

CLINTON TOWNSHIP

Taste Fest returns to support educational grant program

By Thomas Franz

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The Chippewa Valley Educational Foundation's sixth annual Taste Fest will take place March 23 at Zuccaro's in Chesterfield. (Photo provided by Diane Blain)

CLINTON TOWNSHIP — More than 20 restaurants and gourmet markets will be the feature attraction of the sixth annual Chippewa Valley Educational Foundation Taste Fest.

Taste Fest is scheduled to start at 6 p.m. March 23 at Zuccaro Banquets and Catering, 46601 Gratiot Ave. in Chesterfield Township.

Proceeds from the event go primarily to fund the foundation's teacher mini grant program, which allows teachers in Chippewa Valley Public Schools to apply for grants for unique programs or materials beyond what is budgeted for by the district.

"We're trying to support the mission of the schools, to provide the best education to our students," said foundation President Tim Tomlinson.

Tickets for Taste Fest cost \$45. Tomlinson said the event has sold out in recent years, with upward of 500 people attending.

"We've been fortunate. It's gotten to the point where it's sold out a number of years in a row," Tomlinson said. "The past few years, we could not fit any more people in there."

In addition to the increasing number of restaurants and markets featuring their popular dishes, a live and silent auction will also take place at Taste Fest. Auction items will include vacation packages, golf trips, electronics and sports tickets.

Last year's event allowed the foundation to award more than \$21,000 in classroom grants throughout the district and \$6,000 to fund the district's visiting author program for elementary schools, and a LEGO robotics program.

Through six years of the mini grant program, the foundation has raised more than \$100,000 to invest in the district.

"I think this event brings more attention to the foundation, so people become more aware of it and what they're able to do with the money," said district Superintendent Ron Roberts. "I think it allows the foundation to grow because there are so many people involved with Taste Fest."

In addition to being a fundraiser for the district, Roberts added that Taste Fest is a unique community gathering.

"I think the other great part of it is it's just a wonderful community event. This is really the only event in our district that involves people from all aspects of the district that get together for a night and is relaxing and fun," Roberts said.

Tickets for Taste Fest are available at school offices and online at <http://tinyurl.com/zop3x3c>.