

Black-tie gala fundraiser planned for Wheaton anniversary

By Jack Komperda | Daily Herald Staff

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Wheaton community leaders are planning a huge black-tie bash early next year in honor of Wheaton's 150th anniversary.

The benefit, which is scheduled to be held Feb. 21 at Arrowhead Golf Club, is one-part anniversary party for the city and one-part fundraiser for more than a dozen local charities.

"Truly, nothing like this has ever happened in Wheaton's history," said Michelle Senatore, one of the benefit's organizers and president of the West Suburban Foundation for Disabled Veterans, which will be one of the beneficiaries of the fundraiser. "This is going to be a way to reintroduce Wheaton to itself."

Senatore said organizers are still working out the details of the gala, which will highlight the 15 area charities that stand to benefit from the fundraiser.

Among the groups are the Wheaton Center for History, DuPage PADS, the Central DuPage Health Foundation and Outreach Community Ministries.

"Of course we feel very honored and privileged to be chosen as one of the charities," said Lisa Terrazas of Outreach Community Ministries, a Christian-based nonprofit group that runs community centers in Carol Stream, Wheaton and Warrenville.

Organizers are planning both an online and silent auction the night of the gala, a VIP party to honor several notable Wheaton residents of the past and a commemorative cookbook.

Senatore said organizers hope to find enough sponsorships to ensure all the proceeds from the event's ticket sales and auction items will be funneled back to the targeted charities.

"When we sat down and asked ourselves what we thought was Wheaton's strongest asset," Senatore said, "it's the fact that Wheaton is a generous community. We really want to highlight those efforts."