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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***  
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## **Annual Wine and Food Gala Raises \$15K for Community**

For the past 22 years, people have come together for the United Way of Seneca County's "Taste of Spring" event. Each year the United Way hopes to raise as much, if not more money as the previous year. However, this year because of the economy Executive Director Karen Beals and the United Way team were unsure of what to expect.

"I am always nervous right up until the event. I ask myself, did we sell enough tickets? Will everyone come? Was there something more that we should have done?" explained Beals. "This year was different because of the poor economy; the staff and I were feeling more unsure than ever. In the end, the community pulled together, as it always does, and ended up raising \$2,000 more than last year!"

All of the funds generated will be used to continue the work that the United Way does- improve education, income and health, the basic building blocks for a successful and happy life. While "Taste of Spring" is a wonderful evening out, it is in reality the critical "kick-off" to the annual community campaign the United Way holds to raise resources to address community needs and increase the quality of life in Seneca County.

At the event, more than 500 people came through the door, with access to over 35 vendors from local restaurants and wineries. Some faithful vendors have been participating from the beginning – Swedish Hill, Knapp Vineyard. Newer ones include: Hotel Clarence, Happy Family, Muranda Cheese, Eleven Lakes Vineyard, Cayuga Creamery and Zugibe Winery. Each year, vendors donate their products, their time, and/or prizes to help host what is considered one of the most prominent events of Seneca County.

As the United Way looks to the future, they are already planning for next year's event, with a set date of May 5, 2011. The Gala will once again be held at the Holiday Inn, just one of the many local sponsors that make this event so successful- others include Gay & Son Agency, Inc., Fingerlakes1.com, Finger Lakes Radio Group, Five Star Bank, Lyons National Bank, Savannah Bank, Seneca Falls Savings Bank, and Seneca Meadows.