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**LINCOLN-WAY VICTORY** D210 welding teacher wins competition, Page 8

# The Frankfort Station™

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## Show of Support

Cinco de Mayo event raises money for KidsWork Children's Museum, Page 3

Expressionist speed painter Elliott From, of Art Beat Live, paints his version of the Chicago Bear Friday, May 3, during the Cinco de Mayo fundraiser for KidsWork Children's Museum held at CD&ME in Frankfort. MARY COMPTON/22ND CENTURY MEDIA



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**News** COVER STORY

# Cinco de Mayo event benefits KidsWork Children's Museum

MARY COMPTON  
Freelance Reporter

At the Friday, May 3 fundraiser for KidsWork Children's Museum, guests were immediately drawn to the table with the plasma globes.

When guests touched the glass with their hands, their hair stood on end, giving them a taste of what a child might experience during a trip to the Frankfort museum.

Now in its 10th year, the annual fundraiser was held at CD & ME with a Cinco de Mayo theme. More than 65 gift baskets were lined up for auction.

"We're here to support the museum 100 percent," Frankfort resident Stacy Holland said. She and her husband, Frankfort Mayor Jim Holland, have hosted the museum fundraiser for the last five years.

"This year, there is a great display where everybody can vote on," Stacy Holland said. "You place a dollar in the container, and that will tell the board the exhibit that they're most interested in for the museum to purchase."

Erica Petro, of Mokena, who teaches a Zumbini class at KidsWork, was the chairperson for the fundraising event.

"We have about 10 people on our fundraising committee, who are all volunteers," Petro said. "They have done so much work before this night, such as the marketing, getting sponsorships and much more. A goal is to bring in the funds to purchase more STEM exhib-



State Rep. Margo McDermed (R-Mokena) touches a plasma ball Friday, May 3, during a Cinco de Mayo fundraiser for KidsWork Children's Museum at CD&ME in Frankfort.

PHOTOS BY MARY COMPTON/22ND CENTURY MEDIA



Brothers Miguel (left) and Diego Lucero, from the group Cielito Lindo, perform at the Cinco de Mayo fundraiser. Its like the wind tubes. My Basso shared the same hope with this fundraiser passion for the museum. is that it benefits the community."

Petro added she hoped children would benefit from the play-based learning offered at the museum.

"We want to bring more to them at KidsWork," she said. "If you can bring your child to a museum, it's so beneficial for them. They just imitate life; that's how they learn. It's creating a groundwork for what these kids are going to grow into."

President-elect Belinda

is that it benefits the community."

"When my kids were little, we were members of the museum and went a lot," Basso said. "When my children got a little older, they didn't want to go because there weren't any exhibits geared towards the older ages. That's what we're doing with this fundraiser ... purchas[ing] exhibits that are geared for older aged kids."

KidsWork Executive Director Nicole Under-

Please see FUNDRAISER, 14

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**CHITOWN 5K SHOWDOWN**

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**8:00am start time**  
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Early Bird **\$20**  
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Mokena Community  
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# Ladies Night Out

## Summer Social

5-8 p.m. Thursday, June 13  
Orland Park Crossing  
14255 95th Ave., Orland Park  
(143rd Street and LaGrange Road)

Join us for a night of music,  
fashion and fun!

Fashion show produced by  
Jenny Applegate of The Leading Image  
More than 40+ vendors!

For FREE tickets, visit  
[22ndCenturyMedia.com/summersocial](http://22ndCenturyMedia.com/summersocial)

SAVE THE DATE!

**Last Call Before Fall**  
6-9 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 8,  
Georgios Orland Park,  
8800 W. 159th St., Orland Park

**Mistletoe Market**  
4-7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 5,  
Orland Park Crossing,  
14225 95th Ave. (143rd Street & LaGrange Road),  
Orland Park

**Ghouls Night Out**  
4-7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 3,  
Konow's Corn Maze,  
16849 S. Cedar Road, Homer Glen

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## FUNDRAISER

From Page 3

wood, along with the museum's board of directors, has made a commitment to bring STEM exhibits to the museum.

"People don't know we are nonprofit," Underwood said. "We have to fundraise, write grants and solicit donations from private donors just to exist. We are continuing with bringing STEM exhibits to the museum. Not only are we investing into the STEM exhibits, we are bringing in STEM programming as



Guests mingle and examine gift baskets offered at the fundraiser. PHOTO BY MARY COMPTON/22ND CENTURY MEDIA

well. We want to see the eight-12 year old group come back to the museum."

According to Underwood,

the programs will begin this summer. For more information, visit [www.kidswork-childrensmuseum.org](http://www.kidswork-childrensmuseum.org).

## WELDING

From Page 8

will never forget.

"[I'll remember] his whole class; there's no dull moment in his class," Grady said.

"He's a great teacher, from working on the smoker to learning pipe and he wants to get us certified by the end of the year on certain parts," Clymer said. "The three years that I've been in this class, it's hard to say anything bad about it."

Students, community members, other teachers and fellow welders all rallied behind Gast with voting on Facebook after Gast posted a video of himself detailing what the competition was. He received over 80 Facebook requests during the week of the competition.

"I was pretty proud of him," Grady said. "It's a pretty big accomplishment, I'd say, for New Lenox and the welding community."

Clymer built off what Grady said saying that it benefits everyone because it gives them recognition as well as equip-

ment they need.

The "coolest" piece of equipment in the prize package is the augmented virtual welding system, Gast said.

The system allows the students to weld without striking an arc and it gives feedback through its technology sensors. It can generate a report and tell the student how they performed with the weld using the machine.

"In the big scope of things, you can save money without using electricity and consumables, but if the student is struggling on learning a particular process in the shop and can't get over that hump with an actual arc weld, they can come into the classroom, weld on the machine and it will give an assessment," Gast said.

Gast said it's like having another teacher in the classroom that can provide input. It is valued at \$22,000, Gast said.

"We would never be able to afford that without the award," Gast said. "It wouldn't even be a thought."

Students like Grady and Clymer will only be

able to use the new equipment for a few weeks as it was set to arrive earlier, but for everyone else, Gast hopes it gives them a little more exposure to ready them for post high school.

But as the two said, they are hoping to be certified by the end of the year, and are just glad their teacher is receiving more recognition.

"In my opinion, he deserves it for teaching all of us," Clymer said. "He doesn't really get rewarded other than this being his job. So I think it was something he deserved in a way."

Gast joked that he felt like he was running a political campaign trying to get people to vote for him.

"It was fun," he said. "I've got a new respect for anyone running for political office."

He added that it was a bit of a relief to have that week over with, but is excited for the program to continue to grow.

And if there is anyone that wants to learn more about the trades, he said he would be happy to talk to them, he said.