

On the evening of Tuesday, October 25th the Hoffman Estates Sister Cities Commission hosted their 19th Annual French Evening, but this year the evening included a Parisian twist! Instead of the traditional four course meal, guests were treated to a night in *Paris: City of Lights*, complete with a market, a mime, and a caricaturist. Guests were ushered into the Sears Centre under the warm glow of street lamps and the Eiffel Tower, a scene that was *très enchantée*. As visitors to Paris approached, they were greeted by the sight of *un marché Parisien*, or a Parisian market.

Together, with the dedicated staff of the Sears Centre, the Sister Cities Commission volunteers brought the streets of Paris to life right here in Hoffman Estates. The market included a *Boulangerie* for bread, a *Pâtisserie* for pastries, a *Fromagerie* for cheese, a *Charcuterie* for meats, and the *bon vivant*, a *Crêperie* for sweet and savory crêpes. When guests were not strolling among the *cafés charmants*, or charming cafes, they could pose for a photo with a Parisian storefront or with Mona Lisa. In their travels to *Paris: City of Lights*, guests also could spend time with a mime or have their portrait drawn by a caricaturist.

The ambiance of Paris only added to the *fête*, or festivities, which included the traditional silent and live auctions to raise funds for the commission's exchange programs in Hoffman Estate's Sister City, Angoulême, France. Throughout the evening, guests could bid on baskets, gift certificates, gift items, and sports memorabilia in a silent auction. Many of the items were generously donated by local businesses. Donations to the auction were given by local hotels, restaurants, salons, a winery, fitness centers, Harper College, the Sears Centre, and others. A complete list of the donors will be posted to the Village website. The commission is extremely grateful to the local businesses for their generous support and asks that community members support the businesses in turn by patronizing them whenever possible.

In addition to the silent auction, guests also participated in a live auction led by the Sister Cities Commission, Chairperson, Mrs. Lillian Mosier. The highest bidder in the live auction will receive a dinner for 6 prepared and served at Confetti Gourmet Academy and Catering located in Lakewood, IL. The commission is extremely grateful to Chef Rios and Chef Harding for their contribution to the fundraising effort.

The commission would like to extend their gratitude to the staff of the Sears Centre, especially Yousuf Ahmed and Clint Rhodes and their staff. The commission would also like to recognize its members who work ceaselessly for many months to collect the donations and to assemble the auction items; to recreate the *belle ville de Paris* in a day; and provide support and oversee the evening itself. *Merci Bien!*