

**COMMUNITY**

## Food, drink help support community agency



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AUBURN | Restaurants, eateries, beer makers and wineries gathered in Auburn Thursday evening to share their dishes and beverages for the 18th annual Taste for Community Action hosted by the Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency.

The event, one of the most important fundraisers for the agency, is a unique take on the usual fundraising campaign, giving guests the opportunity to enjoy a wide

variety of foods and beverages in a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere.

Laurie Piccolo, executive director for the agency, believes that it is this unique factor that has made the event so successful on the past 18 years.

“First and foremost it is about good will,” Piccolo said. “It is a great time out where you can enjoy all of these different restaurants and wineries all under one roof. It brings all of these diverse places for desserts and meats and cheeses and beers and wines together under one roof where everyone can enjoy them.”

Local and regional establishments such as Mesa Grande, Oak & Vine, Daut’s, Montezuma Winery, Ithaca Beer Company and Buffalo Wild Wings were on hand to share their specialties.

Among those who came to share their wares was Montezuma Winery.

Deb Spearing of Montezuma Winery said that it is a wonderful event to be a part of and one that the winery has been glad to be able to help support.

“It has been fantastic,” Spearing said. “It is a great cause to be able to be a part of, and there are great people here and good wine and food and everyone is happy. It is great to be here.”

Trish Ottley, grant writer and marketing director for the agency, said that the event has continuously been a successful fundraiser for the agency.

This year, she estimated between 400 and 500 guests were in attendance throughout the evening and as the number of guests and supporters have increased so too have the number of vendors on hand.

“This is an awesome year,” Ottley said. “We had double the number of vendors and we had to expand into another room to accommodate all of them. We have over 40 different raffle items donated from the community and we have a great turnout and everyone is having a lot of fun.”

Linda Eldred, who along with her husband, Doug, owns Strawberry Fields Hydroponic Strawberries, was participating in the event for the first time this year, sharing strawberry based goods from cupcakes to honey and was very excited to be a part of this year’s festivities.

“I think this is a great idea,” Eldred said. “We need to support each other and support local businesses and other local products and I think this is a great way to be able to do that.”

The agency, which Ottley said has been active in the community for nearly 50 years, provided programs ranging from transitional housing to head start educational programs to homeless and domestic violence intervention and numerous other services for those in need within the community.

This fundraiser makes it possible for the agency to be able to go the extra mile and provide more programs within the local community.

With the great turnout and support of so many local businesses, this year continued the tradition of success.

“This is our largest fundraiser,” Piccolo said. “It allows us to provide additional services and everyone is having a great time.”