

Sipping in Springtime event to be held Saturday

By Mark Storer

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Angela Skultety came to the Conejo Valley from Florida looking for a different kind of opportunity. She wanted to do philanthropic work and raise her children while her husband worked.

Four years ago, she came across the Westlake Village Junior Women's Club, a group of about 80 women with the same goal.

"We like to give back to the community and so we raise funds for that purpose and provide local charities with what they need, as much as we can," said Skultety, who serves now as vice president and spring event fundraising chairwoman of the group.

The club plans its second annual Sipping in Springtime event from 3 to 6 p.m. Saturday at Gardens of the World in Thousand Oaks. The event will feature 30 wineries and restaurants, as well as a silent auction and raffle prizes.

While the club's annual fall Gingerbread Boutique has stood the test of time, now in its 42nd year, the "juniors," as they call themselves, were looking for something more promising in the spring.

"We tried casino nights, bowling, dinner and dances, but none of them really felt like something we could stick with," said Erika Owens, a club member who handles public relations. "So we decided to do something different that we could adapt each year, and last year was successful enough for us to do it again."

This year, the group has chosen to highlight the New West Symphony's music van, a vehicle equipped with musical instruments that goes to schools and introduces students to instruments.

"So many schools have lost their funding for music programs," Skultety said. "We felt like this was an important charity to highlight."

Skultety said last year's event raised about \$30,000 for local charities and she hopes to exceed that number this year.

"We partner with a lot of different charities and while we're highlighting New West Symphony, we'll also give some of the funds to other charities as well," Owens said.

"We continue to give to places like Senior Concerns, Hospice of the Conejo, Santa Comes to Westlake Food Drive and others."

Skultety said: "We want to create a long-lasting event that won't get outdated. But it needs to fulfill our fundraising goals, as well."

Skultety said the group raises about \$50,000 a year between the fall and spring fundraisers.

The Sipping in Springtime event will feature a number of local restaurants, including Mastro's Steakhouse, Zin Bistro, Adobe Cantina, Pikey's Pub and others, as well as a number of wineries like EOS Estate, Firestone, Hess, Joel Gott and others. The wines are being poured by Young's Market, and representatives will discuss the selections.

Silent auction items will include Disneyland Park Hopper passes, Dodger tickets, wine tasting packages, beauty and fitness baskets, and other items. Raffle prizes include a \$250 Visa gift card, a \$150 Mastro's Steakhouse gift certificate and two tickets to see the New West Symphony.

Tickets can be purchased online through Friday morning for \$55 at the group's website or \$65 at the gate. Gardens of the World is at 2001 Thousand Oaks Blvd. in Thousand Oaks.

On the Net: <http://www.westlakejuniors.org>



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