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• **News Release** •

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HeART for Haiti benefit Set for February 12th

Art has a big heart in Wayne County, and a remarkable group of local artists and community leaders are coming together to host the HeART for Haiti benefit. Scheduled for Friday evening, February 12 from 6 to 8 pm at the Wayne Center for the Arts, HeART for Haiti will feature wine and hors d'oeuvres donated by local restaurants and retailers, music and both live and silent auctions. Proceeds will benefit the Save the Children Haitian Relief Program.

A little over two weeks ago, local artist Lisa Wagoner thought she wanted to hold small benefit in her home, and then also plan a dance for middle schoolers to help earthquake-ravaged Haitians. After talking with a few of her friends she quickly decided her house wasn't quite big enough for her adult reception and she needed a space to accommodate a large group of young teens. She secured one of the studios and lobby of the Wayne Center for the Arts for her adult reception, and the Wayne Center's Auditorium for the middle school dance

The dance took place on Friday, January 29th and was attended by almost a hundred students. Patrick Kearny of AWM Entertainment donated his time and equipment, including confetti cannons, glow in the dark necklaces and other prizes. Expert T's donated time in designing and making t-shirts, and Bowman Beverage provided ice and coolers. The evening was filled with youthful fun and raised over \$400.00

In the meantime, planning for the adult event accelerated in a number of ways. Friend Veronica Frontz came up with the name, HeART for Haiti, and Lisa asked a few of her fellow artists in WAGE (Wayne Artists Group Effort) to donate works for a silent auction. They were joined by others and now over 40 pieces will be auctioned from artists including: Susan Shie,

Jann Gallagher, Tony Gallagher, Sherrie Dennis, Carol Ohl, Charlene Gross, Pat Anderson, Matt Menuez, Dee and Mary Vaidya, Kate Freed, Margaret Freed, Rille Reeds, Holly Prater, Sally Abbot, Karen McCoy, Sharon Wagner, Lisa Wagoner, Dae Evans, Rille Reeds, and Jim Spires.

Another friend suggested inviting local community leaders to create works that night and then have them auctioned live. Lisa asked Jeff Griffin, President of the Wooster Area Chamber of Commerce, to be one of those artists and he offered to recruit additional community leaders. Over a dozen volunteered including: Michael Tefs, Superintendent, Wooster City Schools; Mary Vaidya, Executive VP of Administration; TechniGraphics; Captain John Quicci, Wooster Police Department; Wayne County Common Pleas Court Judge Mark Wiest; Sandra Hull, Executive Director, Main Street Wooster; Jon Ansel, President, D & S Distribution; Kathleen Hovsepain, Vice President, PNC Bank; Dan Stavnezer, Summit Therapy Center; John Hall, Vice President, First National Bank; Mike Pallota, Owner, Pallota Ford Lincoln Mercury; Dennis & Paula Tafoya, Owners, Muddy Waters Café; Mike Kramer, President, Ohio Legacy Bank and wife, artist Meg Kramer; Greg Long, Partner, Long Cook & Samsa; and Andy & Deanna Troutman, owners of Troutman Vineyards & Winery and Wolf Creek Winery.

Lisa also sought out donations of wine and food for the event and soon had a long list of participating restaurateurs and retailers. The donors are Applebees, BW3, Honeybaked Ham, South Market Bistro, City Square Steakhouse, Muddy Waters, Pine Tree Barn, Chipotle, Green Thumb Floral, Longhorn Steakhouse, Tumbleweed, Panera, Troutman's Vineyard & Winery, and Wolf Creek Winery.

This wide-spread enthusiasm and support for the HeART for Haiti benefit soon changed the plans for a modest reception in a studio and lobby of the Wayne Center for the Arts into an event encompassing activities almost every part of the historic building. In addition to the refreshments, silent auction art and art created and auctioned live, local musicians will perform that evening. Parking is available in the lots surrounding the Wayne Center and the non-profit Community Commons. For more information, contact Lisa Wagoner at wagondar@aol.com.

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