

Power of the Purse raises more than \$12,000 to help local people

June 11 2015 2:03 PM

Sold-out inaugural United Way women's event a hit

Helping people.



**United Way
of Greater St. Louis**

EAST ALTON — Nearly 200 women demonstrated their generosity and caring at United Way's Southwest Illinois Division first-ever Power of the Purse event by raising

\$12,083 to help local people. Power of the Purse, a United Way women's event featuring a silent and live purse auction, took place on Thursday, June 4, at Lewis and Clark Community College – N. O. Nelson Campus in Edwardsville, IL.

Attendees enjoyed delicious food generously donated by Bella Milano throughout the evening, a cash bar, three rounds of silent auctions for a variety of handbags and purses, and a live auction with 10 designer handbags modeled by well-known local men. 2015 Miss Rodeo Illinois, Ariel Weinman, also made a special appearance and volunteered throughout the evening.

Cindy Smalley, Power of the Purse chair, said, "The atmosphere was electric, and the outpouring of generosity and commitment to help local people through United Way at Power of the Purse was incredible. We are thrilled to have raised more than \$12,000 from this inaugural women's event. It was truly an honor to lead the committee in putting together a fantastic event to support United Way's Southwest Illinois Division."

All proceeds from Power of the Purse will go to United Way's annual fundraising campaign, which supports 40 local health and human service agencies in the community. United Way of Greater St. Louis' Southwest Illinois Division and its 40 partner agencies help more than 200,000 people each year in Madison, Macoupin, Greene, Jersey and Calhoun counties.

"Power of the Purse was created to celebrate the power of women to change their community for the better – to help people through United Way," Smalley said. "Because of the generosity of our guests and sponsors in opening their purse, and their heart, to those in our community who are in need, we are off to a tremendous start for United Way's annual fundraising campaign this year to help people live their best possible lives in Southwestern Illinois."

United Way's Southwest Illinois Division would also like to thank Power of the Purse attendees, event and table sponsors, emcee Daryl Luster of United Way, auctioneer Hayden Geisler with Hilltop Auctions and the Power of the Purse event committee for making this event a dynamic and exciting evening.

Handbag models for Power of the Purse were:

- Ben Beyers, Madison County Associate Judge
- Mark Boeck, Cope Plastics, Inc. strategic business analyst
- Ben Goetten, Jersey County State's Attorney
- J.R. (aka Lawrence Gordon), Nautilus Fitness trainer
- Adam Koishor, Scott Credit Union chief marketing officer
- Jeff Lauritzen, COUNTRY Financial representative
- Rob Schwartz, TheBANK of Edwardsville senior vice president of retail banking
- Al Womack, Boys and Girls Club of Alton executive director

· Mark Kratschmer, Wegman Electric vice president

Purse committee members were:

Chair – Cindy Smalley

Committee members – Veronica Armouti, Sherri Boeck, Rose Gibson, Lisa Hayes, Deb Kasten, Mary Jo Kratschmer, Carla Luken, Debra Pitts, Amber Scott, Page Selby, Dawn Selvog and Jenni Wittman

Event sponsors for the evening included: Olin Brass, Cope Plastics, Inc. and Heyl Royster Women's Forum. For more information on United Way is helping local people in Illinois, visit HelpingPeople.org.

About United Way of Greater St. Louis

United Way of Greater St. Louis mobilizes the community with one goal in mind — helping people live their best possible lives. Located throughout 16 counties in Missouri and Illinois, United Way helps one in three people in the region build a foundation for a good quality of life through basic needs, education, financial stability, health and strong communities. For more information, contact 314-421-0700 or visit www.HelpingPeople.org.