



# THE NEWS-PRESS CAUSES

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS



Toast of the Coast

Dodge Viper auctioned to raise money for Golsano Children's Hospital.



Scott Robertson Auctioneers has helped raise more than \$28 million for a variety of not-for-profit organizations, schools and charities. Sara Rose Bytnar is the first person Robertson has partnered with to conduct benefit auctions in Southwest Florida.

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-PRESS

## Auctioneer aims to help SWFL nonprofits

Sara Rose Bytnar, of Naples, has joined Scott Robertson Auctioneers

By Tammy Ayer  
tayer@news-press.com

A familiar face has joined the staff of Scott Robertson Auctioneers and she's eager to help local nonprofits raise more money than ever this season. Sara Rose Bytnar, 28, has worked with Robertson on benefit auctions for years. She's part owner of Rose Auction Group in Naples, where she manages the firm's real estate auctions. "Sara is a familiar face as she has worked with me at several hundred auctions



Scott Robertson

over the past five years, in addition to conducting her own fundraising auctions," Robertson said. "Sara joining our team in the capacity of auctioneer will allow Scott Robertson Auctioneers to provide our services to more charities." "She's the only auctioneer I've partnered with. The fact that she's local is just icing on the cake," said Robertson, who in the past 21 years has conducted hundreds of benefit auctions throughout Florida and the United States.

In 2014, Scott Robertson Auctioneers helped raise more than \$28 million for a variety of not-for-profit organizations, schools and charities. She's already up and running, so to speak. Bytnar will be calling the lots at the Naples Art Association gala on Feb. 7 and the Celebrity Martini Glass Auction for the Naples International Film Festival on Feb. 8. She'll also be at the Southwest Florida Wine & Food Fest on Feb. 28.

See BYTNAR • D3



PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-PRESS: Sara Rose Bytnar has joined Scott Robertson Auctioneers and will be calling the lots at the Naples Art Association gala on Feb. 7 and the Celebrity Martini Glass Auction for the Naples International Film Festival on Feb. 8. She'll also be at the Southwest Florida Wine & Food Fest on Feb. 28.

### SARA ROSE BYTNAR

- » **Born:** Toledo, Ohio
- » **Age:** 28
- » **Family:** Husband Brandon, 31, an attorney. The couple, who met in high school, moved to Naples in 2009.
- » **Education:** Bytnar graduated from Bowling Green State University with a bachelor's degree in communications with a focus in promotions and advertising. She completed her Auctioneer Certification at The Repperts School of Auctioneering and is licensed in Florida and Ohio. She is also a graduate of the Professional Ringman's Institute.
- » **Awards:** Bytnar was the 2012 Certified Auctioneer's Institute (CAI) Rose Award winner. This award is given to the CAI candidate that submits the best auction summary before completing the three year program. The Rose Award is named after Sara's grandfather, David Rose, who lost his battle with cancer before completing the coveted designation in 1998. She was also named the 2014-2015 Florida Auctioneers Association Bid Calling Champion and was first runner-up at the 2014 International Auctioneer Championship.
- » **Personal interests:** She admits that because she's very busy, she does not have much free time to pursue hobbies. Her favorite thing outside work is to compete in auctioneering competitions.
- » **More information:** theove.com or roseauctiongroup.com

## GET INVOLVED

### » SPOTLIGHT

#### Looking for a few good volunteers

United Way of Lee, Hendry, Glades and Okeechobee will hosts its annual Volunteer Recruitment Fair Saturday at Lakes Regional Library in south Fort Myers.

It's one-stop shopping for those looking for volunteer opportunities in the area, with an estimated 18 agencies participating.

The idea is to give individuals a chance to interact, face-to-face, with organizations and the opportunities that fit their interests. It is one way individuals and groups can connect and determine where they can best share their time and talents throughout the community.

For more information, call 433-2000.

**FOR MORE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, TURN TO D3.**



Elizabeth Cornelio's photo submission.

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-PRESS

## Fire & Ice fundraiser breaks record



Megan Becker

Motions ran high at Guadalupe Center's signature event, "Fire & Ice: Igniting the Flame of Learning," as Tutor Corps students shared their inspiring stories of hope for tomorrow.

Raising a record-breaking \$1.3 million, the evening gala held Jan. 14 at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, Naples included a sold-out crowd of

### MORE INFO

To make a donation, or for more information, please visit [GuadalupeCenter.org](http://GuadalupeCenter.org) or call 657-7124.

more than 400 guests bidding on exclusive live auction lots, and one very special custom-designed ring inspired by

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Tell us about your organization. Send an email to [causes@news-press.com](mailto:causes@news-press.com).

### WHY I GIVE



#### Bill Turner

2015 March for Babies chair

"My giving nature comes from my grandmother, who set an example for all the kids in my family by always giving of her time and resources to those in need...I also give because it is, quite simply, the right thing to do. Our SWFL community provides us with endless opportunities to enjoy nature, the arts, outstanding health care, education and business successes. We should demand of ourselves that we give back to the community that provides so much for us."

