

OMAS SISKONA Auction Report

Date: March 13, 2026

The 'siskona-auction-2026' was a success.

Goals:

- Raise funds for Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign (GtoG)
- Convert a donated gift card for Waterloo Wellington Flight Centre into funds for SLF
- Convert donated artifacts, mostly from Africa, into funds for SLF
- Raise funds from a larger audience than members of OMAS SISKONA
- Try a new fundraising method

Success:

- Successful: Raised \$2,850
- Successful: Converted gift card for Waterloo Wellington Flight Centre to funds for SLR
- Not Successful: was not able to sell any of the donated artifacts
- Not Successful: almost all donations were from OMAS, and most purchasers were OMAS or family/ friends of OMAS
- Successful: tried an online auction and this worked well; the auction platform used, GalaBid

Details:

Total Raised: \$2,852.32

- Online auction sales: \$2,268.32
- Donations: \$450.00
- Sales before / after auction: \$134.00

Expenses: \$0.00

- Printing 100 colour posters: \$0.00 estimated cost \$50.00 donated
- Online payment service fee: 0.00 actual cost \$80.14 paid by purchasers
- Online auction platform fee \$0.00 actual cost \$195.22 paid by purchasers
- NOTE: St. Jacob's Printery kindly printed our posters for no cost

Auction details:

- Number of items listed: 93 different items, 5 items had duplicates
- Number of items purchased: 53
- Number of Buyers: 26

General Notes

- Online auction was run for 8 days from Saturday, February 21 @ 10am to Saturday, February 28 @10pm
- Auction site URL: galabid.com/siskona-auction-2026
- auction run entirely by team of 3 people; this was good for organization and execution, but we needed many more people to help find donated services and to promote the auction
- auction team created a website with materials to inform OMAS members how to help and provide materials for their use; I don't know if members used this or found it helpful
- auction team tried to generate interest with OMAS membership by holding a mini live auction at a regular OMAS general meeting

Comments about the auction:

- items that generated lots of bids were:
 - restaurant coupons,
 - local spa type services,
 - consumables like maple syrup
 - wool and craft materials
- items that were hand crafted, like quilts and runners did not generate any interest; I suspect that potential buyers want to see the item before purchasing
- items that were artifacts did not generate any interest, probably because we did not have the right audience
- Because we were targeting an audience that extended beyond our known community of OMAS members, family and friends, we set up an auction with an online payment system that forced buyers to pay online for the cost of their items and the fee to cover the online payment service. This increased the cost of items purchased by .025%. Most people made payments using this online payment service and this made the bookkeeping much easier.
- Because we were trying to keep costs to run the auction low or zero, we chose an auction site that provided the opportunity for the purchasers to make a voluntary payment with the payment for their items. With purchasers making a payment of a percentage of their total invoice, the auction site did not require that we pay any expenses 'up front' for the auction service – it was a free service.

Problems encountered:

- Advertising not sufficient; don't know if posters placed by City of Waterloo and City of Kitchener are posted in a timely manner at good locations and if they are effective

OMAS SISKONA Online Auction 2026

- Advertising in the 'Neighbours of Waterloo' magazine was posted without the website URL included
- OMAS donated items that they wanted to sell, but there were not many OMAS members volunteering to find donations of restaurants or services
- not able to reach a wide audience; most of purchasers were OMAS or family / friends of OMAS
- determined that we cannot reach the right audience to auction artifacts
- none of the hand-crafted items (quilts and table runners) were sold
- we need more donations of gift cards and consumables, like restaurants and maple syrup / olive oil
- to make a bigger profit we need some large ticket items that people can bid on
- we identified the benefit of having a matching donation sponsor, but were unable to find one
- we did not see a strong participation from OMAS members in the auction, so we were unsure if this was due to hesitation using an online auction site for purchases

Suggestions for future auctions:

- use Google ads to target specific audiences for specialty items, e.g. African artifacts; research would have to be done to see how this works and what is the cost
- use social media to spread the word, e.g. Facebook and Instagram
- we asked donors of services to include information about our auction in their newsletters and email distribution, but multiple people indicated that we should ask these donors to include our auction in their Instagram / Facebook stories / posts
- we suggested finding a donor to do 'donation matching' to double the profits of the auction – this is a big ask, so need time and effort to find such a donor
- find many more donations of items and services that sell well at the auction:
 - restaurant coupons,
 - local spa type services,
 - consumables like maple syrup
 - wool and craft materials

Auction platform used

GalaBid was selected after research by the members of the auction team. This site was used recently in Waterloo by Habitat for Humanity and members of the auction team were able to see the site in action and make bids and payments as a test of our possible use of this site.

GalaBid is headquartered in New South Wales, Australia and also has a presence in the United Kingdom, specifically in Dorset. GalaBid was founded in 2011 and operates as a cloud-based fundraising platform.

GalaBid is a comprehensive, mobile-optimized online fundraising platform specializing in silent auctions, raffles, and donations for nonprofits, schools, and charities. It supports in-person, hybrid, or online-only events, featuring live leaderboards, automated outbid notifications, and secure payment processing. The platform offers a free tier, allowing for easy setup of branded campaigns.

Comments about GalaBid auction platform

- was easy to use
- technical support was very responsive
- auction site looked good and there was lots of room to promote OMAS and SLF
- cost of use of the online payment method was paid by a mandatory fee for purchaser
- cost of use of auction site was passed on to the purchasers on a voluntary basis and a portion of this cost was returned to OMAS SISKONA;
note that some auction sites had an 'upfront' fee to use the site

Future Auctions?

The current auction team would be willing to help with / organize another auction in the future.