

The Macomb Daily (<http://www.macombdaily.com>)

## 25th annual ArtParty raises more than \$30,000 for Anton Art Center

*By Mitch Hotts, The Macomb Daily*

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More than 400 of the Mount Clemens area's movers and shakers gathered Thursday for ArtParty, the annual fundraiser for the Anton Art Center, but several vendors and guests were first-time visitors.

"Mount Clemens is the place to be for the Macomb County art community," said Tim Johnson of Fraser-based Arts Academy in the Woods as he manned an informational table in the food tent.

Now in its 25th year, the three-hour outdoor ArtParty was held under a huge tent on Macomb Place in the heart of the city. It's a major fundraiser for the nonprofit Anton Art Center, one of metropolitan

Detroit's premier art galleries.

This year's celebration included several chandeliers fashioned from recycled water bottles collected in Flint during the ongoing water crisis as well as a 2017 Lincoln MKZ, which was provided by the event by Crest Lincoln in Sterling Heights.

Between the \$60 per-person admission, along with a host of raffles and an auction of artwork, the event was expected to bring in more than \$30,000, according to Phil Gilchrist, executive director of the Anton Art Center.

"People enjoy this event and have a good time, but we are also here to communicate to the public about our programs and outreach, including for Mount Clemens Community Schools," he said.

Guests enjoyed samples of food and drink from more than 30 food and drink stations, art demonstrations, live music from Daddy-Daughter Duo (Rennie Kaufmann and his daughter Esther), dancing, a silent auction and raffle.

Developer and former clothier Gebran Anton served as honorary chairman. He and his wife, Suzanne, have been longtime supporters of that bears his name. He marveled over the atmosphere the event has taken on as well as the team of volunteers and staff members who coordinate it all.

"I don't think it's ever been set up any nicer than this year," Anton said. "It's so comfortable and welcoming. They've done an exceptional job."

Guests like Diana Rascano of St. Clair Shores agreed.

"We have been coming here since the beginning," said Rascano, a former member of the board for the Art Center and a Detroit Edison retiree. "We love the food and all the great restaurants. But more importantly, it's supporting the arts in the community. It's one of the best events on the east side."

Of course, the food is the star of the show.

One of the most-talked about dishes of the night was J. Baldwin's homemade meatloaf and mashed potatoes with port wine sauce and topped with applewood bacon. Also noted was "quite possibly the world's best sangria" from El Charro Mexican Restaurant in Fraser, said server Willow Flores.

People were also gushing about the dutch apple pie and caramel pie from Achatz Handmade Pie Co., crab chowder from Chantel's Jailhouse Deli, Swedish meatballs from Movable Feast, the 120-pound roasted pig from Stahl's, chicken piccante from Zuccaro Banquets & Catering, chocolate-covered pretzels from Party Pretzels, and the smoked pork ribs from Grey Ghost, a new Midtown eatery created by twin brothers and Chippewa Valley High School graduates David and John Vermiglio.

"We're a huge fan of the arts and the Anton Art Center, and we want to give back to the community," said David Vermiglio. "That's why we're here."

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