Bill Turner, 43, has lived in Fort Myers since 2002. He is the vice president of commercial banking for First Citizens Bank. His son, Hayden, now 10, was born almost three months premature. He is chair of the March of Dimes 2015 March for Babies, which will be held April 25 at Centennial Park in downtown Fort Myers. Turner has made the commitment to raise \$55,000 in new revenue as part of the overall goal of \$200,000. Lee County residents can sign up today at [marchforbabies.org/event/lee-county](http://marchforbabies.org/event/lee-county).

**If you are looking for ways to volunteer, here are a few ideas:**

» **Assist at Hope Healthcare.** RSVP of Lee County needs volunteers ages 55 and over for Hope Healthcare Services. Its mission is to provide exceptional care and support to every individual and their loved ones as they fulfill life's journey. They provide Hospice, palliative care support and frail elderly case management to residents of nine counties including Lee. Volunteer opportunities include assisting patients, their families, assisting in the office and at special events, and at Hope Chest (their resale shop). Volunteers are trained for their positions. No experience is necessary. For information, call Bob Sheehan at 239-489-9188.

» **Help during tax season.** The United Way is seeking volunteers in Lee, Hendry, Charlotte, and Collier counties to help lower to moderate income taxpayers file their

## GET INVOLVED

federal income taxes for free through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program. The United Way is currently recruiting volunteers to serve as tax preparers, greeters, and interpreters. Volunteers will complete online tax law training and certification using IRS tax software. Both English speakers and bilingual volunteers are welcome to better serve our clients. No experience is necessary. Flexible hours are available February through mid-April. Taxes will be prepared at many locations in Lee, Hendry, Charlotte, and Collier counties. For information, email Stephanie@unitedwaylee.org or call 433-2000 ext. 229.

» **Set up a booth.** Community volunteers are needed to help members of the Fort Myers Inner Wheel Club set up the Creative Living Booth at the

Southwest Florida and Lee County Fair located at the Lee Civic Center in North Fort Myers. This booth displays all the artistic entries for judging and display during the fair. They include quilts, photography, woodworking, horticulture, canning and many other works of art. Help is needed with registration, actual set-up of the booth and the judging of entries from Feb. 20 until March 8. Contact Pat Palmer at 313-8058 or visit swflcivc.com

» **Volunteer for Race for the Cure.** Susan G. Komen Southwest Florida is seeking volunteers for the 9th Annual Race for the Cure. On March 7, more than 6,000 attendees will take over the Coconut Point Mall in Estero. Komen will need the help of more than 500 volunteers to make this event possible. Volunteer opportunities include passing out water to participants, helping in the survivor's tent and assisting sponsors with giveaways. For information, contact Amber Nelson at amber@komen-swfl.org or 498-0016.



Sara Rose Bytnar and Scott Robertson

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-PRESS

## Bytnar

Continued from D1

"The first thing people say is 'You can do that fast talking?'" she said, laughing softly. "I'm an only child... I'm very laid back. On stage I'm a totally different person. You take on that persona when you have a microphone on your hand. "Scott is so very well known in the area. I am so fortunate to work with him... him interacting with the crowd is so amazing to watch."

Bytnar, a partner in the Rose Auction Group, travels throughout Florida, Ohio and Michigan performing auctions. She works with nonprofit organizations to help them reach their fundraising goals in charity benefit auctions.

She also oversees marketing and customer relations for the Rose Auction Group's real estate auction division in Naples.

A third-generation auctioneer with more than 10 years' professional experience, Bytnar learned the ropes of this male-dominated industry from her mother, Beth Rose — president and CEO of the Rose Auction Group — and aunts Pamela Rose, Dawn Rose and Karen Rose.

The real estate auction company was founded in

Toledo, Ohio, by Beth's father David Rose, an entrepreneur, who is also from Toledo. Rose Auction Group later expanded to Michigan and Naples, and provides real estate and benefit auction services in Florida, Michigan and Ohio.

"The Rose Auction Group is nothing short of amazing. The Rose family is well known nationally primarily as real estate auctioneers in Michigan and Ohio. They certainly have a national presence," Robertson said.

Awards for Bytnar keep coming, too. She was recently named first runner-up at the 2014 International Auctioneer Championship. Seven women made the finals of this competition, including Bytnar and her mother.

"I've been competing in this contest since the 1990s and I've never made the finals. Sara was first runner-up — it's a big deal," Robertson noted.

Bytnar already plans to compete in this year's International Auctioneer Championship in Texas in July.

"I was runner-up... now I want it more than ever," she said.

Bytnar was also named 2014-2015 Florida Auctioneers Association Bid Calling Champion in November, when auctioneers competed at the state conference. Contes-

tants were judged on speech and clarity, bid calling techniques, salesmanship, appearance and professionalism and knowledge of the auction industry.

"In order to be a good bid caller, you have to be clear, you have to make sure people understand you," said Bytnar, who will compete in the Michigan Auctioneer Championship this weekend.

"Certainly the speed and cadence are criteria as well, to have that cadence that brings the buyer in."

Growing up in a family of well-regarded female auctioneers, she's never felt intimidated by working in a male-dominated industry.

