






Ted Danson and Seth Meyers pushed each other to new heights, as their dreams totaled \$91,000. Ray Ewing


COMMUNITY


## Laughs and Generosity Set the Pace at Possible Dreams Auction

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At the 43rd Possible Dreams auction Sunday, friendly competition between host Seth Meyers and actor Ted Danson pushed the money raised for Martha’s Vineyard Community Services into the stratosphere.

The annual summer event is the largest fundraiser for community services and by the end of the evening the nine live dreams, the online silent auction and the ‘Fund A Need’ had raised \$180,000. Additionally, sponsorships totaled a record \$250,000, bringing the amount raised so far to \$430,000.

The banter between Mr. Meyers and Mr. Danson at the event was a contributing factor to the bottom line.

Both men had donated dreams: Mr. Meyer’s had offered tickets to see a taping of his Late Night show, and Mr. Danson was part of an environmental cruise that included his wife, Mary Steenburgen, John Kerry and other Island environmentalists.



Auctioneer Sherry Truhlar kept the bidding rolling. — Ray Ewing

home watching the event via live stream.

“We are buyers for a cause, not shoppers looking for a deal,” Ms. Truhlar reminded everyone before the live auction started.

While Ms. Truhlar steered the bidding, Mr. Meyers chatted with dream donors in attendance.

He spoke with Wampanoag tribe elder Kristina Hook about the Wampanoag Cultural Experience dream in which she will be teaching traditional tribal recipes. Ms. Hook pitched the dinner party she would help the dream purchaser host, describing dishes such as quahog chowder, root vegetables and locally sourced white fish stuffed with foraged herbs she would prepare.

“And I’m very witty,” she added.

“That’s coming across,” Mr. Meyers agreed.

But despite the celebrity cameos and sky-high bids, the purpose of the evening was never far from focus.

Martha’s Vineyard Community Services CEO Beth Folcarelli shared with the audience how the organization supported the Island during the pandemic and how funds raised at the auction would aid future endeavors.



Martha's Vineyard Community Services CEO Beth Folcarelli and Cronig's Market supervisor Norma Blidgen. — Ray Ewing

open up our state-of-the-art early childhood center. We raised upwards of \$9 million for phase one,” she explained. “And now we focus on phase two. Our goal is \$18 million to rebuild the second part of our campus which will house all of our services: veteran services, mental health services, substance use services, disability services, sexual and domestic violence services.”

The event also honored local essential workers, inviting Martha’s Vineyard Hospital emergency department nurses Betsy Vanlandingham and Mike Spiro, Vineyard Haven postal worker Karen Mercier, Edgartown chief of police Bruce McNamee and Cronig’s Market supervisor Norma Blidgen to attend. Ms. Blidgen accepted a recognition from MVCS on behalf of Steve Bernier, the owner of Cronig’s.

The event is not over yet as both the silent auction and Fund A Need program remain open until Tuesday at 9 p.m.. But on Sunday, Mr. Meyers had the final word.

“I thank everyone here for your generosity... but if there’s one thing we remember from tonight, let it be that when you added it up, I raised more than Ted,” he said.

To bid in the silent auction or give to the Fund a Need visit [events.handbid.com/auctions/possible-dreams-2021-16255](https://events.handbid.com/auctions/possible-dreams-2021-16255)

Under the tent at the hybrid event at Tilton Farm in West Tisbury, Mr. Meyers said he aimed to outperform Mr. Danson’s dream \$16,000 which had been bid for \$16,000, the highest price tag of the night up to that point. As the bids rolled in for the Late Night tickets, Mr. Meyers lightly ribbed Mr. Danson from across the tent to encourage the crowd.

“For Ted to get this much money, he had to go on a boat with John Kerry,” Mr. Meyers joked around at around \$12,500 mark.

The back-and-forth between the two men paid off. When the dust settled, the Late Night tickets raised \$59,000, with three bidders paying \$15,500 each, Mr. Danson adding another \$10,000 and Mr. Meyers donating an additional \$2,500. A second \$16,000 bid for Mr. Danson’s cruise resulted in a \$32,000 total.

Perhaps the biggest change this summer, after a hiatus from an in-person event last year, was the lack of paddles for bidding. This year all bidding took place online with facilitation from auctioneer Sherry Truhlar. Offers came in from inside and outside the tent, with those at



Event was in-person and via live stream - and the laughs were universal. — Ray Ewing



A full tent on a festive evening for a good cause.