

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 10, 2008

- WHAT:** The 19th Annual Friends of the Fine Arts Center Benefit Event
- WHEN:** Saturday, February 2nd, 6:30pm-11:30pm
- WHERE:** Hotel Northampton, Northampton, MA
Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or
go online to www.fineartscenter.com/tickets
- IMAGES:** To download images relating to this press release please go online to
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(19th Annual Friends of the Fine Arts Center Gala on February 2nd)

The Friends of the Fine Arts Center is getting "In the Mood" to host its 19th annual benefit party that's full of great entertainment, food, and auction items donated by local businesses. This year, the benefit auction went live online January 7th so that everyone, not just Gala attendees, could have the chance to bid on the many wonderful items offered through the auction. The Gala itself will be held throughout the entire Hotel Northampton with entertainment options in four rooms. There is no reserved seating so that patrons can mingle and move easily throughout the venue. The auction closes at midnight February 2nd, the night of the gala. To access the online auction go to www.umassfineartscenter.cmarket.com.

In addition to bidding on items online in advance of the Gala, patrons will be able to bid on auction items via laptops stationed throughout the hotel that evening. There will also be several outstanding wine and liquor baskets available to bid on at the Gala event donated by Liquors 44, Whole Foods Market, Spirit Haus, AnnMarie Harding/Pravda Vodka and Four Seasons Wine. The Gala and auction will benefit artist community educational residencies providing artist access to area schools and communities.

The auction is bursting with over 100 treasures of fine arts, original creations, getaways, catered parties, vacation homes, and more all donated from local businesses and artists. Highlights include fabulous trips such as a one week stay at the exclusive Sloane Club in London, an Italian villa, Disney getaway package, or Couples Resort in Jamaica; 2004 and 2007 World Series Red Sox and Patriots memorabilia; golfing packages and New England Revolution Clubhouse tickets; an exquisite white gold, diamond & amethyst briolette cut drop pendant; a

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Dell laptop computer, BlackBerry, and Bose SoundDock; and fine art by Scott Prior, Mallory Lake, and George Trakas, among others.

This year's gala theme "In the Mood" promises to do just that with a variety of entertainment options available throughout the hotel all evening long. In the Ballroom, the Jeff Holmes Big Band will keep the mood swinging with jazz, oldies and rock standards. In the Hampshire room, Jose Gonzalez and Banda Criolla will keep it hot with his incendiary brand of salsa while in Wiggins Tavern, Sue Wiggin and Wiggin' Out keeps the mood on the smoky, sultry side. For those who want to take control of the mike, there'll be karaoke provided by Cloud Nine in the Coolidge Café.

Hotel Northampton owner Mansour Ghalibaf has inspired his chefs to create an exciting menu for the evening including a new dish created just for this event: Dijon crusted Lamp Chops with Fig Infused Balsamic Glaze. Each room will have a different theme (so to speak) and therefore different menu items to go along with each mood. For instance, in the Hampshire Room there will be a fajita station and Spanish style steamship of pork to go along with the Latino music provided. In the Wiggins Tavern, New Orleans fare will be plentiful with jambalaya, BBQ pulled pork, and Tilapia Etouffe. Or while people are crooning to karaoke in the Coolidge Cafe, a sushi display and noodle bar is available. The ballroom will offer pasta, salad, and carving stations, antipasto - basically, it will be a moveable feast of gastronomic proportions. Cash bars will be available throughout the hotel.

Ticket price for the Gala event is \$100 per person and includes a \$25 tax-deductible contribution. Individual sponsor tickets are available at \$150 and corporate sponsorships are available starting at \$500. For more information, please call the Friends of the Fine Arts Center at 413.545.3671. For tickets to the event, call the box office at 413.545.2511 or 1.800.999.UMAS. For more details about the event go online to fineartscenter.com.

Lead sponsor for the Gala is Northampton Cooperative Bank. In-kind sponsors include the Daily Hampshire Gazette, WEIB 106.3FM, Bassette Company and the Hotel Northampton. Supporting sponsors include Finck & Perras Insurance, Florence Savings Bank, Goggins Real Estate, H.B. Financial Group, PeoplesBank, Fallon Health Care, Realty World Sawicki, TD Banknorth, Mark & Sarah Tanner.

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