**Gala Committee Meeting Minutes  
June 14, 2017, 4:15pm**

**Attendees**: Paddi LeShane, Ed Bryan, Laura Post, Carol McCabe, Cara Hardacker, Erum Randhawa, Pam Verney, Lena DiGenti, Deb Shulansky, Paige Abrams, Justine Rakich-Kelly, Abby Woodhouse, Artila Lubonja

**Updates:**

* Save the Date
  + Expect your Save the Date to come in the mail next week. Let Paige know if you didn’t get one.
  + If you have any more names, please let us know and we’ll mail them one.
  + BNY Mellon has been printing the Save the Date and the invitation for the past few years in-kind. The West Hartford office is closing in late July which may impact both the cash sponsorship and the invitation printing. The sponsorship information has been presented to the Westport office leadership team. Justine has reached out to Mark Boxer (Cigna) to see if Cigna can provide in-kind printing.
* Paige is filling out online requests to invite the Governor, Mayor Bronin, Mayor Cantor and John Larson to the Gala.
* Venue update: The Delamar is slated to open mid-summer with their restaurant and have their grand opening around Labor Day.
* Gary Katz was confirmed as our auctioneer this year. Justine spoke with John Motley, who was our auctioneer from last year, and he is still very interested in being part of the Gala by donating an auction item.
* Paige researched mobile bidding and determined CLC’s new CRM offers some of the same features. The mobile bidding package which allows for bidding from mobile phones is expensive and an expense that is difficult to justify for this year’s gala.

**Auction Items:**

* The committee should focus on actively soliciting both live and silent auction items —we’ll take anything, including small gift cards to put into a larger package. An area of need is unique experiences and access that the public can’t just go out and buy.
* Items that did well last year: LEGO sets (Laura will solicit these this year), large teddy bear (Judge Dolan usually donates this last minute), Saybrook beach house weekend, and some jewelry.
* We need live auction items. Vacation homes, airline miles to redeem for tickets, etc. —we currently only have the Hilton Head house.
  + Ideas: Justine will ask Andy Hechtman for his Siesta Key condo again and Fatima Lobo for the Hawaiian paradise package again. Cara’s husband has committed to the catered dinner and will ask if he can double up. Paige submitted a JetBlue sponsorship/ticket voucher donation application and Paddi also suggested Southwest for an airline ticket donation.
  + Laura committed to securing Red Sox tickets. Carol is working on a Yard Goats experience and Paddi has a connection with Melissa & Doug, a CT toy company who may be able to provide items such as a goat for the Yard Goats package.
  + Discussion about a “DC Experience” through John Larson.
* Lots of discussion on packaging items. Past items that were different: beer basket, children’s book basket, game tower. The committee agrees this is something we should expand on—maybe soliciting Mattel for a game basket.
* Silent auction ideas: Milk Craft, Vinted, Bear’s, Grant’s, Bell Boat Cruise

**Wine Pull/Giving Tree:**

* One Idea for wine pull is to integrate the logo into the evening by having guests select a numbered building block which correlates to a wine bottle. Guests will use the blocks to help us continue to “build our house”. Another idea is to carry through the star theme from the Save the Date. With several months’ notice, Deb can create ceramic stars for the giving tree.
  + Paddi brought up new legislation that deregulates raffles. This might be something we incorporate into the pull or into an auction item.
* Paige wants to approach Total Wine to be the wine pull sponsor. Committee can also solicit individuals to donate special bottles to make the wine pull more exciting and attractive.
* Wine Pull vs. Teddy Bears: do we want to have our “hand out at every corner?” General consensus from the committee was that doing both wouldn’t be too much, as they are both very different activities and the wine pull wouldn’t be at a cost to CLC.

**Entertainment:**

* Paige contacted owner of Time Frozen Photography about providing pro-bono photography services. Keith, the owner said he is a definite maybe. Lena knows Keith and will put in a good word for us.
* Music ideas as guests arrive: kids from Talcott Mountain Science Center’s music program playing orchestral music and Backbeat Music Academy in Glastonbury kids singing holiday and contemporary music. Let us know if you have any other ideas.
* Paige has reached out to the staff attorneys to determine if there are past clients we might be able to feature in a video. A video needs to be compelling and well done. If we are not able to gather enough powerful footage, we will not have a video.
  + Justine has a former client, Theresa, who she keeps in touch with. She spoke 10 years ago. Committee consensus is having Theresa speak is compelling and those who heard Theresa speak about 10 years would love to hear an update.

**COMMITTEE ACTION STEPS**

* Please continue to provide names/mailing addresses to Paige for Save the Date. We will continue to mail Save the Date postcards.
* Focus on soliciting live and silent auction items. Please email Paige the businesses/individuals you plan to solicit for auction items to avoid the same business/individual being approached multiple times for CLC Gala. Also, if you have an idea, but not sure how to go about securing, please be sure to share idea. Updated auction list attached.
* Please continue to think about ideas for interactive wine pull.

**INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEE ACTION STEPS**

* Paddi will reach out to Melissa & Doug for potential auction items. Paddi to talk with Paige about specific requests that would benefit auction.
* Paige will contact Duby McDowell about possible red sox opportunities/swag.
* Paige will look into raffle now that state regulations will change and each town will determine how they will regulate raffles.
* Paige to look into a Washington DC experience through John Larson’s office.
* Justine will ask for Siesta Key and Hawaii condos again for live auction.