

Clinic's Event Draws Thousands At 13th Annual Auction

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LEOLA (Lancaster Co.) — Again this year donated quilts, food, and furniture combined to draw thousands to a benefit auction now in its 13th year.

The event, which benefits The Clinic for Special Children, Strasburg, is one of three benefit auctions for the clinic. An auction in Shippensburg in July and Morrison Cove in early September preceded the largest auction conducted recently at the Leola Produce Auction, Leola.

The Leola event is the largest of the three auctions. The other two auctions were created for people who wanted to "support the clinic, but not drive all the way to Lancaster," said Caroline Morton, executive director of the clinic.

The Shippensburg auction, conducted July 19, included a spring wagon made specifically for the event and 22 quilts.

Auction offerings included household decorative items, furniture, quilts, crafts, and food.

More than 80 quilts were donated from all over the county. "Many of them were made by friends or relatives of patients of the clinic," said Morton. Most of the quilts were from Amish and Mennonite communities in the Lancaster County area, however groups in other counties donated their handiwork, as well.

Besides individual contributors, "sewing circles and church



Amidst the busyness of the auction, the horses quietly dozed in the sunshine.

groups" were also suppliers of quilts. The highest-selling quilt of the day, featuring the postage-stamp design, brought \$925.

In addition to quilts, funds may come from other areas.

"Food is also a large portion,"

said Morton, who pointed out that last year volunteers sold 20,000 doughnuts.

For example homemade lemonade, soft pretzels, chicken barbecue, pizza, strawberry pies, and ice cream churned on the premises has proven to be popular with auction-goers.

Locally-made furniture has also become a draw for buyers. Outdoor furniture — such as a gazebo, sheds or playhouses — included a scale replica of an Amish schoolhouse which was complete with a bell.

Swingsets, an Amish buggy, a two-seater open carriage, and pony and wagon were a few of the wares sold outdoors.

"All proceeds go directly to support the clinic," said Morton.

Last year more than 6,000 attended the event, and by the end of the day at this year's auction, more than 1,300 buyer numbers were handed out.

The event is organized by a committee comprised of a dozen Amish and Mennonite couples, according to Morton. Event organizers may call on businesses, besides members of the community, for donations.

"It is just absolutely amazing how much is donated every year," she said. "It's overwhelming to us how much always turns up."

Labor is also donated. "We have some volunteers that return year after year after year," said Morton.

Last year, for example, 19 auctioneers donated their time.

The 2001 auction also featured 4,000 donated items that included 16 sheds. Auction-goers ate 600 pounds of potato chips, 4,000 subs, and 3,500 soft pretzels and washed it all down with 2,500 cups of lemonade and 769 cups of rhubarb fruit drink.

Next year's auction will take place on Saturday, September 28.

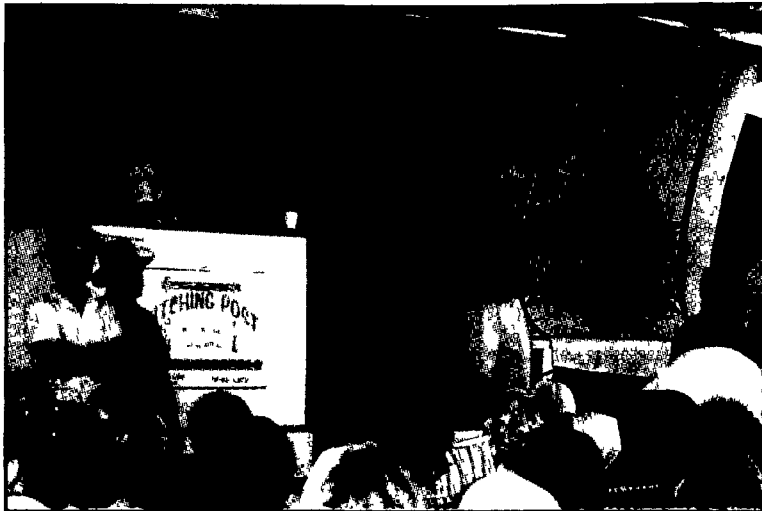
The clinic, a non-profit diagnostic and medical care service for children with inherited disorders, depends on the auctions.

