

'Bling' gift fundraiser for Valentine's Day supports local library

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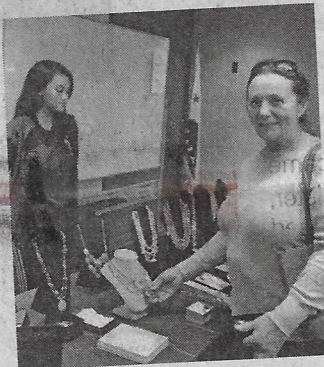
The second annual Bling sale, held in the Gracey Room at the Merced branch of the Merced County Public Library on Saturday, Feb. 1, was a display of previously owned items for \$1 to \$10, including fancy scarves, purses, bracelets, earrings and necklaces, which could be purchased as Valentine's Day gifts.

The fundraiser was organized by the Fundraising Committee of Friends of the Merced County Library.

At the event, Mary Badorine, a Friends volunteer, told the Times, proudly, "We've been preparing for eight days. We were at Susan Walsh's house to price the items and tag them. Susan Walsh is the most organized person, and she's the reason for this."

It was amazing to see the three-hour shopping frenzy that ensued where community members searched for the perfect baubles for friends and loved ones.

La Guardia Security from Merced donated a security guard for the event.



During the second annual Bling sale at the Merced branch of the public library, shoppers enjoyed browsing at the table with elegant jewelry in sets.

El Capitan High School Leo (Leadership Experience and Opportunity) Club members volunteered at the event to provide some security, help the guests and keep the bling on the tables in order.

The Lions Club coordinates Leo, its 150-member youth group, which assists at events to fulfill a community service component.

Simon Xiong, President of the El Capitan High School Leo Club, was on hand to oversee the youth.

The items on the tables were labeled by price with colored stickers, and shoppers carrying plastic bags

could easily understand the code. After browsing to their heart's content, they eventually made their way to the checkout area where their treasures were totaled up.

Friends of the Merced County Library President Susan Flinspach told the Times, "We're selling gently used jewelry, scarves and purses, and they're all donated by folks who are tired of their stuff.

"This year, we allowed members only in on Friday and welcomed the public on Saturday. So we also had 16 new members sign up to attend prior to or during the Bling sale, for a total of \$276.00. For the Friends, this is a significant increase in our membership.

"The fundraiser has been very successful. Last year, the proceeds from the three-hour Find Your Bling sale was \$2,700. This year, we made \$2052 in sales.

"For the second year in a row, proceeds from the Bling sale have netted us a major portion of our annual budget, supporting Summer Reading and our new Author Series! Thanks to all the donors and volunteers who made it possible."