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Diminutive art has big effect on hunger

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Peter Bowe and fellow owners of the Saline Picture Frame Co. had such good luck with Circle of Art last year - they raised \$10,000 - that they're doing it again.

Circle of Art: Small Art for a Big Cause brings together 300 or more small works of art from about 200 local and national artists. The works are being auctioned off at the shop, at 7641 N. Ann Arbor St. in Saline, as a fundraiser for Food Gatherers, the group that collects food for the hungry in Washtenaw County.

Bowe and Saline artist Valerie Mann hatched the idea for Circle of Art over lunch more than a year ago. Shop owners Bowe, his wife, Mary, and his sister Sara Bowe had donated here and there but wanted to do something more substantial.

So they spread the Circle of Art idea among local artists, who in turn told other artists as well as art owners. The idea was to collect 360 small works, a full circle, for a grand auction. Suddenly the frame shop was full of small, lovely paintings, prints, photographs, sculpture, blown glass and jewelry.

This year, the circle has even more works, and they all are up for bid until May 21, when a party at the shop will bring artists and patrons together for final bidding. Early bids are being accepted online and by mail. And, according to the frame shop Web site, more than \$1,000 in bids have already been filed.

Works in the auction include a stone lithograph by the late Ann Arbor artist Emil Weddige. Other pieces included photographs by Gerry Volgenau and Doris Kraushaar, watercolor paintings by Bill Lavery, fiber art by Gail Ives, painted china by Phyllis Martin and glass vases by Shawn Nelson.

Bids start at \$10 and can be raised in \$1 increments.

To see the art and submit e-mail bids, visit www.salinepictureframe.com.

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