

Symphony Guild Holiday Gala 2025 – Live Auction

1. How to Start a Special Evening?

The best way to start any special evening is with a bottle of champagne, but not just any champagne. Tonight's offering is an exceptional bottle of champagne selected by Chef Brian Tucker, Richland Community College's Culinary Arts Program, while traveling with his students in France this past summer. Procured by John and Cheryl Bradley and graciously donated for tonight's auction, it is offered with a cut crystal ice bucket which honors Mrs. JeanEva Smallwood who always gifted family and friends with special occasion ice buckets. Two champagne flutes accompany this elegant French-inspired package.

Donated by John & Cheryl Bradley, Mrs. JeanEva Smallwood, and Friends of SOGD

2. Everything Tastes Better by Candlelight!

During the holiday season, few things are lovelier than the warm glow of candles and delicious food at a dinner shared with friends. Imagine your party of four sharing a bottle of wine and dining at the Country Club of Decatur as the club once again presents a special evening of holiday warmth on Wednesday, December 10th.

Donated by Captain & Mrs. William Frank, USN retired

3. St. Louis Is More Than Baseball and Hockey!

St. Louis is a great music city, and there is no finer music in the city than the St. Louis Symphony which has returned to its permanent home in the recently renovated Powell Hall. This package includes two tickets for the symphony, and a \$400 gift card for a special getaway in "The Gateway City".

Donated by The St. Louis Symphony, John & Carmen Dunn, and Terry & Christina Shields

4. A Pie-a-Month from Grandma Flo's Kitchen

Why not treat yourself to a Pie-a-Month fresh from Coney McKane's? The lucky winner will receive a package of twelve certificates – one for each month of 2026 – but the challenge will be deciding what pie to order! Lemon Meringue? Blueberry? Cherry" – So many choices!

Donated by Cheryl Bradley and Shirley Swarthout

5. Did You Know There Are 23 Golf Courses in Paris?

Yes, within a radius of twenty-five kilometers of Paris, France there really are twenty-three golf courses, but none are as fine as the Country Club of Decatur. Enjoy a round of golf for four on the beautiful course that is just outside the window. After the 18th hole, lunch awaits in the Eagle Grill.

Donated by the Country Club of Decatur and Friends of SOGD

6. From the 15th Century to Today

Ballet began in the 15th century, and the Joffrey Ballet Company began in 1956. Lucky for us, The Joffrey performs in Chicago, and this package includes two tickets for *Eugene Onegin*. Winners will be able to choose their dates from June 4-14, 2026, and the seats are on Level B. This package includes an overnight stay at The Kimpton Grey Hotel and a \$200 gift card for dining.

Donated by The Joffrey Ballet Company, John Baird, and Greg & Jo Carter

7. Since the 19th Century, the French Have Loved Their Bistros.

And more recently locals love dining at Bistro 537 at Richland Community College. With Chef Tucker's 2025 culinary adventure in France, 2026 will be the perfect time to enjoy a French cooking class for ten in a professional kitchen with a master chef. Bon Appétit!

Donated by Richland Community College and Chef Brian Tucker

8. Spotlight on Paris!

Imagine yourself cruising on the Seine River, visiting the Louvre, Versailles, and other iconic landmarks of Paris, with the option of visiting the hallowed ground that is Normandy. This is a dream vacation experience coming October 7 – 13, 2026. This amazing opportunity is also a way to support the Symphony Orchestra Guild of Decatur -- for everyone who takes advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime itinerary, the guild will receive \$250! Twenty spaces are available, and \$1,250 will cover your deposit *and* trip insurance. Please consider making your deposit tonight.

Coordinated by Linda Roberts of Best Trips Ever

9. World Class Music Since 1891!

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is truly among the world's finest orchestras, and this auction item includes two tickets, a one-night stay at the Kimpton Grey Hotel, as well as a \$200 gift card for dining while in the Windy City. The CSO presents approximately 200 performances per year, so the winning bid will have scheduling flexibility to enjoy a special afternoon or evening at the symphony.

Donated by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Joe & Kathy Brown, and Dr. Priscilla Palmer

10. Some Parties Are Better Than Others

Why not throw the best party ever!?! gK9 is donating the use of their facility for your next event – whether an intimate party for two or a festive celebration of up to seventy people! Use on a mutually agreed date and time before May 1, 2026, with live music provided by Doug Nicholson and Friends. Food is welcome but not included. This special opportunity includes a \$100 gift card for gK9 libations.

Donated by gK9 and Jack & Sarah Kiley, Doug Nicholson & Friends, and Friends of SOGD

11. More than a Snapshot!

Local award-winning artist Barbara Dove traveled to France, and while there, she visited the asylum where the artist Vincent Van Gogh was hospitalized. From her travel photographs she painted “The Cloister at Saint-Remy-de-Provence.” Framed by Gallery 510, this 16"x20" oil painting on canvas is gallery wrapped on 1" stretcher bars. In Barbara's words, “Warm and cool colors are juxtaposed to create interest, and high contrasting values draw your attention to the focal point of the painting. The work is painted with opaque layers and transparent glazes.” In short, this is an incredibly special work of art that was specifically commissioned for this evening's Symphony Gala.

Donated by Barbara Dove

12. Sparkling Like “The City of Light”

Your beloved's eyes will light up when she sees this beautiful matching set of earrings and pendant. Both are fashioned in 14 karat yellow gold clusters with the pendant featuring four round brilliant cut diamonds totaling approximately .47 carat, G-H color, and VS clarity fixed to a diamond cut oval link chain measuring 18-inches in length with a lobster clasp. The earrings feature eight round brilliant cut diamonds totaling approximately .31 carat, H-I color, and SI clarity. This is truly a gift to remember!

Donated by Flora Gems

13. Have You Ever Been Invited to “The Chef's Table”?

If the answer is “no,” then here is your chance. If the answer is “yes,” then you know how special it is to have an accomplished chef prepare a five-course tasting meal in front of your eyes. Each dish will be thoughtfully crafted and paired with specific wines to enhance the flavors of each dish. Chef Brandon Kramer and his talented team invite your party of ten to enjoy his culinary expertise at a mutually agreed time during 2026 here at the Country Club of Decatur.

Donated by the Country Club of Decatur and Chef Brandon Kramer