

# Mount Vernon Gazette

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## NEWS



The Rev. Keary Kincannon and Sharon Emory pose with props at Rob Cannon's Hope Grows Gala photo booth.



PHOTOS BY ROB CANNON

Karen Booker, committee co-chair, poses at Rob Cannon's photo booth. His shop Rob Cannon Photo is on Washington Street in Alexandria.

## Gala Supports Rising Hope

Charity bash  
raises \$55,000.

BY ED SIMMONS, JR.  
THE GAZETTE

Seated at the reception table outside the Singleton Ballroom, Rising Hope's star volunteer Sharon Emory was up to her elbows on Friday evening, Oct. 3, plowing through sheet after sheet of names as she checked in droves of guests flocking to support the Hope Grows Gala held at the Waterford

in Springfield.

"She's the Queen of the Gala," Rising Hope's pastor, the Rev. Keary Kincannon, told the crowd after dinner.

Most guests came from churches throughout Northern Virginia paying \$100 a ticket for an evening of food, dancing and auctions, all to support Rising Hope Mission Church which aids the poor along the Route 1 corridor. Last year 750,000 pounds of free food was distributed thanks to donors. With its food pantry, clothing closet, emergency aid, hypothermia shelter, Celebrate Recovery program and noon chapel

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# Charity Bash Raises \$55,000

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services and hot lunches, the mission helps 8,000 people yearly.

Emory set a record of 190 guests, 50 more than last year, and after expenses her event earned \$10,000 more than last year – for a total of \$55,000.

“I felt fabulous,” she said after counting the proceeds.

Her sixth consecutive gala, she’s been a Rising Hope volunteer for 16 years. Supported by Rising Hope’s Fund Development Committee co-chaired by Karen Booker and Herb Brynildsen, with right-hand help from Rising Hope staffer Kat Roman, Emory devoted months to the gala’s preparations, booking the Waterford in February, then spending all of July sending out 750 invitations and August and September making up elaborate gift baskets for bidders with Cassandra Wells helping.

“We worked right up to the last day,” Emory said.

Highlights of the evening were numerous. Leigh Rosenmund’s framed needlepoint of the names for Jesus earned a high bid of \$575. Top donors giving \$3,000 were Ahrens Accounting & Tax Services, Aldersgate United Methodist Women, and Cindy and Keith Davis.

Giving personal testimonies were Rising Hope members Samantha Jacobs and Perry Taylor. Jacobs told how Rising Hope helped



PHOTO BY SARAH BADGER

**Perry Taylor gave his testimony about living in his car and seeking work.**

get her and her three children back on their feet after being homeless. Taylor told of his struggles living in his car and how Rising Hope has backed him in his quest to qualify for his journeyman’s electrician license.

With her 2014 Hope Grows Gala racking up a huge success, Emory will cool her heels a few days then head to Honduras Oct. 16 “to visit the little girl I sponsor.” Her name is Mildred and she is 10; Emory has sponsored her for the past five years working with Compassion International.