

Evening Under the Stars sets a record

A record crowd of more than 300 friends and supporters of the Shirley Heinze Land Trust gathered at International Friendship Gardens recently to celebrate the organization's accomplishments during the past year with a French-themed celebration, "A Taste of Provence."

RACHEL SAXON, board president of the Michigan City-based land trust which protects and restores natural areas in Northwest Indiana, proclaimed the evening a glowing success.

The event featured a formal dinner, live and silent auction, and a paddle raiser. Guests were served champagne and Nature's Beer supplied by The Upland Brewing Company as they arrived and mingled, while local musicians from the South Shore Orchestra and LaPorte Symphony played French chamber music in the background.

The reception was followed by a formal gourmet dinner starting with Salade Nicoise and featuring Coq Au Vin served by Sahara Restaurant, of Michigan City.

A red and white wine selection was served throughout the evening.

INSIGHT



BY MARGE KULLERSTRAND

French tarts and Napoleon pastries were savored for dessert.

NIPSCO, a corporate sponsor of the summer gala, presented a \$50,000 check to the Heinze Trust on behalf of the NiSource Charitable Foundation to help purchase a 30-acre parcel of land in Chesterton. The property is ecologically significant and uniquely positioned on the Little Calumet River, adjacent to Brummitt Elementary School, and will make paddling, hiking and educational opportunities available to the public.

KRIS KROUSE, land trust executive director, said the group is extremely grateful for NIPSCO's commitment to land conservation.



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As the paddle raiser commenced, DON BABCOCK, NIPSCO's economic development director, announced a dollar-for-dollar match of as much as \$25,000 to leverage additional financial support for the Little Calumet Wetlands Project.

More than 70 guests raised their paddles to make more than \$30,000 in financial contributions from the floor. With NIPSCO's total support of \$75,000 and the paddle funds, the Heinze Trust will be able to make the land acquisition a reality.

Krouse recognized individuals for their work in building relationships to help advance the cause of preserving and restoring natural areas in Northwest Indiana. They include LEE BOTTS, environmental activist; PAT TAYLOR of The Louise H. Landau Foundation; JOHN BACONE, director of Indiana DNR's Division of Nature Preserves; JOHN SWANSON, executive director of Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission; LEIGH MORRIS, chair of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority; and HOWARD COHEN, chancellor of Purdue University Calumet.

At the silent auction, a Trail Creek kayaking expedition hosted by DAN PLATH, SHIRLEY HEINZE board member and president of the Northwest Indiana Paddling Association, was featured, along with a "Behind the Scenes" tour of Shedd Aquarium in Chicago.

The live portion of the auction, where guests could bid on one-of-a-kind getaway and adventure packages, featured a ride in a 1929 Packard and private tour of the Hesston Steam Museum, as well as a stay at the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal, Canada.

Since 1981, Shirley Heinze Land Trust has protected, preserved and restored ecologically significant and sensitive lands in Lake, LaPorte and Porter counties.

To learn more about its properties and volunteer opportunities, visit HEINZETRUST.ORG, call (219) 879-4725, or e-mail land@heinzetrust.org.



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After finishing a gourmet dinner at the Shirley Heinze Land Trust gala at International Friendship Gardens, Craig Nelson and wife, Kay, NWI Forum Environmental Affairs director; Lee Botts, environmental activist; Vicky Plath and husband, Dan, Shirley Heinze Land Trust board member; Bill Gregory of Indiana University Northwest and his wife, Carolyn Saxton, executive director of Lubeznik Center for the Arts, wait for the paddle raiser to begin.

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