

BASH 2010: A Belief in Success

After weeks of plans, prayers, and hard work, BASH 2010 proved itself a winner. April 23rd launched the festivities with Friday Family Fun night hosted by Trish Opitz and Trish Madsen. The evening included both silent and live auctions, a scrumptious picnic dinner, and—new this year—a Kids Zone where Loyola students entertained the children while their parents participated in the auctions. Lucky families went home with items ranging from class projects to Snowbowl ski passes. One guest even scored a portable generator capable of powering an entire house. The evening also featured “Heads and Tails,” an action-packed 50/50 coin-flip game. Hundreds of people attended Friday night’s activities, and no one left disappointed.

The Saturday night event reflected the same kind of energy and excitement, boosted by the new and improved sound system in the Sister Rita Mudd Activity Center. Registration began at 4:30, followed by cocktails and a full course meal prepared by our local Outback Steak House. Loyola students served the dinner, including kids from the successful Speech and Debate Team and star athletes from numerous winning teams. A full-range silent auction coincided with the dinner, featuring items ranging from antique art and furniture, to Griz-Bobcat helmets and sports gear, to professionally donated estate planning. The most poignant moment of the evening occurred just after dinner when Dorothy “Dee” Stergios received the Shining Star Award (see article).

The live auction began immediately after dinner, with Seattle auctioneer, Larry Snyder, taking over the microphone. “Of all the auctions I do across the United States, this is my favorite. People in Missoula really care for the school and the kids. It’s clear how much the Foundation executives care about this event. I love being here. BASH has become a real part of my life.” Watching Larry and bid monitor Matt Manley cackle and cajole throughout the night was a sight to behold. Auctioned items covered virtually all interests and hobbies, and they ranged from the practical to the downright decadent. Participants witnessed the sale of a four foot tall, hand-made dollhouse; a real, live puppy; an original painting by local artist, Hadley Ferguson; NASCAR “Hot Pit” Passes; NFL Green Bay Packer football tickets; and a private jet for eight anywhere west of the Mississippi plus a full week family vacation at Big Sky Ski Resort.

However, the highlight of the night was Marc Mariani.

Although the Foundation had arranged for Marc’s presence at BASH months in advance, the serendipitous timing of his arrival couldn’t have been more perfect: he walked in shortly after being drafted by the NFL Tennessee Titans! Marc created lively bidding excitement the same way he often orchestrated fabulous plays for the Griz. He brought the house down with his auctioning of Griz-Bobcat tickets, and although originally scheduled to spend just 20 minutes at center stage, Marc generously mingled with BASH attendees for two hours.

The night consisted of one exciting auction item after another until the last item sold at 11:15. And although everyone had great fun, each person was keenly aware that this weekend event was for the kids and the continued success of Missoula Catholic Schools. It was truly a testament to the many individuals who sacrificed countless hours in their belief of outstanding Catholic education.