

Celebration marks sculpture garden opening

By Quentin Roux

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A chocolate and champagne celebration at the Marco Island Center for the Arts has heralded the opening of a sculpture garden originally inspired by the work of artist/sculptor Leo Schimanszky.

His huge, colorful sculptures have been an outside feature at the center for the past few months, but the board recently decided to refine the area by adding lights, landscaping and pathways to create the walk-about garden.

The work of Viennese-born Schimanszky also inspired the board to brighten up the exterior of the center about six months ago, and the result is that colorful art "has spilled out the doors and onto the front courtyard and lawn of our building," in the words of



Sculptor and artist Leo Schimanszky talks to a group enjoying a champagne and chocolate reception to acknowledge his contributions.

PHOTOS BY QUENTIN ROUX/SUN TIMES

Elaine Michaelis, the center's program coordinator.

"It was a wonderful catalyst," Rosemary Wick, art center president, said of Schimanszky's outside sculptures

prompting the paint job.

Schimanszky, who bases himself in Canada, was on hand for the reception. He chatted to members and guests, and afterward revealed that he

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Marco Island Center for the Arts, 1010 Winterberry Drive, Marco Island, 394-4221

hopes to create a worldwide disaster fund through sales of a lapel pin based on one of his paintings called "Smile."

"Funds could be made available to anywhere in the world where there's any kind of disaster, like tsunamis, hurricanes, earthquakes," Schimanszky said.

His idea is possibly to mass produce the pins and sell them for around \$10 to \$15.

After the reception, Wick said she wanted to thank Lowe's Home Improvement for discounting prices on landscaping items, Dave Rice's Total Home Services for labor, and the Calusa Garden Club for plant donations.

Several one-of-a-kind exclu-



Marco Island Center for the Arts President Rosemary Wick, left, and volunteer Sheila Luciano.

sive pieces of Leo Schimanszky's are on display in the center's atrium, including three miniature versions of his pieces out front.