

Gala to benefit public schools

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FITCHBURG -- Class won't be in session during Fitchburg Public School's annual gala May 6, but students will still reap the benefits.

Fitchburg

The event will raise money for 10 after-school programs and a new reading app, Footsteps2Brilliance, said Superintendent Andre Ravenelle.

"It's a way to encourage people to come to the gala to support their own program and support their own schools," he said.

A \$50 ticket to the event, which starts at 5:30 p.m., includes dinner, live music and a "cocktail hour" with hors d'oeuvres. Red Sox tickets, paintings, signed sports photographs and other items will be up for bid at a silent auction during the dinner.

Ravenelle said the district collectively raised \$20,000 at the first two galas, enough to pay for 10 after-school programs that started this semester. The programs include a chess club at Fitchburg High School and a Civil Air Club at Memorial Middle School.

"The idea is every teacher has a passion, and they can start a program after school where they can share it," he said.

Money raised by the gala will pay for supplies and a stipend for after-school club advisers. Footsteps2Brilliance, a program that provides app-based reading activities for anyone living in Fitchburg, will kick off May 4. Though the district has already secured the funding for the program's license, the gala will raise money for devices to use in school to access the app, Ravenelle said.

Ravenelle said the first year the gala was held he expected the event to attract people from the school system, but people from all over the community bought tickets.

"It's always a community event," he said. "We want it to be a community experience."

Ravenelle said tickets are selling well. He hopes the event will raise \$10,000 for the district. Tickets are available at the central office on 376 South St. and online at gg.gg/fpsgala.

People unable to attend can also make donations to the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts.

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