



CORRESPONDENTS



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[In Praise of the Virtual Fund-Raiser](#)

My wife and I paid \$2,000 for two tickets to the WorthyCause Gala.

Then we went to the best fund-raiser ever---without ever leaving home.

The Gala was at the Museum of Modern Masterpieces. On the Gala website, we received a floor plan of MMM, images of some of the best known works of art, with accompanying remarks on tape from the curator, and an audio of the string quartet that was playing during the cocktail hour.

On the website was also a layout of the table arrangements, with our seating assignment. The menu, in beautiful script, showed us the four courses, each with a special wine. We clicked on an icon to admire an enlarged image of the floral arrangements.

We were given the names of our table companions, a short bio (we had to submit same when we bought the tickets) and their email addresses in case we wanted to exchange thoughts or questions about our brilliant children, the price of real estate in Vermont, the problems of Health Care Reform in the Senate, Teddy Kennedy's or Sarah Palin's new books, whether Mayor Bloomberg would have trouble governing with a reduced majority and other weighty questions about cabbages and kings. For the misanthropic (unfortunately, I must confess there are nights when I am in that category) no pressure to make conversation with your dinner partners.

Some of the best stores in the City offered on-line specials if men or women wanted to buy special clothes for the gala. Those stores would share some of the margin with WorthyCause and express mail purchases so that they could arrive on time.

The program was easily accessible on streaming video. We choose to skip the 20 minutes when the dinner co-chairs thanked the biggest donors, their co-workers and the chef and extolled the virtues of WorthyCause (we'd given already!!). We went straight to the featured remarks of the

former Ambassador to We're-in-Deep-Trouble-Stan, who gave a brilliant analysis of past triumphs and tragedies, the challenges and opportunities, in that difficult corner of the globe.

Then, after 10 minutes at the Gala, we got up from our computers and settled in our easy chairs to read for the rest of the evening. The car continued to sit quietly in the garage.

We were thrilled that the Gala had raised \$1.2 million and that it could actually keep about 97 percent of it, rather than paying 25-40 percent for the cost of an actual dinner. We were equally thrilled that WorthyCause staff could work on charitable activities, rather than a charitable dinner.

Yes, this virtual gala meant venues, caterers and staff might lose income. But we were interested in giving to WorthyCause, not the Museum of Modern Masterpieces. And we could eat out a few more times to help restaurants and restaurant workers.

We thought WorthyCause was really cool to pioneer in these hard times to raise significant extra dollars through the virtual fund-raiser.

And better yet: we didn't have to go to our six thousandth dinner on a week-night.

We decided to give even more to the WorthyCause Gala next year.

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