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More than \$140,000 raised at Montessori Family Center's Sun & Stars Auction on 2/28

The 21st Annual Sun & Stars Auction, a benefit for St. Helena's Montessori Family Center's two early childhood education programs, raised more than \$140,000 in a lively atmosphere at Niebaum-Coppola Winery on February 28. Attendees were welcomed---on video---by famous newsman Dan Rather. The auctioneer was the well-known and vivacious Fritz Hatton. The top lots in the auction were:

Lot 31: a dinner for 8 with Hundred Acre Winery owners Jayson & Barbara Woodbridge and winemaker Philippe Melka, including a tour, tasting, dinner (by Tra Vigne chef Michael Reardon) and limousine service

Lot 33: a dinner for 4 at The French Laundry with wines from Colgin, Abreu Vineyards, Aubert Wines

Lot 7: a dinner for 8 at the home of Mike & Kara Dunn, with wines from Dunn Vineyards (meal by Todd Humphries of Martini House)

Lot 27: flight for 2 to Paso Robles with Turley Wine Cellars' owner Larry Turley and winemaker Ehren Jordan, touring and tasting and lunch

Lot 23: dinner for 20 at the home of Karen & Oliver Caldwell, co-hosted by Laurie & Tom Shelton of Joseph Phelps Winery, with wines by Phelps

Lot 20: an "instant cellar" collection of wines from the Spring Mountain District and "instant library" of subscriptions to major wine publications

Lot 11: a serigraph by Thomas Pradzynski of a Parisian street scene.

A new feature this year was the option to bid online (<<http://www.sunandstarsauction.org/>>www.sunandstarsauction.org), and there were some bidders who used this route to participate in the auction.

Hors d'oeuvres during the evening were provided by Armadillo's, Bosko's Trattoria, Café Kinyon, Cindy's Backstreet Kitchen, Culinary Institute of America at Greystone, Dean & DeLuca, Fume Bistro & Bar, Gordon's Café, Knickerbocker's, Meadowood Napa Valley, Mustard's Grill, Silverado Brewery and Sunshine Foods.

A wine reception before the live auction included wines by Chameleon Cellars, Chappellet Vineyards, Franciscan Oakville Estate, Miner Family Vineyards, Napa Wine Company, Neyers Vineyards, Niebaum-Coppola Estate Winery, Paraduxx, Robert Pecota Winery, Rutherford Grove Winery, Shafer Vineyards, Smith-Madrone Vineyards & Winery, Summit Lake Vineyards, Vine Cliff Winery and

White Oak Vineyards & Winery, poured by the winemakers and winery owners themselves.

“What a night we had, filled with incredible energy,” explained Kristin Martin, Chairman of the Sun & Stars Auction. “As I look back on the many months of time spent planning and coordinating, it made it all worthwhile to not only see everyone having a great time, but to also witness the incredible generosity of our community. There are so many people to thank; I want everyone to know how

much their time, energy, and donations are appreciated. A man never stands as tall as when he kneels to help a child,” she added.

The school’s website will be updated during the year with details of upcoming events. Check <http://www.sunandstarsauction.org/> for those details.

The Montessori Family Center in St. Helena is a dynamic learning center which provides children with an enriching environment which empowers them with a love of learning. The Sun & Stars Auction is the Center's only fundraising event, and its proceeds support scholarships, learning materials, ongoing staff training and maintenance of our buildings and playground equipment. Founded in 1981, The Montessori Family Center (of St. Helena) is the only Montessori program in St. Helena with a toddler program. Montessori Family Center has two campuses--The Toddler House welcomes children from 18 months to 3 years old, and the Pre-School/Kindergarten welcomes children ages 3 to 6. The schools have a traditional Montessori environment, an energetic and dedicated staff, and extensive outdoor play areas which include gardens, sandboxes, swings, play structures and three-wheeled toys.

The Montessori Family Center is a non-profit educational organization, dedicated to providing a nurturing educational environment for the complete and total fulfillment of children. For more information about the school, visit the MFC website at www.sunandstarsauction.org or call 707/967-1984. The Montessori Family Center is a 501 3(c) charitable organization and welcomes donations from the community.

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