

Beatlemania Sweeps Crane and Breaks Fundraising Records

By Ann Pieramici / Special to CASA

THE BEATLES "ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE" was the theme of Crane's Annual Auction and the school got plenty of it, plus a whole lotta money as this year's gala grossed over half a million dollars, breaking all previous fundraising records for the elementary and middle school.

While it's true that money can't buy you love, it can and will offset the school's operating budget and help provide tuition assistance to qualifying families. It will also contribute significantly to the school's growing endowment, with nearly \$112,000 specifically raised for this fund, a donation headmaster Joel Weiss calls a "gift to the future."

Co-chairs, Cyndi Richman and Beth Green said they were amazed at the earnings. "We wanted to celebrate our long tenure at the school and go out with a bang," Green noted. When the pair agreed to chair the spring fundraiser, they did so with enthusiasm – their children will be graduating in June. The imprint they leave behind is a boon for a school that is already enjoying explosive growth. "Crane is having an unprecedented year: record enrollment, an

annual fund drive that broke all records, and now an auction that was hugely successful," explained Weiss. "The event was an unbelievably fun party."

Many parents attribute the gala's success to this year's extraordinarily fun Beatles theme. John "Sgt. Pepper" McGovern, a Crane dad, served as the auctioneer, aided by go-go momma Pam Raisin and hippie-hottie emcee Kevin Sanford. Live auction items up for sale included American Idol finale tickets, incredible houses in Aspen, Kauai, Telluride and Sun Valley and inventive class art projects. There were also over 250 silent auction packages and a raffle offering a Vespa, Mammoth condo, and *Spenderella* earrings. This year's most talked about offer, a restored Volkswagen Beetle, was driven into the tent where guests were dining, in a dramatic, lively, grand auction finale. The 1972 Bug was completely rebuilt by high-school students and Crane alums,

Ben Samuels, Cameron Gniadek and Paul Quenzer who refurbished and donated the car to benefit their alma mater. Samuels says he is happy to have raised \$18,000 for the school that taught

him the importance of community service.

The "Fab Four" inspired fabulous décor that was brought to life by Laura Macker Johnston and Max Hirschfield who turned the school's open field into a sixties-funky-festive party scene with balloon hearts, retro love signs, oversized peace symbols, pastel Gerber daisies and an interpretive dance bubble. Groupies in dazzling minis mingled with very convincing John Lennons amid a sea of tie-dyed hippies. Co-chair Cyndi Richman, who looked as though she stepped right out of the pages of *Life* magazine, says she was going for an "edgy, cool, funky feel." The exuberance of *The Beatles* was channeled through the *Magical Mystery Tour* band that looked and sounded uncannily like the original foursome. "All 298 people were on that dance floor, twisting and shouting and singing every word to every song," Richman shared.

These events don't



Cochairs **Cyndi Richman** and **Beth Green**



The Groovy Couple: **Matt** and **Mia Morphy**, Silent Auction Co-Chair



Channeling Sgt. Pepper, **John** and **Elizabeth McGovern**



Jeppe Madsen, Parents for Crane Chair, **Joel "Ringo" Weiss**, and **Laura Shelburne**, Board President

magically *come together* without a lot of help from our friends, and a committee of 74 that included Lori Bacon, Katy Berrey, Mary Blair, Ella Brittingham, Scout Centrella, Carolyn Chandler, Liz Dewell, Tiffany Foster, Corby Gage, Beth Geiger, Molly Green, Tracy Kanowsky,

Mia Morphy, Mei Sheng Ng, Nancy O' Connor, Pam Raisin, Kelly Simmons, Michelle Smith, Rachael Stein, Trish Soriano, and Mina Welch.

Top sponsors and supporters included Brander Vineyards, Ella and Scott Brittingham; Elisabeth and Greg Fowler; Elizabeth and Lee Gabler; Beth and Steve Green; Harold Green; Klaus Hallig; Tracy and Erick Kanowsky; Patty and John MacFarlane; Tasha and Mike Marlow; Amy and Mike Mayfield; Nancy and Kevin O'Connor; Rita and Doug Otto; Cyndi and Robert Richman; Kyra and Tony Rogers; Laura and Craig Shelburne; and Leslie and Robert Zemeckis.



The Car Guys, from left to right **Dave Quenzer**, **Bob Ingersoll**, **Jon Samuels**, **Anthony Lombardi**, **Chris Reussner**, parent and faculty advisors on the Beetle restoration