

Plans Are Underway for the 13th Annual Taste of Rappahannock on September 11

by Laura Overstreet, Special to The Rappahannock News

Plans are underway for Headwaters Foundation's 13th annual Taste of Rappahannock, widely considered as one of the County's most popular fundraising events. This year's event, which will be held at Belle Meade Schoolhouse on September 11, beginning at 6 p.m., promises to be an exciting evening.

"We've hired Red Apple Auctions of Alexandria to help us with both the silent and live auctions, and they have some great new ideas that we are implementing," said Toni Egger, Executive Director for Headwaters.

Nearly 50 one-of-a-kind items will be auctioned. Already on the bidding list and which are sure to cause competitive bidding are a week at *Le Silence*, a charming, five-bedroom farmhouse in the scenic countryside of Burgundy, France; a trip to Cancun; and a theater weekend in Washington, DC. Guests may bid on other unique experiences such as a helicopter ride and accompanying gourmet picnic; a cooking workshop and dinner with well-known chef and writer Hi Soo Hepinstall; a behind-the-scenes tour and tasting at Copper Fox Distillery; original art from a number of Rappahannock County's most accomplished artists and much more.

Of course, The Taste is all about the students of Rappahannock County and this year, more than ever, they will be a part of this time-honored event. Students will be involved in every aspect of the evening from greeting and chatting with guests to serving hors d'oeuvres, and helping to prepare and serve a wide selection of dishes of locally-sourced foods. A musical ensemble from Rappahannock High School will provide live background music. During the formal dinner program, one student will share how his experience with Headwaters has made a difference in his life.

Funds raised during the annual Taste of Rappahannock are crucial to underwriting the enrichment programs offered to students by Headwaters throughout the year. This year's "Challenge" will, in fact, be a challenge – thanks to generous donations by Rappahannock resident Mitzi Young and the late Took Crowell—and should generate significant contributions. High level challenge donors will be honored with a champagne reception.

The funds raised this year are more important than ever, as Headwaters looks to expand its outreach efforts. In addition to supporting its robust, long-lived programs, including Farm-to-Table, Starfish Mentoring, and Next Step, and its supportive Teacher Mini-Grants and Complementary Staff Development efforts, funds are needed to develop new programs.

“Rappahannock County has a new school administration with new ideas and programs they will want to launch. We want to be ready and able to help,” Egger said. “We would like to create an opportunity fund so that we can respond to developing needs and ideas for programs at all levels of school.”

In the planning stage is an after-school program for elementary school children. Egger said that a survey will be sent in August to elementary school age children and their parents. “We want to learn from the parents and students what they would like to see in an after-school program before we build it and will incorporate their thoughts and suggestions,” Egger said. “We hope to start such a program in January.” She credits Headwaters volunteer Philip Strange for outlining a proposal for the effort.

Demand for tickets this year will likely be greater than ever, in part because of advertising support in *Flavor* magazine which reaches some 50,000 people throughout National Capital region, including DC, Maryland, Northern and Central Virginia. Details of this year’s Taste are online at Headwaters Foundation’s website, headwatersfdn.org.

Event Co-Chairs Cheri Woodard, Terri Lehman, and Ashleigh Cannon Sharp said that invitations to the 13th annual Taste of Rappahannock will be in the mail in early August. Tickets are \$150 for individuals; Patron Tables of ten are \$2000. Sponsored Tables are \$1200 and include two tickets to the event. No doubt, the event will sell out as soon as invitations reach the mailbox.

For anyone who has not yet had the opportunity to participate in this uniquely Rappahannock County experience, email your name and address to Toni Egger at director@headwatersfdn.org or call Toni at 540-987-3322. Tickets are \$150 for individuals and tables may be sponsored. Event sponsorships are also available. Come to The Taste and enjoy the best of Rappahannock for a very worthy cause.

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