PEOPLE

Cheers all around for the Circle's Museum-centric philanthropy



Diane McGinn and Claudia Owen. PHOTOS: NORA KODIS



Lori Lazorik and Cindy Mochel.



Robin Jones Mandato and Karen Nuccitelli.



Mackie McGuinness and Catherine Cooke.



Jane Beattie, Mary Anne Liljedahl and Debbie Potter.



Christine Ryall and June Fitzgerald.



Diane Wilhelm, Stuart Weismiller, Mary Wright and Joan Semmer.



Susan Hager, Trudy Powers Hoffman and Lee Albro.



Barbara Williams, Cindy Broten and Donna Auriemma.



Arlene Platt, Eliot Foote, Marilyn Bosland and Holly Lentini.

BY MARY SCHENKEL
Staff Writer

There was an air of excitement as the ladies of the Circle, a group of philanthropic and volunteer supporters of the Vero Beach Museum of Art, gathered in the Holmes Great Hall for their last meeting of the year, the Circle Closing Reception and Final Vote.

The dues and donations of Circle members, currently numbering 158, are pooled and each spring members vote to determine which of the museum's educational and outreach initiatives will receive that year's accumulation.

"Just to give you an idea of what we're going to do today, the big excitement is, of course, our voting on where we would like our $52,000 to go and what programs in education we will be voting to fund," said Stuart Weismiller, Circle board president.

"This is one of my favorite days of the season," said Sara Klein, VBMA director of education and visitor experience, before giving a brief description of each program under consideration.

After the synopsis and voting, it was announced that members had opted to fully fund two of the programs, and to partially fund one other.

The VBMA's Museum Explorations on the Go, wherein teaching staff introduce children to art by bringing the program to area schools, was selected to be fully funded. PowerPoint presentations given to the children combine images from VBMA exhibits with classroom curriculums. Additionally, children are given art kits and two free admission coupons so that they can visit the museum with their caregivers.

"Next year we're increasing our target audience by about 20 percent since we'll be closed March, April and May, so we're projecting to serve about 3,000 students. That roughly translates to about 15 to 18 schools, because with a lot of the schools, we're seeing every single student in the school," said Klein.

The other fully funded program was a perennial favorite, the VBMA Veteran Program, which offers free art classes to veterans. Klein said that Circle funding in the past has enabled the three veteran classes to be expanded from five weeks to eight weeks, each of which has been filled to capacity.

The Circle voted to partially fund the off-site Artful Engagements/Movement in the Moment programs, presented in partnership with the Senior Resource Association and the Center for Memory & Movement (formerly Alzheimer & Parkinson Association).

The programs not funded this year were Second Saturdays, which offers free admission, programs and activities the second Saturday of the month; and the Scholarship program for the weekly VBMA Summer Art Camp for ages 5 to 16.

Circle membership is open to all women interested in ensuring that art engagements are available to all county residents, regardless of age and economic barriers. Members pledge $325 or more annually so that collectively, they can make an impact on the outreach programs being offered to the community.

Ladies interested in joining are invited to attend the Opening Tea at the VBMA on Thurs. Nov. 12.

For more information, visit VBMuseum.org. ■