

MUSICAL: 'Sounds Around Town' draws crowds to B'ville

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Gallery of Fine Art, Leonard Mizerek, a New York City artist whose works are on display at the gallery through the end of June, painted a scene of the Claremont Road streetscape while several residents watched intently.

"People are coming in who've never been here before," said business owner John Stringer of Oldwick. "People are getting introduced to the businesses.

"Ceasar's idea was brilliant," he said of his business partner Ceasar Mistretta Sr., the chamber president who was a driving force behind the event.

Stringer noted that in suburbia, people tend to drive their vehicles swiftly past local businesses without ever getting out to see them. The event accomplished its mission, he said, of getting people to walk around the downtown like they do in metropolitan areas.

In addition to music, free finger food and wine was aplenty.

At Rejuv at 59-65 Mine Brook Road, residents were given tours of the candle-lit spa and offered wine or champagne. Outside Dugan's Hooligans, a Celtic family ensemble from Madison, performed draw passers-by inside.

Kids' Activities

At the Bernardsville Centre

shopping mall, the parking lot near Burger King was blocked off for children's entertainment. Among the offerings were a large mural painting, a T-shirt design booth, a martial arts demonstration and a "silly dance" and hula-hoop contests for younger children.

"Bernardsville, when I was growing up here, didn't have fun things like this," said Basking Ridge resident Caren Frost Olmsted, a 1992 Bernards High School graduate and artist who helped kids with the mural painting in the parking lot. "It's nice to see this happening."

Many of the activities at the shopping center were presented by the E Arts Center of Bernardsville, which opened at 75 Claremont Road in 2008. Basking Ridge resident Lisa Gunn-Becker explained that the business offers art, dance, acting and environmental arts programs for children to help develop their talents and self-confidence. "We're really trying to promote our summer camps," she noted.

Numerous stores at the mall offered discounted merchandise. Gary's Wine and Marketplace held a special wine tasting, as did Raritan Liquors and 65 Degree Wine else where in town.

On another stretch of Route 202 Weichert Realtors handed out literature, bright yellow hoola-



Photo by Debbie Weisman

Caren Frost Olmsted and her son, Mathew, of Basking Ridge create a black and white mural for other children to color in the parking lot of the Bernardsville Centre during the family-oriented celebration Friday evening.

hoops and even free chili to residents walking by.

"We're a full service Realtor," said office manager Elaine Waller of Basking Ridge with a

smile. "We'll sell you a house and feed you!"

All in all, more than 60 businesses participated in the big event, which was blessed with



Photo by Charlie Zavalick

Patrick Jackson of Bernardsville tries his luck at the prize wheel operated by Tristan Morgan of the WPLJ radio station in the parking lot of Prestige Auto on Mine Brook Road during Friday evening's event.

ideal spring weather.

Despite the large crowd, police reported no negative incidents.

"It seemed everyone who came out was having a good time," said

Police Chief Kevin Valentine who attended the event. "It was a nice event - a larger crowd than expected turned out - and no major problems."