

Merriam Auction FAQs

What is the Merriam School Auction?

The annual Merriam School Auction is a fun-filled evening for the Merriam community. Moreover, it is the key source of funding for one of the highest priorities at Merriam – classroom teaching assistants. All of the event's monies go directly toward providing our children with greater individualized attention in the classroom than would otherwise be possible. Over the past few years, the auction has raised as much as \$54,000 in one night.

Wow. That's a lot of money. Will I have to spend a lot of money if I attend?

All the night will cost you is the price of your ticket, which includes a full dinner and a new Merriam Movie. Anything more is entirely up to you. You can choose to enjoy the evening and spend nothing more. Perhaps you will just buy a raffle ticket for a chance to win an item decorated by your child's class. Or, you might team up with friends and splurge on a catered dinner for 8, a vacation week away or a hot Patriots or Red Sox game.

Any bidding you do at the event will help Merriam reach its goal. There is another very important way that you can help – that may not cost you a cent – and that's by making a Community Donation.

What are Community Donations? How and when do I sign up?

Community Donations are items or services that are provided by members of the Merriam community to be auctioned off on the night of the event. Your donation is limited only by your imagination. It can be as simple as providing lessons in a skill you already know, such as knitting or magic tricks. Some of the most popular categories include themed dinners (Mexican night for 8), use of vacation homes (if you are lucky enough to have access to one), kids' birthday parties and tickets to sporting events. Here's your chance to be creative. To spark your creativity, check out our [Donation Ideas List](#) on the Merriam Auction website <http://merriam.maestroweb.com>. Large or small, every donation helps and makes for a more varied and exciting evening. The deadline for Community Donations is Friday, January 15 and it's easy; just go to the website and [Donate a Good or Service Online](#).

I have never been to an auction. How does the Merriam School Auction work?

At the Welcome Table you will receive a packet of goodies, including your paddle/bid number which is unique to you. You use your paddle number to bid on any item, regardless of the bidding format. There are several formats to choose from listed below. If you choose to pre-register your credit card either by purchasing tickets online or at the beginning of the auction, you don't even need to show up to check out. Your prizes and winning bids from the various formats will be added up automatically. You can receive a receipt for your purchases at the check out desk. You can also pay for items by cash or check.

Bidding Formats

Silent Auction (before dinner) – Items on display tables can be won by simply recording your paddle number and bid amount on the log in front of the item. Others may record higher bids. Whoever has recorded the highest bid at the end of the Silent Auction is the winner.

Live Auction (during/after dinner) – The big excitement of the evening. A professional auctioneer introduces each item at the podium, and audience members raise their paddle to display their unique number and register a bid. Last one bidding (and hence the highest bidder) wins the item.

How does the raffle work?

Once the auction starts raffle tickets will be available to purchase. These can be purchased in groups or “buy your height” which allows you more options. You then decide which item(s) you'd like a chance to win. Each raffle item has a collection box where you will deposit your ticket(s) if you are interested in that item. In addition, there may be special items being raffled, and tickets for those will be sold by volunteers walking the floor.

What's a cracker and how do I purchase one?

Crackers are some of the best bargains of the night! They are in essence a “grab bag”. For a set amount (\$25) you will be guaranteed a prize worth at least \$30. Some are worth much more than that. Most are items that have broad appeal such as restaurant certificates. Many are a composite of two or more items. There will be volunteers wandering around during the silent auctions selling the crackers so if you interested catch them early and enjoy the surprise!

What's all this talk about the kids' projects?

There are two types of projects this year:

- Every class at Merriam has created its own masterpiece to be displayed in the school during the February student/parent conferences. You'll be astounded when you see these pieces! They promise to be spectacular and are representative of each child in some form as every class member creates his or her own piece to add to the whole. This year's projects incorporate the auction's theme of “Making a Difference.” New this year, this art will be bid on during an online auction from February 5-13. Go to the Merriam Auction website <http://merriam.maestroweb.com> and read the "Guide to Bidding Online."
- Every class at Merriam is creating a centerpiece for the auction. Each class has designed a fun and whimsical utensil holder that will do double-duty as centerpieces and raffle prizes. Each class is creating its own design based on its curriculum or field of interest, and the children's thumbprints will form the base for those designs.

This sounds like fun, can I volunteer to help?

The auction has lots of volunteer openings available. You can help by selling raffle tickets, working the check-out desk, helping with set up, working the welcome desk, closing the silent auction, being a runner (taking bids to the check out desk), or bidding on behalf of proxies (where you get to spend other people's money!) To volunteer, contact Susan Brager Murphy (SJB.Murphy@verizon.net).