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## **IFMA's Giving Thanks Giving Back Virtual Gala a huge success**

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Boston, MA 2020 has thrown us one crazy loop after another and we have worked to dodge each one as they have come! Typically we would be gathering together for our annual Giving Thanks Giving Back gala to raise funds for Boston Medical Center's The SPARK Center through a silent auction, raffle, and donations. But this isn't a typical year. So we adjusted.

More than 30 donors were on hand to help us raise our critical funds for this year's IFMA Boston scholarship fund

After 25 years of supporting The SPARK Center, the program has closed and is providing services to their population in a different format moving forward. As a result, the chapter decided to continue with our fundraising efforts, but focused them on the annual scholarship fund through the chapter. The chapter has provided \$5,000 scholarships for more than 10 years to students pursuing an FM education either as an undergraduate or graduate degree. This is just one of the efforts the chapter has to help close the FM talent gap. Each year, far more FMs retire than enter the workforce. Our Career Expansion group, headed by Frank Rhodes, II, CFM of Marriott, is working directly with regional technical schools to educate high schoolers on the field of FM. They are also working with the IFMA Foundation to raise awareness for the profession and to work with area community colleges to add FM specific programming within their curriculum.

And since we are still firmly seated within a pandemic, we could not bring our members and community members together in person, so we provided a virtual venue for the festivities. The gala included four days of bidding on the silent auction, which included everything one needs in isolation—home office equipment, restaurant gift cards for your favorite take out, meal delivery services, DIY gift certificates, and more. We also had a raffle for a home office bundle that included artwork, office chair and noise canceling headphones. We were also incredibly thankful for all of the corporate donations directly to the fund including American Moving & Storage, TRIA, Staples, and Gorman Richardson Lewis Architects.

The gala then culminated with a 30 minute reveal event that included Thanksgiving holiday demonstrations, a surprise celebrity guest, speed networking, and door prizes. It was jam packed and exciting to watch the donations continue to come in! Our goal for this virtual event was to raise \$5,000 for this year's scholarship. Not only were we able to do that, we exceeded that and closed the evening just shy of \$6,000! Amazing!

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