"The auctions are significant contributors to our operating costs," accounting for one-third of its annual operating budget, according to Morton. Besides the auction, the clinic is also funded through fees for services and private contributions. Because of the community's support each year via the auctions, the clinic can provide services at a low cost for families.

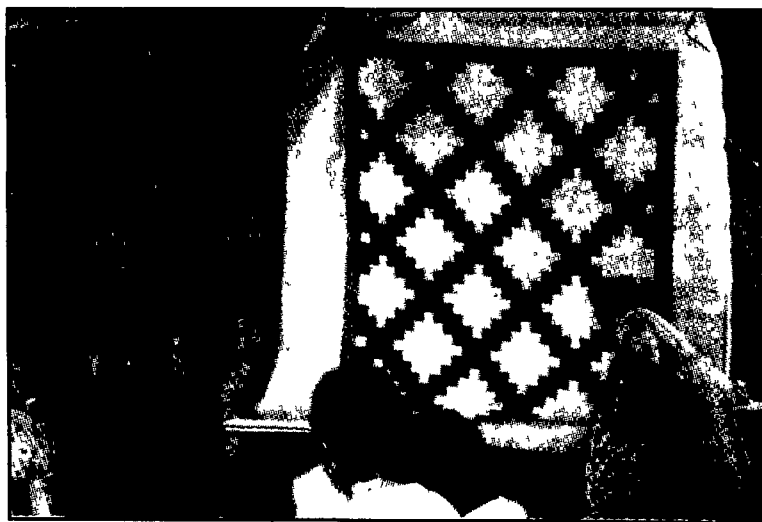
The facility has a total case-load of about 500. For more information, the website is located at www.clinicforspecialchildren.org.



Pounds of potatoes plus a little lard, a little salt, and a lot of laughter equal crowd-pleasing homemade potato chips. This Strasburg-based business, Stoltzfus Potato Chips, keeps employees busy from September to Christmas making potato chips to sell for customer orders. Volunteers worked to make chips to sell during the auction, with proceeds going to the clinic.



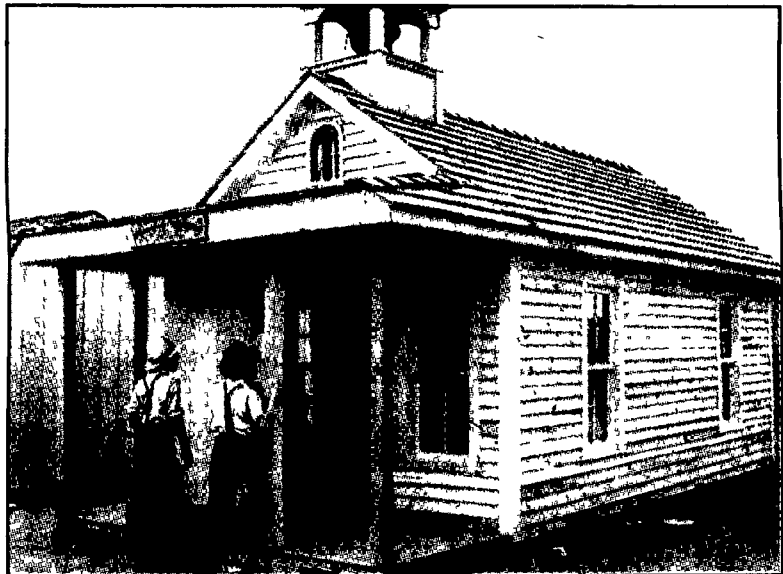
Volunteer auctioneers sold more than 80 quilts during the event.



Who would like to start the bid for this quilt?



In addition to quilts and wallhangings such as the one pictured, auctioned items included home decorating items, furniture, food, and lawn furniture.



The to-scale schoolhouse was also built and then donated by community members.



Items such as this gazebo were built by community members and then donated to the auction. The auction accounts for one-third of the annual operating budget.

