

Lona said, “Even when I was working full time, I always maintained doing art. At age 55 I said to myself, ‘Do I need more money or do I need more time?’ What I needed was more time to do art, so I retired. Since then I have been delving into furthering my art, becoming better at it. My husband has been very supportive.”

Lona has been studying with master gourd artist Robert Rivera and is enjoying the experience of coming into her own. She said, “At age 60, I’m finally an up-and-coming artist.” 🌸



The Three Shamans

Organizing Our Art Auction Fundraiser

by Lona Warne, AE, Farmington, New Mexico

I first got the idea for our chapter fundraiser from an article in The P.E.O. Record about a chapter that did a silent auction called "heART Auction." Two years ago, I became a member at Feat of Clay, a local co-op art gallery, and I found out that they do an auction once a year to support local charities. I asked the board members if they would consider holding an auction for P.E.O. None of them had ever heard of P.E.O. but after I informed them of the history of the Sisterhood and described the projects that we offer to women, they voted unanimously to host our chapter's first "heART Auction."

I set about organizing the event about three months in advance. Every member of the gallery donated one or more pieces of art and volunteered to work at the event. What was even more exciting was, in addition to member donations, my artist friends at the gallery got even more artists to contribute and my chapter sisters went out and collected more artwork and gift baskets to add to the auction. One chapter member baked pecan pies for the auction, another donated organic produce she had grown. One of our members even donated a night at a local bed and breakfast she owns that is built into a sandstone cliff. We had a wonderful array of more than 70 items for people to bid on.

Next, I wrote articles about the silent auction for our three local newspapers. I included photos of some of the artwork and the papers published the articles free of charge. A helpful tip to other chapters considering something like this—it makes it easier for the reporters to have the articles already written with photos attached. They will always contact you if they need any other information. I was also able to include information about our projects and P.E.O. in the article. I invited the public to attend the event and sent invitations to two local chapters inviting them to make this a night out with their husbands, friends and families to enjoy a crisp fall evening with food, wine, music and artwork.

A local musician/songwriter offered to play music at the event. He was impressed with the mission of P.E.O. and did not charge us to perform. My chapter sisters provided the wine and appetizers. The gallery members helped with collecting payments and cleaning up. It was the most attended art reception the gallery had ever had and it brought new people to the gallery. They were so happy with the results that they invited our chapter back the next year to do it again. Over the last two years of having this fundraiser we were able to earn more than \$4,500 for P.E.O. projects.