

"'Twas the Night LIVE!" benefits

SAPCC

BY BILL LOCKWOOD

The Shopper

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – On Saturday, Nov. 30, for the third year, the Hartness House Inn in Springfield was the site of a warm, welcoming, and festive "'Twas the Night LIVE!" event, featuring an appearance of Santa, elves, dancers, singers, puppets, horse-drawn wagon rides, cookie decorating, a silent auction, and much, much more. It was a great transition from the often hectic Thanksgiving season into the also sometimes hectic Christmas season that is now upon us. It is the major yearly fundraiser for the Springfield Area Parent Child Center. Angela Kelley, who minded the door, estimated that over 400 adults and children attended over the daylong event. She noted the event "has been growing."

Dallas Welch, also from SAPCC, said, "I think it's a great event to kick off the holiday season. A lot of work went into this."

Innkeeper Gayle Ballard did a fantastic job decorating the inn with a large miniature Dickens Village, wreaths, garlands, trimmed trees, and additional cardboard pop-up props from SAPCC.

The mansion was built in 1904 as the home of James Hartness,

Springfield industrialist and once governor of Vermont, and it lent a Victorian setting that totally fit the event.

The well-organized entertainment was created and directed by Carrie Jewel with choreography by Kyla White of Dream in Motion Dance and Performance Center with lighting and staging by Sean Roberts of World Under Wonder.

There were 35 entertainers with White's dancers ranging from ages 6 to 18. White said, "I love the event. It's great for the community. And it's different, and it caters to a crowd that doesn't sit for long."

The entertainment took place in various rooms of the inn. Groups of about 15 were led by an elf from room to room. The first room had a big dance number. Ainsley Bertone sang a very sweet "My Favorite Things" and three puppeteers presented "Reindeer Games." Ruby Besson presented a reading of the classic "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" and had an accompanying ballet dream sequence danced by Olivia Magliola. The final room had a very big dance routine finale that featured the appearance of Santa.

John MacDonald, president of the Springfield Community Players, has been Santa all three years. Margo Holmes, director of SAPCC said, "He's become



Team and wagon of Ingrid and Christopher Nichols from Woodstock, Vt. giving rides.

PHOTO BY AIMEE PARNELL

the Santa Claus of Springfield." This is the first year there was a Mrs. Clause, played by Pam Church, also of the Springfield Players.

MacDonald said, "Every year, they keep adding more and more."

There were also a large amount of donated items up for silent auction that included a three-night stay in Nashville, Tenn., a hockey puck signed by Connor Clifton, and a baseball signed by Eduardo Rodriguez. There were complimentary refreshments and a cookie decorating activity that turned out to be not only for the children.

Since 1992, the Springfield Area Parent Child Center has been providing services and supports for families and

children in the Windsor and northern Windham Counties. Director Holmes says their educational and support programs are designed to "build bridges of support for families," and they span primary prevention to interventions. They include home visiting and a diaper bank open to the community to name just two.

For this event, there was an impressive program that noted an equally impressive number of sponsors, both local businesses and others. Kelley said, "It is truly a huge team effort with support from countless community members."

For more information about Springfield Area Parent Child Center, go to www.sapcc.org or call 802-886-5242.