



Community, compassion and commitment are the words organizers of the 2022 Waynesboro Area Gala Cancer Auction are using to describe the event for this year. The 40th annual auction will be held Saturday, April 9.

“I feel really good about what we’ve done ... raising \$2.5 million for cancer programs in the last 40 years,” according to Mike Beck, a member of the steering committee.

“We hope someone does something next year. There are so many who are ready to retire from their committees and the auction ... I don’t know how those remaining would be able to do it as it is now. We now have some younger people involved, so I think they will look in a new direction, probably something on a smaller scale.”

Beck has been involved in the auction since the late 1980s. His wife, Denise, who battled cancer from 1980 until she died in 2016, started volunteering for the event in the mid-1980s.

Beck began his volunteer stint by helping to pick up donated items from people’s homes. “That was a much bigger deal in the beginning. We told donors, ‘If you donate, we’ll pick it up.’ But it got to be a huge chore, so then we started having solicitors pick up the items.

“Again,” Beck added, “this all follows Denise. I got more and more involved in soliciting, personally soliciting and then with the computer system that had been set up by Bob and Caroline Mack. They set up the database for the donations and then Denise stepped up and did that when they retired.”

Donations were first housed in a storage unit, but then the Beck home on East Main Street became the collection site and remains such today.

“Denise started recruiting solicitors and then became donations chairman, and every step of the way I followed and helped with that. When she became ill again, I started taking over more and more of her role with the donations.”

Each solicitor – this year there are 45 – receives a sheet with the names and contact information for their donors from the previous year.

“All the items, reasonably-sized ones, are dropped off at my house, and then I enter all the solicitor, donor and item information into our auction tracker (database),” he added. WAGCA will accept items up to two days before the auction. Cash and checks are always welcome, Beck said.

Items received by March 5 will be listed in the catalog. Items received after that will be included on an addendum available the day of the auction.

The items are taken Thursday night to the auction site and set up by volunteers. Members from two organizations at Waynesboro Area Senior High School – The National Honor Society and Future Business Leaders of America, assist that night as well as during the auction.

The night of the auction, Beck can be found on the stage. “I work ahead of the announcers and auctioneers, getting them prepared for what’s up (for bid) next. At the end of the night, we have to break down the tables, load them up and clean up the stage and throughout the building. We’re still looking for someone to donate (8-foot) tables,” he noted.

What are Beck's plans for April 10? "Take a vacation," he said. "We start working in November. I clean up the database, remove names of deceased donors and businesses we know have closed."

The committee holds a wrap-up picnic after the auction. "We talk about what we felt went right, what went wrong, and any issues that came up and how we can fix them, etc.," Beck noted. "Then we exhale."

Memorable moments for Beck include the year his neighbor and Toyota dealership owner Dean Hebb, offered to donate a brand new car for the auction. "It'll bring \$10,000 ... I guarantee it,' he told me. The night of the auction, the bidding took five minutes and we got \$10,000," Beck noted.

Vacation offerings such as a package to Lansdowne Resort and Spa in Leesburg, Va., are always popular with bidders, he noted. "We typically have Penn State and Orioles tickets, the picnic for 25 from The Parlor House, and a gallon of ice cream each week for 14 weeks from Antietam Dairy. We'll also have six Barbie-filled baskets from the same donor. She accumulates items on sale throughout the year to fill them." Beck encourages anyone who has an item or cash to donate to call him at 717-762-0285.

The 2022 Waynesboro Area Gala Cancer Auction will be held Saturday, April 9, at Green Grove Gardens, 1032 Buchanan Trail East, Greencastle. Doors open at 3 p.m., the silent auction begins at 4 p.m., and live bidding starts at 5:30 p.m.; admission is free.

Visit the website, www.wagca.org for more information; catalog items will be listed after March 14.