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A Taste of Italy

By Suzy Paluzzi

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On October 24, nine Cupertino High School cooking class students, supervised by their teacher Judy Turney, served tasty authentic Italian cuisine for the benefit of JW House and Not Just The Child. The remaining culinary students cut, cooked and garnished the food prior to the buffet. A silent auction of generous donations was also part of the fundraiser. The Pacific Central District of the Optimist Club sponsored the event.

This is the first time the JW House and Not Just The Child participated together to earn money for their causes. JW House is the dream of one brave teenage cancer patient, JW Knapen. Family, friends, JW's physician, Dr. Alan Wong, and community supporters are making that legacy come true. It was JW's final wish that a house be built near Kaiser Hospital in Santa Clara for families to stay during hospitalization of a loved one.

"We are still building," says Dr. Wong. "There were unanticipated construction problems so the goal is to open J.W. House in April 2008. Because of the delay we need more money due to unexpected costs," he goes on to say. "There are also two main areas we are concentrating on: the interior and the garden. For example, we still need money for furnishing J.W. House," Dr. Wong adds. If you are interested in helping, please contact him at Alan@JWHouse.org

Not Just The Child is an Optimist effort. The project began when "a member of the DeAnza-Cupertino Club sat with families with cancer and realized they needed financial help," says Jim Watts, Santa Clara Optimist. NJTH helps families with cancer in their lives at Kaiser in Santa Clara also. For example, a ten-year-old cancer patient wanted a dog, so the Optimists got him a beagle puppy that the hospital allowed. The puppy lives on to comfort his family now. The Optimist Club gave a single mom, who was struggling to see her ill child, a car, since hers was repossessed due to medical costs. So the money is given directly to the people who need it. If you want to assist, please contact jim@watts.com

Tickets for the evening were \$30. A portion of raffle proceeds also goes to both charities. The silent auction included 2 passes to Six Flag Magic Mountain, valued at \$120, and Yoga Lessons, mat and carrier through Kaiser in Redwood City, valued at \$140. Donors ranged from The San Francisco 49ers to Trader Joe's. Not Just The Child and JW House share one hundred per cent of the funds.

Gayle Shean, the Optimist organizer who brought NJTH and JW House together to join forces, expected one hundred and twenty guests. Among those attending were JW House Board Members, JW's mom Anne Marie Knapen-Asnong and Dale Hume, past governor of Optimists of District 20. Paul Luke, JW House Board Member, sums up the success of the evening with his words: "It is wonderful they are supporting JW and Not Just The Child as well, AND we are getting a good meal out of it."



Guests decide which silent auction items to bid on.



Storyboards showing just a few of the events sponsored by the Local Optimists Clubs.