

South Valley Wine Auction

A History

In 1998 - 1999 the Morgan Hill Unified School District budget was tight and all sports teams were scrambling to find revenue sources to help with the costs of uniforms and equipment. When the parents of the Live Oak HS Cross Country and Track teams were informed that there was not enough money to buy new tank tops for the runners, a group of parents was determined to see that their children and team members got what they needed. That was the inception of the Live Oak Running Program Wine Auction. Early organizers included former Live Oak and Sobrato Athletic Director Dennis Martin, former Live Oak Track and Cross Country coach Dean Raymond and parents such as Donovan Mott, David Lister, Rich Benner, John and Wendy Campos, Jon Hatakeyama and others. The first event took place in April 1999, and was held in the barrel room of Guglielmo Winery with the support of George and Gene Guglielmo, where it remained until 2004.

In 2001, with an attendance of about 130 people, the event raised \$8,000 for the Live Oak Cross Country and Track teams. In 2002 the event changed its name and became the "Silent Wine Auction." It raised \$15,000, some of which was donated to support Middle School athletics at Britton and Murphy Middle Schools. By 2003, the organization, then known as the "South Valley Health and Fitness Council", had applied to join the Morgan Hill Community Foundation, sponsoring the event known as the South Valley Wine Auction. With acceptance into the Community Foundation in 2004 and attaining non-profit status, the organization adopted its present name, the "South Valley Athletic Foundation" and moved the event to the Morgan Hill Community and Cultural Center. Mayor Dennis Kennedy became the Sponsorship Chair. Later in 2004, the South Valley Athletic Foundation broadened its scope of interest and began to support all sports through the athletic booster clubs in both the middle and high schools, including the new Sobrato High School. In 2004 the loosely organized foundation and auction had grown significantly and a more formal organization structure was put into place. Early officers included the people named earlier and some new faces, including David de la Questa, Rick Lieninger, Rosemary Kamei, Jona Denz-Hamilton, Zann Yates, Jim Green, Mike Cox and many more.

Today the South Valley Wine Auction is largely managed and supported by past and current members of the Athletic Booster Clubs of both Live Oak and Sobrato High Schools. Past and present leaders include people such as Mitch Baio, Becky Obbema, Shelly Lefore, Sharon Stoner, Andrea Pasek, Elizabeth Mandel, Jona Denz-Hamilton, Leslie Hartl, Martin and Maryanne Groen, Kimberlee Boggiano, Donna Cowan, Jeff Conforti, Debbie Tawney, Trina Barnes, Wendy Ottzman, Ava Musgrove, Kristen Schoepe, Sandra Roman, Victoria Walton, Linda Pawlak, Lori Foster, Jana Levic, Paula Mancias, Donna Bruschetti and other members of both of the Athletic Boosters clubs too numerous to mention here. Over the past decade the auction has raised something in the vicinity of \$250,000, annually awarding \$5,000 in scholarships and grants to deserving student athletes and middle school programs and anywhere from \$20,000 to \$40,000 per year to the Athletic Booster Clubs of both Live Oak and Sobrato High Schools.