

Projected \$323,000 donated to American Cancer Society at Gateway Center

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The American Cancer Society's 45th Annual Mardi Gras Ball took place February 17th at the Gateway Convention Center in Collinsville, Ill., welcoming nearly 800 people. The Mardi Gras Ball was hosted by John Simmons and the law firm, Simmons Hanly Conroy, LLC. The projected \$323,000 raised for the society is the most funds raised in the 45 year history of the event.



“My experience with Gateway Center was entirely positive. From event planning to catering needs to specifics of facility usage, every aspect, question and concern was addressed in a helpful and flexible manner,” said Roger Lewis, Executive Assistant of

Simmons Hanly Conroy and Event Planner of the Mardi Gras Ball. “The underlying philosophy seems to be what can be done for the client, rather than the too-often experienced resistance and lists of everything which cannot be done so often encountered at other venues.”

This was the first year the Mardi Gras Ball was held at Gateway Center. The money raised by the Mardi Gras Ball was given through a combination of corporate sponsorships, private donations, tickets to the event and proceeds from the live and silent auctions. In addition, volunteers from the firm, Alton Little Theatre, and the local chapter of the American Cancer Society donated countless hours to plan and organize the event.

This year the American Cancer Society utilized GiveSmart for their silent auction items. GiveSmart is a system the guests used on their Smartphones to easily place bids on desired items. The system allows the simplicity of placing a “Max Bid” for guest to enter the highest price you are willing to bid for the item and the GiveSmart system will automatically bid for you up to that maximum amount.

The live auction was emceed by Dewayne Staats, anchor of the Emmy Award-winning Sun Sports telecast and broadcaster of the Tampa Bay Rays. Some of the live auction items included a Classic 1980 Pontiac Trans Am, Super Bowl 50 Trip to San Francisco, Trip to London, Cardinals Baseball Suite, Custom Made Putting Green, Pure Labrador Puppy, Nilo Farms Hunting Package, and more.

To highlight the New Orleans theme, the band Big Bad Voodoo Daddy was the evening’s entertainment. The band was cofounded by Scotty Morris and drummer Kurt Sodergeren and made their debut in their hometown of Ventura, California, in April 1993, helping to usher in the swing revival. Their music has been used in countless films, television shows, and trailers, including Swingers, The Wild, Family Guy, Phineas and Ferb, Malcolm in the Middle, and Ally McBeal, as well as multiple uses of songs for dance routines on Dancing with the Stars and So You Think You Can Dance.



The menu for the evening was created by Ovarions, the in-house caterer for Gateway Center. The salad for the evening was Ovation’s signature “Gateway Greens.” The Gateway Greens consists of mesclun spring mix, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, carrot curls, feta crumbles, homemade croutons, and champagne vinaigrette dressing. The entrée of the evening was a grilled beef tenderloin topped with mushroom demi-glace, accompanied by dauphinoise potatoes and roasted asparagus with red velvet cake for dessert.

Both Gateway Center and Ovarions employees had Mardi Gras staff and guests praising compliments to their service. “In terms of the staff members, everyone – and I mean everyone – was friendly and willing to do whatever was necessary to address our requests. I would recommend to anyone the use of Gateway for an event. Stop looking anywhere else,” said Lewis.



For more information, please contact Gateway Center office at 618-345-8998 ext. 127 or visit www.acsMardiGrasBall.com.

About Gateway Center

Gateway Center is a multi-purpose convention center located in Collinsville, IL that hosts various events. The Center is located 10 minutes from downtown St. Louis, on Highway 157, just north of I-55/70, in Collinsville, Illinois. For information you may call 618-345-8998 or visit gatewaycenter.com.

About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society combines an unyielding passion with nearly a century of experience to save lives and end suffering from cancer. As a global grassroots force with more than 100,000 volunteers in Illinois and millions elsewhere, ACS fights for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. ACS saves lives by helping people stay well, by helping people get well, by finding cures and by fighting back. As the nation's largest non-governmental investor in cancer research, the American Cancer Society turns what we know about cancer into what we do. As a result, more than 11

million people in America who have had cancer, and countless more who have avoided it, will be celebrating birthdays this year. To learn more or get help, call 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

About Simmons Hanly Conroy, LLC

Simmons Hanly Conroy LLC is one of the nation's largest mass tort law firms and a leading voice for victims of mesothelioma and asbestos exposure. The firm's attorneys have recovered more than \$4 billion in verdicts and settlements for individuals in asbestos-related litigation, including the largest-ever U.S. verdict (\$250 million) for a single plaintiff. The firm also represents plaintiffs nationwide in pharmaceutical, consumer protection, environmental and personal injury cases, as well as small and mid-size corporations, inventors and entrepreneurs in matters involving intellectual property infringement and business litigation. Offices are located in New York City, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, St. Louis, and Alton, Ill. Read more at www.simmonsfirm.com.