

“Raise A Fork For Kids 2017”

The Rotary Club of Roanoke-Downtown held its annual fundraiser, “Raise a Fork for Kids!” March 31, 2017 at the Taubman Museum of Art in Downtown Roanoke. More than 275 people came out to show their support for the youth of Roanoke. The festivities began with a gourmet dinner prepared by the chefs from the Al Pollard Culinary Institute at Virginia Western Community College and the American Culinary Federation, Southwestern Virginia Chapter. Music throughout the evening was provided by Bill Kesel and his band. During dinner, bids were placed on a wide variety of high quality silent auction items. The winner of a raffle with a grand prize of \$1,000 was selected during the event. The evening concluded with a live auction featuring several special and fun items of significant value. The guest auctioneer was WSLs Channel 10 News Anchor and Rotarian John Carlin.

In December 2015 Club members selected three local organizations with youth programs to benefit from the proceeds raised at the annual fundraiser. Each organization was member sponsored and submitted an application that included how the funds would be used. The three organizations selected were the YMCA (water safety program), BRAAC--Blue Ridge Autism and Achievement Center (services for individuals (and their families) with unique learning challenges, ages 2-22), and West End Center for Youth (after school program). The three organizations received \$9,500 each from the fundraiser. The total amount donated of \$28,500 is a record for the event.

This marks the sixth year that the Club has partnered with the Culinary Federation and the Culinary Institute to prepare the food. The Culinary Federation members donate their time and utilize their student members to gain experience and perform community service. This arrangement has allowed the Club to reduce food costs while still providing superior food. A \$2,000 scholarship to the Culinary Institute was also provided from the fundraiser proceeds.

At the Club’s June 7, 2017 meeting Fundraiser Co-Chairs Lee Clark and Manny Schabel presented checks to the three organizations. These organizations are grateful for the contributions and the Rotary Club of Roanoke-Downtown is appreciative of all those sponsors and participants who helped make this event a success this year. The Club is proud to assist these fine organizations in helping our youth through the unique programs each organization has to offer.



Lee Clark, YMCA Dale Parris and Mark Johnson, Manny Schabel



Lee Clark, BRAAC Christina Giuliano and Angie Leonard, Manny Schabel



Lee Clark; West End Center Susan Larkin, Melanie Huber, and Joy Parrish; Manny Schabel