

The Hour

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The Independent Voice of Our Community

Delights for donations



Hour photo / MATTHEW VINCI

Shari Ulman, board of directors member with the Norwalk Education Foundation, Lauren Rosato, executive director of the foundation, and Michael Everett-Lane of DonorsChoose attend the Wine Tasting and Chocolate Party to benefit the Norwalk Education Foundation at Lillian August on Thursday night.

Wine and chocolate event benefits NEF

NORWALK

By NINA SEN
Hour Staff Writer

Now, donors anywhere in the world can help Norwalk teachers get the books and supplies they need for class.

A new partnership between the Norwalk Education Foundation and DonorsChoose allows anybody to

donate money to a school classroom. The money will be used for items such as books, chalkboards or even computers.

DonorsChoose is a national non-profit that takes requests from teachers and allows anyone to donate from \$10 to the maximum amount needed to fill the request. On the Norwalk page, teachers asked for a writing easel, projector and even a small electric pencil sharpener.

"Teachers usually pay for these items out of pocket," said Michael Everett-Lane, executive director of the northeast region of DonorsChoose. "Small grants like these allow teachers to be innovative and focus on their classroom."

The partnership was announced at the 10th anniversary celebration of Norwalk Education Foundation, a

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Partnership to benefit classrooms

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nonprofit that supports after-school activities, professional development and teacher grants.

The celebration started with a *Vino e Cioccolato* (Wine and Chocolate) tasting party at Lillian August home furnishings and interior design.

Knipschildt Chocolatier, Colonial Wines & Spirits, and VinUS, Inc. provided wine and chocolate as well as hors d'oeuvres for tasting. Guitarist Ed Wright performed light blues and jazz to set the mood while student photography adorned the walls. The photographs are part of an after-school initiative by NEF that puts middle-schoolers behind the lens.

Essentially, anyone can

donate money to any proposal via online donation and DonorsChoose will ship the requested item to the classroom. Students write thank-you notes to their classroom donors for the gifts they have received.

"Instead of giving the teacher a cup with an apple on it, this is a great way to give to the community and schools," said Lauren Rosato, executive director of NEF. "It really has an impact on teachers and students."

Rosato and Everett-Lane agreed that teachers are a precious resource so the partnership gives them national visibility and leverages fundraising.

Nearly 200 guests at the cele-

bration enjoyed many varieties of wine, but they came to support the organizations.

"Education is very important to me," said Hamid Malakpour. "I'm glad to be here and support these projects."

Rosato hopes to receive \$50,000 in grant money from donors and was pleased at the turnout Thursday.

"It's great to see so many people here," she said. "We support teachers, and they really know what they need in classrooms. Looking at the turnout tonight I think it'll be easy to achieve our goals."

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