

Mingle Award Recipient Named

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
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The fourth annual Mingle event is set for November 18 and in advance the day, the owner and employees of RED Steakhouse were proud to announce that the recipient of the funds raised this year will be the Vermillion School Foundation.

"Mingle is an open event where you purchase tickets to it," said chef Kirk Phillips of RED Steakhouse. "We remove all the chairs from the dining room and it is a mingling event. Our wine vendors usually provide a hundred plus varietals of wine that we sample out. We also sample out beers and different spirits. We provide different food stations throughout the building."

However, at the end of the day, it is a fundraiser, said RED Steakhouse owner Jerad Higman.

"People will go to one of these events and think they are going to get deals and stuff like that," he said. "We are looking to make money. We are shutting down the restaurant. It is always for a good cause and it is money going back into the community. I know people get hammered throughout the year for a lot different things. But for us, this was a way to do one big thing, not a bunch of little things. To really make an impact, not saying the little ones don't, but this was a way to make a big impact."

Higman said he is very proud of the fact that all of the food, wines, beer, spirits and most importantly his employees valuable time is donated to the event.

Susan Tuve, foundation president said she is proud to represent the fourth award recipient.

"Every year the people at RED Steakhouse and Jerad and Peggy give up their time to turn the restaurant over to a charity and allow them to raise money for a cause," she said. "We are I believe the fourth charity to be honored by Mingle – Dakota Hospital Foundation, St. Agnes School, the Vermillion Community Foundation and now the Vermillion School Foundation."

With the funding received Tuve said they will be splitting it between two different projects.

"Half will go to the Vermillion Athletic Boosters and half will go to a reading, writing comprehension initiative for the children at Jolley School," she said.

Higman said the growth of the event has been rewarding for he and his wife, who began the event when they were looking for a way to give back to the community that has so welcomed them.

"My wife and I asked what we could do to give back," he said. "I guess and spark some excitement in the community. The first year there wasn't really a formal process. That year Mary Merrigan was real involved with all of it, which gave us a real good foundation for all of this, where we



SHAUNA MARLETTE/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

the Vermillion School Foundation was announced the Mingle award recipient for this year. Pictured are Emily Te Brink, RED front of house manager, Susan Tuve, Vermillion School Foundation president, Chef Kirk Phillips, RED, Peggy Higman, Jerad Higman and Jim Peterson, Vermillion Booster Club President.

could say, hey if we are going to do this every year how do we formalize it. I would say this year has been the most formal, as far as picking between charities."

He noted that in the past three years the event has averaged dollar wise right around \$7,000-10,000 for a one day event.

"It is growing in popularity," Phillips said. "At first it was a wine event. Then we introduced beers. Now we have introduced different spirits and whiskies – brown liquors as popular as they are. It is getting more and more popular and it is just growing. People want to be involved – vendors and participants from the community. People are starting to look forward to this event every year."

He said the restaurant has always tried to offer a performance station during the event, as well.

"We maybe fry donuts or something along those lines at that station," he said. "It might be something made with liquid nitrogen or a mac and cheese bar. We always really try to create something unique and fun that shows who we are. Our serve staff hors d'oeuvres food and different tastes. It is really a fun mingling event, hence the name."

Higman said that the other main event during the evening is the silent auction.

"It is silent auction items and of course people are always welcome to write a check," he said. "This is about opening up and giving these people, these organizations, the change to reach out to their constituents to give back. It is a team effort which is really nice. I think it is a way for

the different charities to go out and touch their members. A lot of things there are a few people that do all the work. This is a great opportunity to dress up come out and mingle with other members of the community that you don't get to see very often. Then you get the chance to talk with the people who are heading up the charity and ask them any question you want."

Tuve said she knows the Vermillion School Foundation and the people it represents are very excited about Mingle and what is going on in the foundation.

"In the last year several people have gotten involved with the foundation that has just reinvigorated it," she said. "We have worked at redoing the articles of incorporation and the bylaws. We are building a board made up of qualified individuals from all parts of the community. We want people with an education background. We want people community leaders. We want parents, all involved in the process."

"We are really working to determine through some strategic planning what we should be doing. We are bringing in some of the booster groups and the parent groups under the Foundations umbrella to really make their job easier in terms of fundraising. But we want to focus on the students and working with the teachers."

In all, everyone involved said the most important aspect, is to come to the event, have fun, and bring your checkbook.

Tickets for Mingle are set to go on sale in the next few weeks and will be available for purchase at RED Steakhouse and from foundation members.

What's Happening At Newton Hills And Good Earth

BY GIANNA HARTY AND CORTNEY REEDY

This weekend at Newton Hills we are taking a walk on the dark side with all things nocturnal! On Friday, August 28th at 8:30 pm we will be showing a movie at the amphitheater. Saturday, August 29th at 10 am we are starting off the day with Give a Hoot, where we will learn about owls and make a craft. At 1 pm we are Going Batty to learn about South Dakota's bats. Then at 3 pm, we will be continuing our discussion of nocturnal creatures with a fun activity, Seeing with Sound. Then at 5 pm, we will meet for Advantages of the Night, where we will learn more about what it means to live the nocturnal life. In the evening we will show a movie at 8:30 pm at the amphitheater. Finally we will end the day with Newton Hills Night Hike at 9:30 pm. Meet us behind the Welcome Center for a walk on hard surface roads. Please wear good shoes. Flashlights are permitted but we will encourage you to keep them off to help with adjusting to night vision. On Sunday, August 30th you are welcome join in a non-denominational worship service at 9 am at the amphitheater. Come as you are, all are welcome, and refreshments will be provided.

Summer fun is winding down at Good Earth State Park at Blood Run! Have you joined us for a program? It's not too late! August 28th at 7 pm join us for Monarchs. These flying beauties travel thousands of miles every year! Come discover how you can be apart of their epic journey. Then August 29th at 11 am is our final Good Earth Challenge. Do you and your family enjoy scavenger hunts, hikes, and bingo? Come to Good Earth State Park for this family fun game that everyone will enjoy. Then at 2 pm learn to identify various animals' tracks found at Good Earth at Making Tracks. Includes painting tracks onto paper to take home. Then at 4 pm meet us at Good Earth State Park for a short hike with your dog and while you're there, you can learn etiquette and tips to keep your dog safe while at the park at Dogs at Good Earth 101. Then August 30th is at 3 pm whooo wants to discover the world of Great Horned Owls? Whooo wants to craft their very own owl, then join us at Great Horned Owl?

If you have any questions about the park or the programs for this coming weekend, do not hesitate to give us a call at (605) 987-2263 or email newtonhills@state.sd.us. More info including an event schedule may also be found online at www.gfp.sd.gov. If you would like to receive weekly email updates on programming at the park, like us on Facebook, or send an email to newtonhills@state.sd.us. The staff at Newton Hills and Good Earth looks forward to seeing you at the park this summer!

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