



## Adams Elementary Auction FAQ

**Date:** Saturday, March 16, 5 to 10:00pm at the Ballard Bay Beach Club, 6413 Seaview Ave NW, Seattle WA 98117  
**Tickets:** \$75 per person or \$125 per person for VIP tickets (see below for details), available at <http://adams.maestroweb.com/> starting 2/15/19.

### **What is the auction?**

The Adams Elementary Annual Auction is currently our biggest fundraiser of the year, last year grossing \$200,000. It is a fun, social night out and the primary goal is to raise money for our kids and Adams community. The auction funds a majority of our annual PTA budget: arts-integration training, tutoring, music and drama programs, technology upgrades, grounds renovation, and more. All non-SPS funded activities at Adams depend upon this fundraiser. Funds raised also pay for the free annual Adams Community Events, including the International Potluck, the Family Dance and the Carnival plus education programs like occasional parent education sessions and equity programming. Providing all Adams families with free and accessible community-building social opportunities is a priority for the PTA.

### **Where is the auction?**

The auction will be held at the Ballard Bay Beach Club. There are very few venues in Ballard that can handle 250 guests for a seated dinner.

Background: For many years, we held the auction at self-service venues. (2006 – 2015). Although this did keep our costs lower, the management involved was extraordinary—orchestrating a multitude of vendors, managing them onsite and servicing ourselves with food and drinks required about 100 total volunteers over the course of the auction period and an extraordinary project manager to oversee the entire production. Moving to a full-service venue reduced our manhours by 60-70% and the number of volunteers required for the whole program down to ~30. Please note all volunteers managing this fundraiser are Adams parents like you and me—we do this because we love auctions and are obsessed with raising funds for our school. The time involved is not insignificant!

### **What's covered in the ticket price?**

The \$75 Live Auction ticket covers a wonderful, elegant dining experience through Jewel Catering, Silent and Live auction entry, 1 drink coupon, and an incredible evening! The \$125 VIP ticket also includes VIP check in, 2 drink tickets and a Pick-of-Live raffle ticket (\$25 value!).

### **Could you explain ticket pricing a bit more?**

As mentioned above, we made a conscious decision to move to a full-service venue 4 years ago after many years of extreme work to accomplish the event on our own. A few of us still on the Auction team remember those days all too well! We negotiate our pricing to keep costs controlled but note that the \$75 ticket covers ~50% of the cost per person for the auction. We do not make money on the ticket, but the investment is well worth it!

### **Why can't we just have a cocktail party, or a Big(ger) Give campaign, and do away with the auction?**

We looked into this rather thoroughly 5 years ago when considering the move, and costs, of a full-service venue. Each school community is unique in its participation and fundraising efforts match that population. West Woodland moved to a Give campaign several years ago by hiring a consultant to help them make the transition. Whittier has

an auction every other year. Cascadia has a Big Give and pulls in \$250K. We are frequently asked how we pull off such a successful auction with a small number of volunteer and 100% donations. The answer—we've had lots of practice and we're really good at it!

To maintain the programs fundraising covers at Adams, we need to Net ~\$250K per year. Experts in the field told us we had to clear 50% of the budget in Big Give before we could consider reducing / cutting the auction.

- We've tried pushing our Give Campaign, but have never cleared more than \$60K, so we're not there yet.
- Streamlining the event to a cocktail party would mandate a much shorter program, less auction items, translating to less revenue raised.
- We know from the cocktail atmosphere during our Silent Auction that socializing is a fun priority, so bidding goes down. Having people sit and eat during a live auction holds attention and drives bidding UP.
- Any change in the cycle of income—moving the auction to every other year for example—would require reworking our spend cycle significantly.

### Can we use our fundraising to help others?

YES! We are thrilled to be partnering with the Equity Committee to help share some of our funds this year with another Seattle Public School, Concord International Elementary. Concord is a beautiful school serving a unique and diverse population of students with distinct needs as 72% of students are on free or reduced lunch (compared to 15% at Adams.) We will collect money for Concord in two ways 1) a specific ask will be made during the Live Auction program and 2) there will be an option within the Online Auction to donate to Concord. We're thrilled to be partner on this effort and will provide more details in the coming weeks.

### How does our price compare to other school auctions?

Our price is in line with other auctions that have a catered dinner.

### What is the cost for a teacher to attend?

We are happy to thank our teachers with a complimentary ticket, but the actual cost is the same as for you and me -- \$150+. On our auction registration page, we'll invite you to help cover this cost by Sponsoring a Teacher when you register.

### Does the auction staff buy tickets, or are they comped?

The only staff who do not pay are those working the night of the auction, like Banking, Servers, and Floor Managers who do not sit at a plated table. All other auction volunteers buy their tickets at full price, including all Chair positions.

### I can't attend the auction. How can I participate?

- **Volunteer** on Auction Night! You work hard, but get to attend, get a bid number, and have fun while doing it! We also always need **Auction Superheroes**! Superheroes help with one-off tasks, like picking up donations, hanging posters, etc. It's easy- [join the Superheroes](#), you'll receive occasional job requests and if you can help, sign up!
- **Bid** in the Online Auction! This year the Online Auction will be the week of March 10, including many gift certificates to local businesses, great camps, some special party seats and ALL teacher experiences.
- **Proxy Bid** interested in something offered at the Live Auction? Have a friend bid for you or contact [auction@adamselementary.org](mailto:auction@adamselementary.org) and we'll assign a bid number to you and have a staff member onsite represent your bid.
- **Donate** an item, service, party, experience. The best and most profitable auction items come from our parent community! The deadline to donate is February 15, so please alert us to your offer today! <http://adams.maestroweb.com>
- **Offer Babysitting / Sleepover Services** to Friends Going to the Auction! Help your friends spend more money at the auction (making more money for Adams) by hosting a pizza or slumber party so they don't have to pay a babysitter! That's a great way to help!

Want to learn more or be part of the future of the Adams Auction? Join the team and shadow this year! Contact [auction@adamselementary.org](mailto:auction@adamselementary.org)