



There are two ways to get your hands on an umbrella. Buy raffle tickets online at Leaf-Ohio.org, or bid on them at the Singing in the Rain Event on Thursday, May 4, at Great Lakes Mall.

Singing in the rain

BID ON A BEAUTIFULLY DESIGNED, ONE-OF-A-KIND UMBRELLA AND HELP A KID GO TO COLLEGE.

by Patricia Nugent

Just in time for April showers that bring May flowers, The Umbrella Project fundraising campaign features gorgeous, hand-designed umbrellas created by artist-students from eight local high schools, as well as local artists, who brought their unique vision to life with special art markers against a canvas of white umbrellas.



There are two ways to get your hands on one of these darling objects d'art. Buy raffle tickets online for any of the available umbrellas for only \$5 each or 3 for \$10 at leaf-ohio.org/umbrella-project. The second way is to bid on them at the Singing in the Rain Event on Thursday, May 4, at Great Lakes Mall.

Seventy-four umbrellas designed by students from Berkshire, Chardon, Eastlake North, Fairport Harding, Harvey, Mentor, Riverside and West Geauga high schools are now on display at the mall.

Lake/Geauga
Educational
Assistance
Foundation

So Many Faces of Community

Tasked with the theme of "Our Community," the umbrellas span universal subjects such as peace, diversity, unity, music and nature. For instance, *My Orchestral Community* features musical notes swirling throughout and connecting portraits of the diverse Mentor High School Orchestra violin students. These umbrellas would make the perfect

conversation piece for any home or office.

Keeping Dollars in the Community

The Umbrella Project was introduced by David K. Munson, executive director of LEAF—Lake/Geauga Educational Assistance Foundation. This local non-profit organization provides invaluable resources to high school students to help them in college selection, career planning, financial aid and attracting college scholarships.

"The Umbrella Project is part of a global non-profit initiative to teach children they can make a difference in their communities, while nurturing their creativity," he says. "This is the first time it has made an appearance in Ohio."



Devyn Diffenbacher, a junior at Riverside High School was presented with the LEAF Umbrella Project \$1,500 College Scholarship by Dave K. Munson, executive director of LEAF. Devyn's umbrella will be part of the May 4 auction.

Last month, Riverside High School junior Devyn Diffenbacher was awarded a \$1,500 scholarship for creating the best-judged umbrella. Check out *A Harmonious World Reaching for Peace* in the online gallery.

Teams of engineering students also lent a hand to the project by creating mechanisms to suspend the finished umbrellas from the ceiling of Great Lakes Mall. The team judged with the best design will win a scholarship.

Local Artists Participate

In addition to student artists, LEAF has reached out to the local artistic community.

Deborah A. Stern Hansen, design and color consultant at Deborah A. Stern, LLC, is coordinating the adult artists, including Jane Andreyko, Tracy Baker, Pat Bonander, Keli Bradford, Hallie Chiappone, Linda Eckmann, Karen Hayes, Joe Hughes, Joe Illiano, Betty Klammer, Karen Koeth, Karen Krauss, Lynn Margalit, Lisa Morton, Carolyn Rigo, Jaclyn Rigo, William Rigo, Joelle Scalzo, Susan Schein, Lori Skala, Dennis Sluga, Barbara Tortora, Kathy Wallace, Kate Weaver, Gail Palmer and Mimi Vanderhaven.

These talented community artists and

designers are using different modes of art on the umbrellas, including glass beads, embroidered cloth, watercolors, acrylics and mixed media. The umbrellas will be unveiled at the Singing in the Rain live auction event.

Check out the umbrella exhibit at Great Lakes Mall, or visit LEAF-Ohio.org. You can purchase \$5 raffle tickets online for a chance to win your favorite umbrella featured on the site, or attend the Singing in the Rain Event on Thursday, May 4, to snatch one up via live auction. For more information on the project, call Executive Director David Munson at 440-358-8046 or email him at dmunson@leaf-ohio.org. LEAF is a 501(c)3 non-profit. Find them on Twitter at [@Leaf_Ohio](https://twitter.com/Leaf_Ohio) or on Facebook.

Singing in the Rain AUCTION AND FASHION SHOW

On Thursday, May 4, from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., don't miss a live auction featuring top students and community artists strutting their artfully designed one-of-a-kind umbrellas down the runway. (Even Mimi herself will design an umbrella.) Look for a fun, rain-themed fashion show put on by mall stores at the Great Lakes Mall stage. This community event is free and open to the public.