

### **What are Party Boards?**

The opportunity to sign up for various parties will be sold at the Gala. Last years parties included "Cheeseburger in Paradise" – an adult margarita party on Lake Barcroft – and "Movie Under the Stars" – a family friendly outdoor/backyard movie night. Descriptions, prices and dates are prominently displayed on a board and you use your bid number to buy a space. Numbers are limited so grab a group of friends and sign up quickly!

### **What is the "Best of the Live Auction" raffle?**

Buy a raffle ticket for a chance to win one of the big "Live Auction" items! The raffle winner may choose from a selection of Live Auction items. The drawing will take place prior to the start of the Live Auction. This is a great opportunity to win an item worth thousands of dollars just for the price of a raffle ticket!

### **Is there an online auction?**

Yes, the online auction runs from February 8 – March 8, 2010. Visit [Bid4Colts.com](http://Bid4Colts.com) to browse and bid. New items will be added continually. So check back often and keep bidding!

***What kind of things can we bid on?***

There is a wide range of goods and services. Also, checkout the “Priceless!” category with school-sponsored items, faculty and staff donations, and the incredible *class projects*. Don’t forget to look at the exciting Camp items, too.

***Are there class projects?***

Yes, each class in the Early Childhood Program (Bright Beginnings thru SrK) is doing at least one class project. Grades 1 – 4 are doing one project per grade. Grades 5 – 8 are offering service projects. These items will be available for bidding in the online auction, [www.Bid4Colts.com](http://www.Bid4Colts.com).

***What’s a ‘blank canvas’ project?***

A blank canvas is a project that will be completed by any class or grade. The highest bidder gets to choose which class will create the project. If you are out-bid on the class project, you still have an opportunity for a priceless creation from your child’s class.

***Is there an auction at the Gala?***

Yes, there is a silent auction during the cocktail reception and a live auction at the dinner. Arguably the most exciting items will be auctioned off during the Gala – first in line, reserved parking, dinner with the Head of School, trips, tickets, etc. are auctioned at the Gala.

***What if I need a babysitter?***

There is a list of EHP counselors who are available to babysit in your home the night of the Gala. You may contact these individuals and make arrangements to secure their services. The list is provided to help parents whoever the school will not be making the arrangements for parents.

***What if I want to spend the night at the Westin?***

Rooms are available at a discounted rate of \$119 plus taxes. Contact the hotel directly at 703-717-6200 no later than Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup> to make your reservations. Reference the Congressional Schools of Virginia Gala to receive the discounted rate. Adjoining rooms are available should you need more than one room.

***Do we have to RSVP? When do we need to RSVP by? How much does it cost? What if we just want to show up?***

Reservations and payment needs to be returned to Congressional by March 5, 2010. The cost is \$150 per person. You must RSVP so we can guarantee the number of attendees for the hotel. We cannot accommodate walk-ins.

***Where do we park?***

Valet parking is included with your Gala ticket. Valet parking is located at the main entrance of the hotel. Pick-up is conveniently located in the basement level of the hotel, which is great in inclement weather!

***What about coat check?***

Coat check is also complementary.

***Can I underwrite or sponsor a portion of the Gala and Auction?***

Yes, we have underwriting and sponsorship opportunities available ranging from \$500 to \$5,000.

***Who will we be seated with?***

On the reservation card you can indicate with whom you would like to be seated. If you do not have a preference the auction committee will assign you to a table.

***What should I wear?***

Cocktail attire is recommended. “A Vision in Green” could be extended to include a green accessory – whether it is the color green or a recycled/vintage/antique accessory or tie.

***How can I help?***

We are still accepting the donation of goods and services for the auction. Anything from a bottle of wine to a spare weekend at a vacation home are greatly appreciated. We also have underwriting and sponsorship opportunities still available.

And of course we always need volunteers! We especially need help with decorating. We can work around your schedule and the amount of time you have to donate. Come help – its’ fun!

***Where can I get more information?***

Contact Heather Oles at [heather\\_oles@yahoo.com](mailto:heather_oles@yahoo.com) or 703/403-9704 or Donna Begeny at [dr14210@msn.com](mailto:dr14210@msn.com) or 571-228-2746