

Monopoly Madness takes over Victoria

By Jeanine Soodeen
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Unlike most dinner and auction events, expect Monopoly Madness to be anything but refined or cultured. In fact, organizers have had to find ways to tone down the 14th annual event this year, by curbing players' competitive edge.

"The game is just wild. There are some people who get quite competitive, wheeling and dealing to amass the most property. It's very exciting, fast-paced, there's a lot of laughing and screaming going on," said Kate Mansell, Director of Development, Boys & Girls Club Services. "There's nothing quite like it in Victoria." Victoria's favourite dinner and big band dance, live and silent auction and Monopoly tournament supporting Boys & Girls Clubs Services and B.C. Paraplegic Association, returns Saturday, March 4, but to the Victoria Conference Centre. Previous events have been held at the Empress Hotel.

It all starts with cocktails at 5:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. The live auction features such items as a getaway for two to the Fairmont Chateau Whistler, dinner and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet or a day with Rick Hansen catching, tagging and releasing white sturgeon on the Fraser River.

"Then we have a short version of a Monopoly game. Everyone plays their heart out for 75 minutes," Mansell said.

Players disperse to up to 32 Monopoly tables of six players each. Go to www.monopolymadness.ca for the rules. This year, to tone down the competitive nature of the fierce Monopoly matches, tournament organizers have eliminated the grand prize. Instead, everyone in the tournament is entered into a draw for a grand prize.

In addition to ticket sales, community sponsorships help make Monopoly Madness possible by local businesses "buying" the properties on the game board.

From Park Place to Waterworks, properties of all values are for sale. However, many have already been sold. For example Thrifty Foods bought Board Walk and Black Press bought North Carolina. To see which properties are still available, check the website.

"It's a really exciting event for us this year," Mansell said

Not only has the bigger venue allowed for more ticket sales, but participants have two chances to either listen or dance to jazz music. During the games, those who aren't playing can relax in the lounge and listen to live jazz. Following the game the big band takes the stage at 10 p.m. for the dance.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for a big band orchestra composed of such stellar musicians to play together. We are very excited to perform for two community organizations that make such a difference in people's lives," said Joey Smith, Bank Notes musical director.

Expect such performances as "Hey Big Spender" and "Diamond's are a Girl's Best



Photo contributed

Participants always have a great time buying and trading at the Monopoly Madness fundraiser.

Friend" from the 12-piece orchestra featuring drummer Don Leppard, Tom Vickery on piano, Donny Clark playing trumpet, Ian MacDougall on trombone and Al Pease on clarinet. Vocalists Stephanie Greaves and Dave Linhart share their talents for the important fundraiser.

Last year Monopoly Madness - which sold out the past three years - netted \$96,000, and the year before, \$98,000. This year the goal is \$100,000.

"This year we're really hoping we'll make that \$100,000. It's been elusive the last couple of years," Mansell said. "It's a pretty important source of funds for both organizations."

The BC Paraplegic Association reaches out to hundreds of people with disabilities and their families. And Boys & Girls Clubs provide vital social, educational and recreational programs for children and youth.

Tickets for the full event are \$150, and tickets for the dance only are \$25. Call 384-9133.

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