

# Designer handbag auction to benefit Sisters Academy

It's a fact of female life – most women love handbags and shoes. To divert from the standard “bingo in a basement” event, the young-spirited Baltimore City Division I Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians (LAOH) are hosting a September event called “Bags to Riches” to profit Sisters Academy of Baltimore.

LAOH is an Irish Catholic heritage group, its Baltimore division relatively new considering LAOH was organized in 1894. The local group consists of 20 members, representing about 10 parishes in the Baltimore area.

“We have a lot of new young ideas,” said event vice-chair Karen McGullam, “with a youthful outlook of all ages from 20s to 70s.”

The local group has held several fundraisers over the past two years just to prepare for the Bags to Riches event.

“We wanted to splash out and aim high and do something different to put Baltimore City division's stamp on it,” Ms. McGullam said. “As a new division, we're trying to prove ourselves.”

Her co-chair is Nanci Mahoney. The president of their group is Mollie McDonnell.

To support a school of young women of impressionable age is the driving force behind their hard work. A 5-8 grade Catholic school in Lansdowne, Sisters Academy serves students typically from low-income one-parent families.

“We're hoping to give the school a big check,” Ms. McGullam said.

In addition to Sisters Academy, the Maryland board of LAOH also raises funds for The Franciscan Center for homeless men in Baltimore.

On September 28 between 2-6 p.m. at Grey Rock Mansion in Pikesville, event-goers will have the chance to bid on over 80 donated designer handbags, tote bags, and men's bags, with fast-paced urging from a live auctioneer.

The afternoon will also afford chances to bid on gift certificates, clothing, and items for men in a variety of silent auction items. For purchase during the “not a girl-only day” will be high-end, mid-priced, and affordable items.

A Frank Sinatra-type singer will provide entertainment. There will be Asian, Italian and other ethnic food stations, plus gourmet desserts will feed the shoppers.

Yet for LAOH to meet their mission of “friendship, unity, and Christian charity,” and to make this a big hit, they need to sell 200 tickets.

“We’re looking to boost tickets sales,” said Ms. McGullam, a parishioner of Sacred Heart, Glyndon. “We’re looking to fill Grey Rock to maximize the check we can give to Sister Delia (Dowling, S.S.N.D.). The more attendees, the more it will help the girls.”

LAOH sponsored one Sisters Academy student from the 2008 graduating class, Danielle Hipkins, and is working on another partial scholarship for a class member of 2012.

Tickets for Bags to Riches are \$40, 2 for \$75. Send checks payable to Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, c/o Mollie McDonnell, 109 Starhill Lane, Baltimore 21228.

Call 410-952-6676 for more information.