Affaire to Remember – an amazing evening

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ANNA MARIA – It was truly an Affaire to Remember when country music star Lee Greenwood rocked the house with a selection of his songs at the Community Center's annual dinner auction Saturday night.

His performance was the highlight of the evening for the sell-out crowd of 350, and when his set concluded, he threw out a challenge – he would sing his most famous song, "God Bless the U.S.A.," for the highest bidder.

The crowd took up the challenge and after spirited bidding, Trudy and Stewart Moon and generous friends were the winning bidders with a $15,000 donation, which included dinner for eight with Greenwood and his wife. That helped boost the evening's total to $200,000.

"He is the most kind generous man," Trudy Moon, the event's chair, said of Greenwood. "It was a pleasure to get to know him, and when he sang 'God Bless the U.S.A.,' it was the most emotional statement of the evening.

"It was a magical evening – we were at capacity, we doubled the amount we brought in, Harry's meal was flawless. It was pulsating and it just kept going."

Moon said it was exciting to see the diversity of ages and the large number of locals in attendance at this year's event.

Executive Director Pierrette Kelly praised both Moon and Greenwood, noting, "At the end of the day, it comes down to having Trudy back as chair of the event and the kindness and generosity of Lee Greenwood. It was a wonderful night. Everything worked perfectly."

"It was an amazing evening," Assistant Director Scott Dell agreed. "I can't remember a more exciting evening with spectacular food and entertainment and wonderful generous people, especially Lee Greenwood, who donated all of his time for the event.

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Above, Lee Greenwood sings for the crowd. At right, Greenwood greets Center Assistant Director Scott Dell.

"It was one for the record books. We couldn't have done it without everybody's support – the staff, the donors, the volunteers and the people who attended."

Dell said he was particularly proud of his daughter, Katie Rose, who sang "Hallelujah," to bring attention to the cash call, which raises money for the scholarship fund, so no person is turned away from the Center's programs and services. Katie Rose got a standing ovation and the cash call raised $45,000.

The pick of the live auction was won by Rich Pierro, who chose the Wyland serigraph, "Dolphin Dance," valued at $5,000. Raffle winners were Kathy MacKenzie for the $5,000 diamond necklace donated by Pierro's Jewelers and Jayne Christense for the HDTV donated by Breiter Capital Management.

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Above, Kersandra Quinn, manager, and Brad Smith, owner, both of Bridge Street Jewelers, visit with Trudy Moon, who is wearing the $5,000 diamond necklace that Smith donated to the auction. Below, Holmes Beach Commissioner Sandy Haas-Martens checks her silent bid sheet.

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April Jonatzke and Pam Fortenberry admire donated jewelry.