

## RocTwestival benefits YWCA

Written by Driadonna Roland  
Mar. 26, 2011

Organizers of this year's RocTwestival used the Twitter social network and rallied about 200 people for a charitable cause with the simple theme "Tweet. Meet. Give."

Young professionals, social media experts and others gathered for the Twitter festival Thursday night at Easy on East, a bar on East Avenue, in an effort to raise \$6,500 for the YWCA of Rochester & Monroe County.

By night's end, more than \$3,500 was raised, thanks to a combination of ticket sales, online contributions and donation buckets scattered throughout the venue.

"We were extremely happy with how it went," said Kelly Ashworth, YWCA development and marketing assistant. Ashworth, 22, wrote the application for the YWCA, which was chosen from nearly 20 submissions by nonprofits. The YWCA has been using Twitter only since December with the username @YWCA\_Rochester, so Ashworth said the timing was perfect.

Matthew Ray, a social media enthusiast, has been leading Rochester's involvement since 2009. He was joined by a team of 14 volunteers, mostly young professionals, who had two months to pull it all together. What Ray most appreciated was how Twitter drove community conversation.

Twestival attendees were treated to live music by the a capella group Eight Beat Measure and other local bands. Raffles throughout the night were also a big hit, with prizes that included Kodak cameras and Amerks tickets.

"I am really impressed. The YWCA's a really good charity and it's something fun while being able to support a good cause," said Meghan Stewart, 26, of Rochester.

In the opinion of Jean Carroll, the cause is the reason YWCA was chosen as the beneficiary. The organization's emergency housing program provides shelter to women and children who are homeless, and funds from the event would help pay for 200 nights of free shelter.

"Especially now, with the economy being what it is, it's not the traditional person you think of as being homeless; it's little kids and women, so I think it's a very compelling story," said Carroll, President and CEO of the YWCA of Rochester and Monroe County.

The Twestival alternates every year between raising funds for local or global charities. Rochester was one of 150 cities around the world that participated, but it isn't over yet. At more than midway toward the \$6,500 mark, donations will be accepted until Thursday.