"We are in the minority when it comes the industry as a whole, but in our industry and our profession, we have a big voice," she said. "For us, it's a great challenge... it certainly motivates us to the top of our game."

"I probably wouldn't want it any other way. I see it as a huge positive to be in this industry as a woman."

Robertson brought Bytnar on board, he said, as he becomes more in demand on a national basis while still handling benefit auctions throughout Florida.

"She just keeps getting better. We've done hundreds of auctions together, and it's time. Sara's beyond ready."

## CAUSES CALENDAR

TUESDAY, JAN. 27

» **Child Advocate Orientation.** The orientation explains the duties to volunteer as a Guardian ad Litem Child Advocate. Open to Florida residents at least 21 years old with 8-10 hours monthly to volunteer on their own schedule with staff support, after free training. Noon-1 p.m. Guardian ad Litem Program, 20th Judicial Circuit, 2075 W. First St., Suite 300, Fort Myers. 357-9889. VoicesforKids.org

FRIDAY, JAN. 30

» **Lawrence O'Donnell to speak at Planned Parenthood gala.** MSNBC news program commentator Lawrence O'Donnell will lend his voice in support of women's rights on behalf of Planned Parenthood of Collier County at its 11th Annual Choice Affair. The premier fundraising event begins at 6 p.m. with cocktails and a silent auction, followed by dinner and the program at 7 p.m. \$350 for a single ticket to \$15,000 for a premium table. Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club, 851 Gulf Shore Blvd. N., Naples, 262-8923.

## SPOTLIGHT



Team Fox Swing for the Cure to host third Annual Charity Golf Tournament supporting Parkinson's Research to be held at The Plantation Golf and Country Club.

## Charity Golf Tournament

Team Fox Swing for the Cure to host third Annual Charity Golf Tournament supporting Parkinson's Research Event will be held at The Plantation Golf and Country Club. Parkinson's disease is a chronic, degenerative neurological disorder that affects one in 100 people over age 60. 175. 7:30 a.m. Thursday. Plantation Golf and Country Club, 1050 Dartington Drive, Fort Myers, 810-3709. facebook.com/teamfoxswfl



## Coffee + News

- Who: The News-Press editors, reporters, photographers and digital team
- What: Our morning news meeting
- When: Friday, January 30, 10:00 a.m.
- Where: Gwendolyn's Cafe 2400 1st Street #101, Fort Myers, FL 33901
- Why: Come and tell us what matters to you. Meet your local news team.

For more information or if you are interested in sponsoring a **Coffee + News**, call Cory at 239.335.0359, or codonnell@news-press.com.

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The News-Press media group

## Record

Continued from D1

Tutor Corps student Elizabeth Cornelio.

As the inspiration for Port Royal Jewellers' William Boyajian's "Orchid Bee" ring, Cornelio's passionate essay reflecting the impact the center has made in her life was transformed into a platinum and 18k yellow gold ring set with a rainbow of diamonds — pink, red, white and purple — with pink sapphire accents. It also features a white, green, and yellow-diamond bee.

Cornelio submitted a photo and essay of a flower being passed to her niece.

"What better way to show my gratitude for what Guadalupe Tutor Corps has provided to me than giving the same to another," Cornelio wrote in her winning essay. "Guadalupe Tutor Corps gave me hope. I come from an agricultural town, and to be honest, never really had a chance to be greater than the generations before me - a town that unfortunately is a blessing and a curse due to the fact that many don't have the opportunity to make it out. This program gave me that chance, that hope that has pushed me to become who I am today. I am the past, the present and the future, therefore I am instilling that same emotion, that same feeling of hope, opportunity, love, into my community, into my friends, into my family. The flower I am handing to my niece is a symbol of all that this program has provided for me, because I understand that one day it will be her handing the same to another."

"The Guadalupe Center has helped transform and impact the lives of so many children and families in our community," Boyajian said. "Seeing



Sandy Vasey, event co-chair, Mary McCabe, decor chair, and Linda Yoest, event co-chair.

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-PRESS



Eva Gomez, the winning bidder of the Orchid Bee ring with Port Royal Jewellers' William Boyajian.

exclusive gourmet dinner for 10 created by former White House Presidential Chef Walter Scheib.

Evening festivities also included live musical entertainment, a gourmet dinner and the opportunity to make on-the-spot donations for Early Childhood Education and college scholarships, which raised more than \$500,000.

Money raised from the auction and event benefits more than 1,100 Immokalee children in the Guadalupe Center's Early Childhood Education, after-school and Tutor Corps programs.

For the past eight years, 100 percent of Tutor Corps high school students have graduated. Students are hired as paid tutors in Guadalupe's after-school program, enabling them to help their families, while earning up to \$4,000 a year in scholarship money for college. More than 90 percent of Guadalupe's Tutor Corps students graduate with a post-secondary degree and many return to Southwest Florida and the Guadalupe Center.

Guadalupe Center's innovative early childhood education, after-school tutoring, community mentoring and college scholarship programs have earned national recognition.

Megan Becker is Marketing, Communications and Event Coordinator for the Guadalupe Center.