

The Green

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Since

Light The Way Gala Is Set For March 23

By Dave Bell

Once a year, the academic foundation of the Bond County Community Unit #2 School District holds a fundraising event that supports the academic programs of the district.

This year's fourth annual "Light The Way Gala" will be held on Saturday, March 23, at Copper Dock Winery and Banquet Center.

It's an event that generates the lion's share of the support raised by the organization each year.

"It's a very important part of our fundraising efforts," said Dr. William Beckert, president of the foundation. "We used to do a lot of smaller events, but everybody seems to have a good time at the gala. They get a good meal, some live music, and a chance to socialize."

The other key part of the evening involves an auction, during which dozens of donated items are sold through either a live auction or a silent auction format.

Last year, the "Light The Way Gala" dinner and auction generated about \$25,000. Nearly \$10,000 of that was awarded to district teachers who applied for grants to fund programs that go above and beyond the normal scope of specific classes. Another \$16,000 went toward the establishment of

a STEM lab at the high school, where students will learn about science, technology, engineering and math.

Superintendent Wes Olson said that the gala "gives us a chance to bring people together in the name of helping our students."

He said that the teacher grants made possible through the gala "fill a gap when funds aren't available to finance extra academic opportunities." The STEM lab, he added, will allow more learning opportunities in areas such as technology, computers, robotics, and drones.

"This foundation has supported the district for many years," Olson said. "It's one of the most active foundations I've been around, and it involves many retired educators and parents."

According to the schedule for the March 23 gala, the doors will open at 5 p.m., dinner will be served from 6 to 7 p.m., and the live auction will follow dinner. The evening concludes with music by the Chapman Brothers Acoustic Duo.

More information about the foundation and the gala is available at www.bccu2af.org.

Organizers said that only a few tickets remain at Watson's Drug Store, and when those are gone no more will be sold. Tickets are not available at the door.



'Celebration'

These quilters designed quilt blocks, right, are winners: Aiden Smith in the category with her orange and Spanish celebration, the D block. Not pictured is Nichole Reed's II. The blocks will be on display at the March 23 gala at the Methodist Church east of C