

## [Business](#)

# Chamber Luncheon Showcases Local Nonprofit Businesses

Nonprofit and for-profit businesses came together for an afternoon of networking at a special luncheon sponsored by the Birmingham Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce.

By [Kristen Skladd](#) | [Email the author](#) | June 22, 2011



The [Birmingham-Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce](#) (BBCC) held its second-ever community leadership luncheon Wednesday and from the start, the event was no ordinary get-together.

Designated as a nonprofit showcase, more than 140 guests from both the private and the public sector gathered in the banquet room of [The Reserve](#) for more than a dining experience, but, rather, to really understand how they can help one another grow.

“The whole idea is to bring together those from both sectors that are looking to make connections,” said Joe Bauman, BBCC president. “It also allows the nonprofits to identify potential supporters, not just financially, but they are looking for people to serve on their boards and volunteer at their events.”

Greatly exceeding the BBCC’s expectations, the event was listed as sold out on Monday.

More than 19 nonprofit organizations, including Gleaners Food Bank, Kids Kicking Cancer and the Bottomless Toy Chest, came to the luncheon in hopes of forming lasting partnerships to assist with their causes. Different exhibits were set up around the room with information about each nonprofit’s mission and services.

Molly MacDonald, founder and President of the Pink Fund and one of the afternoon’s speakers, recalled her own personal experience with breast cancer during her address. MacDonald, filled with emotion, described how becoming financially broke in the midst of her struggle led her to start the nonprofit Pink Fund. Through the organization, women who are diagnosed with breast cancer are given financial aid for a period of 90 days so that they don’t have to hit rock bottom and endure the same hardship.

“A for-profit has the power to build the brand equity of a nonprofit through the engagement of their employees, their suppliers, their vendors, people who see this corporation getting behind something they believe in,” said MacDonald. “They realize that together they can make a real difference in people’s lives.”

Mike Fezzey, regional president of Huntington Bank, served as the keynote speaker of the afternoon. To Fezzey, who acts as a board member on a variety of local nonprofits, business should be “not an interruption but an extension of people’s core beliefs and values.”

The luncheon marked a successful turning point in the business world; the BBCC hopes to make the gathering a regular occurrence.

“We’re hoping that this event will kickstart a kind of new energy for the nonprofit network,” adds Bauman. “Hopefully, the Chamber can act as a clearinghouse for putting those people together.”