

InMenlo

Menlo Park, California 94025 and Atherton, California 94027

MPAEF hosts 5th annual Gift Boutique, opening tonight with more shopping Friday

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The [Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation \(MPAEF\)](#) Gift Boutique — a local holiday tradition — celebrates its fifth anniversary tonight and tomorrow at the Allied Arts Guild. Open to the entire community, the Boutique showcases over 20 local, unique vendors; 20% of the proceeds benefit Menlo Park schools.

Searching for a fun, community-oriented way to raise funds for MPAEF and Menlo Park schools, Oak Knoll School parents and friends Carolyn Bowsher, Janet Falkner and Margie Klapper began the MPAEF Holiday Boutique in November 2010. Held at the Bowsher home for the first two years, the event garnered shoppers from all four schools [Laurel, Encinal and Hillview as well as Oak Knoll].

According to Carolyn, each year the Boutique grew in size and scope. “In 2011, we held the first

‘Champagne and Shopping’ and charged guests \$50 to attend which gave them early access to the unique merchandise while enjoying an evening out with friends. Given the success of the Boutique, we quickly outgrew my home. We knew it was time to find a new venue so we could welcome even more guests and community shoppers. The next year we moved to Allied Arts Guild.”



MPAEF Gift Boutique organizers, Julia Molise and Claire Thompson have brought back the much loved signature event — “Sips, Sweets & Shopping” — tonight and added a new Thursday night event, an “Evening with the Experts: Holiday Party Planning Class”. Caterers and mixologists of [Palace Cafe & Catering](#), along with florist Amanda Thorne, hosted a class on how to plan and decorate the perfect holiday party.

On Friday, November 14, the Boutique is open from 10:00 am to 2:30 pm. Admission is free, and all are welcome. Not only will Menlo Park schools benefit, but shoppers can get a head start on their holiday purchases and support local vendors.

Photos by Linda Hubbard

Photos: Reindeer with a ribbon just one of the many imported items for sale from [Kasumisou Gallery](#); necklace one of limited edition jewelry from Janet Falkner Designs