

# The Macomb Daily

## Chippewa Valley foundation hosts a tasteful Taste for Education event

Taste fest and auction benefit student scholarships, teacher grants



Chippewa Valley Educational Foundation will host A Taste for Education taste fest and auction on April 18 at the Mirage in Clinton Township. Pictured is a wine basket prize that will be among the many raffle and auction prizes available at the event. (PHOTO COURTESY OF KELLY GEBBY)

By **NICOLE TUTTLE**

PUBLISHED: March 25, 2024 at 2:14 p.m. | UPDATED: March 25, 2024 at 2:15 p.m.

A tasteful night out filled with culinary delights from 27 different restaurants is coming to the Mirage in Clinton Township, courtesy of the Chippewa Valley Educational Foundation.

The foundation will host its 11th annual A Taste for Education event at 6 p.m. April 18 at the Mirage Banquet and Event Center, located at 16980 18 Mile Road in Clinton Township.

“It is our biggest, our flagship fundraiser,” Foundation President Christopher Gura said.

Restaurants, caterers and markets from across Macomb County and beyond it have been invited to attend the taste fest. Chippewa Valley Schools Director of School/Community Relations Diane Blain said some of the restaurants have participated for all 11 years that the taste fest has been held.

“Local restaurants really step up and come out and bring some really delicious food, and come there and man their booths. And they really do nice displays as well. That is what is really wonderful, all that is donated,” Blain said.

One returning restaurant participant is actually a district graduate, Blain said.

“We have a variety of different people. In fact, one of them, the Grey Ghost, is a restaurant in Detroit. It is an alumni person, who comes back every year. He is always really happy to do it and loves doing it. We are happy he is there. It is a really nice restaurant and fun to have him back in the community helping to raise money,” Blain said.

The foundation reaches out to find new restaurant, catering and market taste fest participants as well, including new establishments that have opened. Blain said the search usually starts several months ahead of time in the fall.

“They love the interaction with the school community, and they have fun while they are there as well,” Blain said.

Those who attend the taste fest can participate in a variety of games, including a grand prize drawing, silent/online auction and basket raffle. Blain said those who cannot make it to the entire taste fest event can still participate in the auction, as it will be conducted with an online component. She also said that links to the auction will be available a few weeks before the taste fest at the school district website, at [chippewavalleyschools.org](http://chippewavalleyschools.org).

Gura said this year the foundation is hoping to attract 500 guests to the event. Tickets to A Taste for Education are \$55 per person and can be purchased at Chippewa Valley Schools district school offices. They can also be purchased by contacting 586-723-2240, at [tinyurl.com/CVSTasteFest2024](http://tinyurl.com/CVSTasteFest2024) or at the school district administration building at 19120 Cass Ave. in Clinton Township. Tickets can also be purchased at the door on event night.

“In the ticket price is certainly all the tasting stations. There are 27 different restaurants, pop, water, and coffee is included. Alcoholic beverages are available for purchase. Then we have a DJ and music,” Blain said.

Restaurants, markets, and caterers can still register to participate in the taste fest. Blain said that the foundation is continuing to accept donations of auction prizes and sponsorships for A Taste for Education as well. Those interested in registering as a restaurant participant or businesses seeking to make a donation or sponsorship can contact 586-723-2240 or [kgebby@cvs.k12.mi.us](mailto:kgebby@cvs.k12.mi.us).

“We are really fortunate in that our business community is very supportive of the schools,” Blain said.

The Chippewa Valley Educational Foundation’s mission is to help achieve and maintain an extra margin of excellence for the Chippewa Valley Schools district, by utilizing private resources, fundraising and gifts to supplement traditional school funding. The foundation, originally founded in 1987, is nonprofit and tax exempt. It is dedicated to fostering new and creative programs designed to enhance education in the district.

Proceeds of the taste fest event will benefit foundation projects for Chippewa Valley Schools such as student scholarships and a teacher mini-grant program. The mini-grants are awarded to teachers at all grade levels, generally to undertake unique classroom projects. Blain said this year's taste fest fundraising goal is \$50,000.

Money raised through this year's taste fest would fund the 2024-25 school year teacher mini-grants. Teachers generally apply for the mini-grants in the fall, and decisions are made in the winter. Teacher mini-grant applications are reviewed through a committee process, taking into account the number and types of requests as well as the funds available. The foundation board must approve committee recommendations for grant awards, Blain said. Foundation board members arrange to go to the schools to announce and grant the awards to the chosen teachers.

"We set up secret, or I guess surprise, presentations to teachers. They think they are going to a regular staff meeting, and a foundation board member shows up and awards the teachers mini-grants," Blain said.

Gura said that for the 2023-24 school year, \$23,262 in grants were awarded, 18 separate grants. Items requested range from 3D printers to musical instruments to scoreboards, Gura added.