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Lizeth Olvera, center, with Marya Falcon and Taly Haffar at the fundraiser for the Gustavo Ipiña Memorial Scholarship.

Art Show Raises Funds for Ipiña Legacy

Posted August 20, 2007, 3:00 a.m. by Liz Mackinnon

A crowd of about 100 art lovers from the Lakewood area and beyond filled the Van Ditthavong Gallery near Fair Park Aug. 16 for a special exhibit and silent auction benefiting the Gustavo Ipiña Memorial Scholarship at Woodrow Wilson High School.

Dallas County assistant district attorney and, G.I.M.S. founder Taly Haffar collected the works of 10 local artists for the second annual "Art in Celebration" exhibit. Last year's fundraiser pulled in \$2,900 for the G.I.M.S. fund, and this year's event made \$6,500.

"We more than doubled our total this year, it was a huge success," Haffar said.

Paintings of large, brightly colored flowers, reminiscent of Georgia O'Keefe, shared gallery space with photographs of old Dallas courthouses, and a display of unique hand-made jewelry.

Haffar called this year's selection "very eclectic." Almost as unusual as this year's variety of artists.

"Some were local professionals and the rest DAs, lawyers, and friends," he said.

Haffar's co-workers and friends did not let him down this year. Many turned out to show their support for the man who is so devoted to the memory of a young man he never met.

"More than anything it was how much potential that Gustavo had. He was a tremendous young man who really had the world at his doorstep. To see all that go unfulfilled is tragic," Haffar said.

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Photo by Liz Mackinnon

Tyler Wright and Rob Casas take in some of the displayed artwork.

Lizeth Olvera, the 2007 G.I.M.S. recipient, attended the event, along with the first recipient, Cesar Ortiz. Olvera talked about why she wanted to win the scholarship and how it already is changing her life.

"I wanted to win because I want to go to college and become a medical assistant and a professional photographer, and I want to help my family," she said. "I am the first in my family to go to college. My family is all excited about it."



Woodrow Principal Ruth Vail, teacher Marjorie Shaw, Taly Haffar, Erin Hendricks, and scholarship winner Lizeth Olvera at the 2007 scholarship award ceremony.

While Olvera thanks Haffar for encouraging her to succeed, she credits Dallas County prosecutor Erin Hendricks with showing her how successful a woman can be. Hendricks helps Haffar with the details of the scholarship program, and speaks fluent Spanish.

"She is a role model for me, and she is really sweet," Ortiz said. "Her work in the courts is hard but really, really, interesting."

Olvera knows all about hard work. During high school, she worked at a neighborhood grocery store whenever she could to help make ends meet at home.

"Part of the reason we want to devote all the finances to this [scholarship] is because kids are used to working throughout their school year while they're in high school, and we want college to be their only job" Haffar said.

Olvera will use her \$5,000 scholarship to pay for books, tuition, and any other school-related costs she encounters at college this fall.

Haffar's goal is to have enough money in the scholarship fund some day to pay for a student to go to college for a full four years.

Haffar and Hendricks spent two months putting this year's art show together. The next event occurs Dec. 1 at the Bodega Bar [near Knox-Henderson](#) section of East Dallas. They agree that it was worth the effort, and they would, and will, do it all over again.

Gustavo Ipiña was killed in a road-rage incident in 2004, just one week before his senior year at Woodrow.

*To donate to the G.I.M.S., contact [Taly Haffar](#) or mail a contribution to:
G.I.M.S.
3501 Bryan St., No. 3501
Dallas 75204*

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