



UNIVERSITY TIMES

The faculty and staff newspaper

Volume 39

Number 18

May 17, 2007

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GSPH art, jewelry benefit set

Volunteers in the Graduate School of Public Health are pouring out their creativity yet again in remembrance of a late colleague.

The creativity that funds the Evelyn H. Wei Scholarship Award in Epidemiology is an ever-growing labor of love. More than \$11,000 has been raised in five summer and holiday sale events held twice yearly on the first Friday in June and the first Friday in December.

The next sale, themed "A Midsummer Night's Dream," will take place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 1 in the Parran Hall first-floor student lounge.

The sale features works from the hands of GSPH faculty, staff and friends and is growing with each event, said organizer Kim Sutton-Tyrrell, professor and vice chair for academics in the Department of Epidemiology.

Sutton-Tyrrell creates necklaces, earrings, bracelets and watches in a variety of classic, elegant or just fun styles from a variety of beads. All her profits are donated to charities, she said, noting that she makes the jewelry as an outlet for her creativity. "It's a labor of love," she said.

In addition to Sutton-Tyrrell's handmade jewelry, there are photographs by Sheryl Kelsey, interim director of the Epidemiology Data Center, and paintings by Trish Orchard, spouse of faculty member Trevor Orchard. New to this event will be hand-sewn aprons created by EDC staff member Mary Tranchine that pair nicely with copies of "Evelyn's Cookbook," compiled by colleague Mary Hester.

Even the posters that advertise the event are works of art available for purchase. The June 1 event features a fanciful drawing by EDC programmer Yulia Kushner reflecting the "Midsummer Night's Dream" theme.

"It's a rising pool of talent," Sutton-Tyrrell said. "We attract new people each time we do it."

While most of the items for sale are priced at less than \$20, they range from \$4 photo note cards to \$600 paintings. Visitors to the sale can expect complimentary refreshments and a chance to win door prizes donated by local businesses.

The sale was organized following a fatal accident that touched GSPH in 2004 when 33-year-old Pitt researcher Evelyn Wei, who earned her PhD in psychiatric epidemiology at GSPH, was struck by a vehicle while walking near her Regent Square home. Her mother, Yuling Wei, was a senior research associate in the



Sheryl Kelsey and Kim Sutton-Tyrrell of GSPH prepare for the school's June 1 fundraiser that benefits the Evelyn H. Wei Scholarship Fund.

Department of Epidemiology.

"A tragedy of this magnitude defies one's ability to accept it as an end in and of itself," Sutton-Tyrrell said. "The need to turn this terrible thing into something positive drives those of us who knew Evelyn. We do this by coordinating our talents, energy and ideas to make the event happen. Doing something positive together is very therapeutic and allows us to deal better with the sad reality of losing Evelyn. Evelyn's mother worked very closely with us before retiring recently. Losing your child has to be one of the worst things that could ever happen. Thus, this event is our way of supporting Evelyn's mother as well."

The event has outgrown Sutton-Tyrrell's office, where the first sale was held in 2004. The initial sale drew 60 people and raised \$1,500 for a fund that, at the time, paid education-related travel expenses for GSPH students. In contrast, the December 2006 sale drew more than 200 people and raised more than \$3,000 for the fund, which now provides scholarships to help students with tuition and expenses.

"It's fun to see it take off," Sutton-Tyrrell said, adding that she hopes to see the fund grow large enough eventually to support a full-time student.

Planning for the upcoming sale has been in the works for three months, Sutton-Tyrrell said, noting that the list of volunteers who donate their work or who take charge of advertising, solicit door prizes, bake cookies, set up or clean up after the sale has grown to more than 50 people. "It's energizing and fun having so many people working together," she said. "The vision was to have a lot of people in the department taking part in it. It makes it an ongoing celebration of Evelyn."

For more information, go to www.publichealth.pitt.edu/evelynwei.

An email signup list will be available at the sale for patrons who wish to be reminded of future events.

—Kimberly K. Barlow