



---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Leslie Brown**  
**p. 847.234.1063 x205**  
**c. 847.275.8832**

**Friends of Ragdale Host Annual ‘HEART AND SOUL’ Benefit June 14**

**LAKE FOREST, IL** – The **Friends of Ragdale** hosted its annual **Heart and Soul 2008 Benefit** on Saturday, June 14 at 6:00 p.m., **raising more than \$100,000** for the **Ragdale Foundation**, a distinguished artists’ community and residency program in Lake Forest. The relaxed, fun-filled evening delighted guests with a seated dinner catered by George Jewell Catering, and a live and silent auction at the historic **Ragdale House** (1230 N. Green Bay Road).

Guests began the evening with a competitive silent auction which included items such as original works of art by distinguished Ragdale alumni, an oversized, handmade Adirondack chair crafted by Lake Forest’s Bob Broten, donations by the Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Artisan Guild, coveted Bears tickets, and a case of Duckhorn wine.

As guests finished the auction, they took their seats for a dazzling dinner of grilled tenderloin of glazed bistro beef with a red wine reduction sauce, asparagus and roasted tomato bread. After an introduction by Ragdale’s Board President Amy Davidson, bestselling author and Ragdale alum **Audrey Niffenegger** took the stage to welcome attendees and regale them with the story of how she came to Ragdale. A visual artist by profession, Niffenegger came to Ragdale to work on her visual art but ended up writing the beginning of her novel *The Time Traveler’s Wife*. The novel went on to be a New York Times bestseller and a Today Show Book Club selection.

As the decadent dessert of chocolate swirl cheesecake was served, turned on its side to resemble the multi-colored kites that hung from the tent’s ceiling, auctioneer Jim Miller began the live auction which offered such exquisite items as a **Rock Star Evening at Ravinia** which included six tickets to the sold-out Sheryl Crow concert coupled with a round-trip limo and a mega-picnic catered by George Jewell Catering. Other items included a stay at a private **beachfront estate at elegant Sea Island**; a round of golf at the prestigious **Chicago Golf Club**; and a stay at a beautiful home on **St. Simon’s Island**. Also included were two tickets to the highly coveted event, **A Novel Affair**, Ragdale’s elegant weekend in which eight esteemed authors come for gourmet dinners in Lake Forest homes. Although the event is open to the public, these two tickets were the only ones that **guaranteed** the winners’ choice of author.

“Once again,” said event Chair Nancy Novit, “The Friends of Ragdale came together to create another beautiful evening on the Ragdale prairie. We’re thrilled with how this evening came together.”

The Friends of Ragdale is a volunteer organization that raises funds to support the Ragdale Foundation, a non-profit that has provided artists with time and space to pursue their creative work in an uninterrupted environment for over 30 years. Funds raised at the Benefit will **support the residencies of writers, visual artists, composers and interdisciplinary artists.**

# # #