

Bridges fundraiser exceeded hopes

190 tickets for auction sold out in 45 days

By Amy Johnson

JAMES CITY — An upcoming auction at the Williamsburg Winery to benefit a local charity has sold out, surpassing expectations of everyone involved.

"We never dreamt this would happen," said Ken Frantz, founder and director of Gloucester-based Bridges to Prosperity.

Bridges to Prosperity is an all-volunteer charity that focuses on teaching the poor to lift themselves from poverty by building their own footbridges.

Money raised through the wine auction will help fund the organization's latest project in the Andes of Peru. Existing programs are in place in Nepal and Ethiopia.

All 190 tickets priced at \$150 each sold out in 45 days, Frantz said. More than 50 were sold to Rotarians.

"I am amazed at how the community came together to support this event," Frantz said. "When we originally discussed starting this event, we thought the only way we could sell all the tickets was to partner with another local charity. Not taking on a partner was a real blessing. For in the end, not only have we sold all the tickets, but also made significant headway in educating the local community about our international bridge missions."

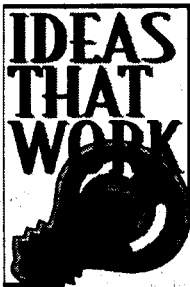
Frantz's goal is to raise \$40,000, which is almost half what it costs each year to pilot a bridge program abroad. Ticket sales alone amount to more than \$28,000.

Frantz met Patrick Duffeler, president of the Winery, last year when working on the Winery's land donation to the Williamsburg Land Conservancy.

Frantz said Duffeler generously offered the winery as the site for the charity's first major event in greater Williamsburg.

"To think, all this started with Patrick's most generous offer," Frantz said. "I cannot imagine the future."

Frantz noted that area sponsors should also be recognized for their role in promoting the event. Those include Ferguson, Chesapeake Bank, RNC Centura, Rotary International, Goodman &



These new foot bridges provide mothers and families access to rural health clinics, and children access to schools.

Company, Legg Mason, Lytle Law, Nice Homes, Regent Enterprises, Smurfit-Stone, Waller Todd & Sadler Architects, EW Muller, WM Jordan and Warwick Plumbing & Heating.

The event is scheduled for Saturday, June 11. The evening will feature wine-tasting, tours, silent and live auctions of quality wines from Virginia and around the world, dinner and dancing. Some of the wines to be auctioned include a 2000 Chateau Lafite-Rothschild and a 1990 Charles Heidsieck, among many others. Trips to Peru, Florida and high performance Porsche driving lessons are among the lifestyle items up for auction.

More — www.bridgestoprosperty.org.