



Brook Weavers and Rebecca Hocking from Earl's Langley joined members of the Rotary Club of Langley Central in promoting the Fraser Valley Wine Tasting Festival, taking place Saturday, Nov. 2 at the Willowbrook Shopping Centre.

Troy Landreville/Langley Advance

Charity

Raise a glass and help youth

Tickets can be purchased in various ways.

by **Heather Colpitts**
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The Rotary Club of Langley Central is throwing a party and you're invited.

Nov. 2 is the 24th annual Fraser Valley Wine Tasting Festival.

When Willowbrook Shopping Centre closes for business on Nov. 2, everyone involved behind the scenes of the wine festival moves into action to set up.

And come 7 p.m., the Fraser Valley Wine Tasting Festival is underway.

The venue can hold 1,000 and having so many food and wine buffs in the same place creates a unique atmosphere that's both casual, convivial, and elegant.

There are several easy ways to obtain tickets. People can check out www.fvwf.ca, which also has lots

of information about the event and Rotary.

Or they can call 604-202-0364, a dedicated phone line for wine festival tickets. Rotary members also sell tickets and tickets can be purchased at the customer service kiosk of Willowbrook Shopping Centre.

The Rotary club has set up several ways to obtain tickets easily because tickets must be purchased in advance, a facet of B.C.'s liquor laws.

While tickets can be picked up at the door, they must be paid for in advance.

Steve Carter has been on the wine festival committee for two years. Other members have been on almost as long as there's been a local wine festival. The committee makeup is a mix of Rotarians with a variety

of experience, all committed to creating a successful fundraiser.

"It's a lot of work. We meet once a week," he explained.

The group ramps up its organizational efforts for November's event in August.

"It's nice to see a group of people give back, organize an event not only that people enjoy but also one

that's a way of giving back to the community," he said.

Carter noted that the wine festival wouldn't be the success it is without strong community support.

"We're just a conduit," he said. "That's why we're Rotarians."

It starts with sponsors and there's very little arm twisting required to get others on board. Maybe it has a lot to do with the

longevity of a successful fundraiser – more than two decades.

A lot has to do with who is behind the fundraiser – Rotary. The clubs have a history of philanthropy and giving, not to mention of hard work. And the sponsors know that every dollar raised at a Rotary event goes to the cause.

Longtime sponsor BDO has contributed \$15,000 this year.

Then there's the other supporters.

"Willowbrook [Shopping Centre] has stood behind us for years," he said.

Providing the hot and cold eats this year will be eight local restaurants.

"That's the most ever," Carter noted.

The event has also secured the largest number of wine merchants.

And the final piece of the puzzle is the public and people buying their tickets and heading out to the fun evening.

"It's nice to see a group of people give back."

STEVE CARTER