

## Family Building Blocks Uncorked Wine Auction

By Mary Louise VanNatta

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The blustery day didn't keep wildly generous donors away from Zenith Vineyards for the Family Building Blocks fourth annual Uncorked Wine Auction.

This event was a time for dressing up and donating to the mission of Family Building Blocks: to provide services to young children in high-risk families.

I joined Diane and Mike McLaran for a sip of Willamette Valley Vineyard's 2009 Pinot Gris, served by Leslie Thompson-Savage. It was difficult not to be distracted by 70 silent auction items, mostly wine. I bid on a hand-painted silver box pendant by Jessica Ramey, with a tiny Oregon Capitol encased in glass. I also met Ivy Hover of Left Coast Cellars in Rickreall and tried the 2008 Left Bank Pinot Blanc.

If guests arrived a little hungry, they could enjoy amazing appetizers from Creative Catering, Crooked House Bistro, Morton's and Jonathan's.

Throughout the reception, you could hear the booming voice of auctioneer Steve Talbot warning us that tables would soon close. Jim and Chane Griggs were watching a few tables, as were Jason and Dena Beyrouthy.

Family Building Blocks Executive Director Sue Miller introduced me to a few of the many event sponsors, including Steve Altman of Merrill Lynch and Deana and Tyler Freres of Freres Lumber.



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Jim and Chane Griggs attend Family Building Blocks Uncorked Wine Auction.

Soon the group moved downstairs to dine inside a large heated tent. Plasma screens displayed sponsor names and the live auction items that would be offered to the highest bidder.

Broadcast professional and former KGW-TV reporter K.C. Cowan served as emcee as guests dined on braised beef short ribs or roasted eggplant terrine, creations of Executive Chef J. Steven Brockman of Vibrant Table Catering & Events.

The overwhelming generosity displayed at the live auction and during the appeal was truly staggering. It was fun to tweet the progress as it happened. A trip for six to the 2012 Kentucky Derby sold for \$43,000, while 52 weeks of French wine earned \$16,000 for the nonprofit.

After the dinner, it was more wine and dancing to the Dusty 45's.

I headed home with the beautiful necklace I earned by outbidding others at the silent auction and a bottle of WVV 2008 Founder's Reserve Pinot Noir as a parting gift.

To learn more about Family Building Blocks, go to [FamilyBuildingBlocks.org](http://FamilyBuildingBlocks.org).

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