

Media Release  
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### STEP VA Inc. Gala Raises Record Amount

FREDERICKSBURG, VA— STEP VA Inc. brought in more than \$50,000 at its 10 Year Anniversary Gala last weekend. It marks the most the organization has brought it at one time, topping the \$30,000 raised at the spring musical, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown.” The money raised will allow the organization to establish its own space for classroom and creative use. To date, STEP VA has held classes meetings at locations either rented from the community or generously loaned by local businesses and houses of worship, but the group has never had its own establishment. With that in mind, the Board of Directors plans to have STEP VA in its own space before the end of 2023.

Most of the ticket holders were being introduced to STEP VA for the first time at the gala, which organizers are looking to make an annual fundraising event for the local 501(c)3 non-profit that works to “empower people with disabilities and their families through creative expression and sensory exploration.” Taking place at the Arbor Haven Event venue, the “Boots and Diamonds” gala celebrated the organization’s 10 year anniversary and featured the first community performance by STEP VA’s new all-abilities choir. The choir, consisting of STEP VA participants, their family members, volunteers, and staff, sang three songs and featured several soloists throughout the performance before mingling with guests, table side, and allowing donors to meet some of the STEP VA families.

“This choir rehearsed over the summer twice a month, and it was a joy to see it pay off and the singers receive a standing ovation at the end of it all. My favorite part about the choir is that six families were represented: whether it was dad/son, mom/daughter, siblings, or a whole family performing together,” said choir organizer Sarah Garner, STEP VA program director.

The choir performance, gala organizers say, caught many guests by surprise, making STEP VA’s mission more accessible. The crowd of 175 stepped up and exceeded the organization’s fundraising expectations. .

“People from the community in the audience that night witnessed the impact the arts can have,” said Jan Monroe, STEP VA executive director. “Through the performance by our all-abilities choir, our gala guests now understand our dream of creating accessible arts programming in the Fredericksburg region and they want to be a part of making dreams a reality.”

For more information or to donate, visit [www.stepva.org](http://www.stepva.org).

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