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Go out with your girls for a good cause

BY KATIE MCDOWELL The Dominion Post

Women of the world, unite.

Or at least mark your calendars for Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center's Girls' Night Out, 6-9 p.m. June 1 at the Clarion Hotel Morgan. The fundraiser will feature girly-themed stations like a mini make-over station, a neck and shoulder massage station, a paraffin hand-wax station and more. Have your future told by a psychic. A surprise "signature cocktail" will be served, along with decadent appetizers like crab fondue, stuffed mushrooms, Greek spanakopita and cheese selections, and decadent desserts like chocolate fondue with strawberries.

Subway will provide the music.

Advance tickets are \$50 per person (\$25 tax deduction) and will be held at the door. Tickets purchased at the door are \$75 (\$50 tax deduction). Barbara Fleischauer, a MCCAC board member, said she realizes the price sounds steep, but it's for such a good cause — and the event will be so much fun — it's worth it.

The MCCAC provides a safe, nonthreatening environment where children can be interviewed and observed by healthcare and legal professionals in cases of possible abuse or neglect.

"When you have a case of abuse or neglect, you don't want to drag a child around to hospitals, courts," Fleischauer said. "And you don't want to have to do several interviews. You don't want to traumatize a child any more in these cases. We're talking about very important stuff — potentially taking a child away from his parents. We're talking about the safety of a child. You gotta do it right."

In cases where allegations may be false, or mistaken, it's also important to exonerate the parent quickly, she said. Having a single place in which to conduct interviews with several professionals at once helps speed things up.

But like all nonprofits — the center is funded in part by grants and by the County Commission — fundraising is a necessity. And when it comes to fundraising, it's important to have an event that will stand out among the rest.

Sandy Graff, co-chair of the event, had been to a similar Girl's Night Out fundraiser in Louisville, Ky., and thought it would go over big in Morgantown.

"It's basically a big party for women," she said. "The point is to have a whole lot of fun." Fleischauer said she's never been to a girl's night out. "But I think I need one," she said, laughing. She's even invited a friend to come from Charleston to attend the event — and then follow it up with a slumber party at Fleischauer's. If the event is well-received, MCCAC is considering hosting a Guy's Night Out, too. "We will explain the center and inform people about its purpose [at the event], but really we're trying to raise money by just having a good time," Fleischauer said.



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