The second annual fundraiser drew hundreds of spectators and raised $30,000 for Children Inc and Family School Partners.

"It's for the children," said Bartholomew County prosecutor Bill Nash, who also informed the audience he never danced a day in his life.

In the dimly lit ballroom of Holiday Inn and Conference Center, Nash was one of eight community leaders who served as the stars dancing with eight local dance instructors.

Columbus firefighter and "Biggest Loser" reality show contestant Allen Smith led a movable and dropped to the dance floor for some push-ups during his number with Sonya Denney.

Mayor Fred Armstrong glided gracefully across the dance floor with Charlotte Bardin, Q95's Dave Andrews and Don Kingen grooved to "Clat Wash" and Dr. Darryl Tannehorn skillfully twisted Jean Klingen.

The crowd excitedly waved star-shaped signs and blew horns for the swing dance of Elwood Staffing's chief executive officer Matt Elwood and Diane Clancy.

Sue Anne Lee and Melissa Smith were among a large, loud cheering section for Nash, who tangled with Ronda Byers to "Por Una Cabeza."

"He's nervous, he's taking it very seriously," Smith said about her boss.

Just for fun

Most couples practiced once

Dancing with the Stars

Elwood Staffing CEO Mark Elwood and Clifty Creek Elementary Principal Diane Clancy boogie to the Bee Gees tune "You Should Be Dancing," Saturday during the Dancing with the Stars Columbus Style fundraiser at Holiday Inn.

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"Stars' dance night away to raise funds"

By Brittany Hart

The Republic

Ben Wagner and Ashley Bear snapped their fingers and swayed their hips to Michael Jackson's "Beat It." Saturday night at Dancing With the Stars Columbus Style.

Dance winners

First place: Mark Elwood and Diane Clancy.
Second place: Tony Moravec and Martha Richards.
Third place: Bill Nash and Ronda Byers.

A week for three months to keep for the show.

"He wasn't a natural," said Martha Richards about dance partner Tony Moravec, owner of Zaharakos. "He was fun, though."

And the fun was what counted at the event, as the audience roared when Moravec, in a black top hat and tux with tails, dropped Richards and lifted her into the air during Frank Sinatra's "You're Eatin' to Dance With."

"What a great fundraiser," Moravec said. "I'm very surprised at the unbelievable turnout, but rightfully so for these great community organizations."

For a dollar per vote, spectators cast ballots for their favorite dance pair.

The night also featured a dance spoof by Jeff Baehmeyer, Gene Hawk, John Johnson, Chad Phillips, Bob Pilette, Doreen Hittiman, Chris Smith, Mike Thomasson and David Westenberger, outfitted in white tutus.

A '70s disco dance was performed by Sheryl Napl, Samantha Harpening, Diane Dennis, Lyn Morgan, Cindy Frese, Tracy Smith, Philpe Heiterly, Jamie Gordon, Shelly Abjahmaugh and Dawn Haski.

Audience members stepped onto the dance floor to show off their moves following the performances.

Dance with community leaders from last year's Dancing With the Stars Columbus Style, winner Jeff Beck and performer Buck Nita, also were auctioned off.

Jacque Douglas, executive director of Family School Partners, said she was overwhelmed by the large turnout.

"This investment will benefit the children and the community," she said.

Family School Partners provides free home visits to teach parents of preschool-aged children skills to become their child's first and most important teachers.

Children, Inc. is a licensed child care program providing full-and part-time care and before- and after-school programs for children through school-age children.