



Focus

Little Friends Unlocking Potential...

Spring 2009

Keeping the Little Friends Community Connected

33rd Annual Bids for Kids Benefit Auction Raises Nearly \$90,000



An enthusiastic crowd of more than 350 supporters helped Little Friends, Inc. raise nearly \$90,000 at its annual Bids for Kids Benefit Auction on Saturday, March 7, at the Hilton Lisle-Naperville. Proceeds from the annual event benefit children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities served by the Naperville-based agency.



Now in its 33rd year, the Bids for Kids Benefit Auction is one of the longest-running auctions in the Naperville area. This year's event celebrated the sights and sounds of one of the finest cities in the world – Chicago. Guests admired the city's picturesque skyline and toasted Chicago's historic landmarks while enjoying a unique and exciting "My Kind of Town" atmosphere. Festivities included cocktails, dinner, exciting live and silent auctions, raffles and entertainment.



This year's live auction netted nearly \$60,000, as event-goers bid on original client artwork, trips to Puerto Rico and Disney World and authentic sports memorabilia. Other items included several fine dining experiences, exceptional wine packages and tickets for some of the hottest sports events around, including the Major League Baseball All-Star Game this summer in St. Louis. The top-grossing item from this year's



A Job Well Done: Congratulations to our 2009 Bids for Kids Co-Chairpersons (L-R) Sue Johanson, Jason Nagel and Kelly Eagan for planning such a wonderful event.

live auction was an exciting package that included six tickets, a premium parking pass and a prime tailgating location for the Notre Dame-Michigan State game in South Bend this fall. Other top-sellers included an exciting trip for two to New York City, complete with a private tour of *The Today Show*, dining packages from Sullivan's Steakhouse and agency-supporter Brad McGuire, a V.I.P. party package with the Kane County Cougars and tickets to this summer's sold out Billy Joel/Elton John *Cont. on Page 2*

Join Little Friends for Naperville's First-Ever Autism Awareness Walk on June 28

Lace up your walking shoes and join Little Friends, Inc. for the first annual Step Up for Autism walk on Sunday, June 28, in downtown Naperville. Registration will begin at 8 a.m. and the walk and fun run will step off at 9:30 a.m. Team and individual registrations for the inaugural event are now being accepted online at www.stepupforautism09.kintera.org.

Designed to raise awareness about autism, a complex developmental disability that affects an estimated 1.5 million Americans, the Step Up for Autism walk is the first of its kind to be held in Naperville. Funds raised from the inaugural event will benefit children and adults with autism served by Little Friends, Inc. and the Little Friends

Center for Autism.

There are a number of ways to get involved with the first annual Step Up for Autism walk. Teams of walkers and runners are needed to ensure that the



inaugural event is a success. Interested walkers and runners can register online at www.stepupforautism09.kintera.org.

Community volunteers are also needed to assist at the event. Local businesses looking to get involved with the walk can

sign on as sponsors, with sponsorship levels ranging between \$250 and \$7,500. Premiere sponsors of the 2009 Step Up for Autism walk include 95.9 The River, Minuteman Press, *Naperville Magazine*, Hard Hat Services and Northwestern Mutual Financial Network.

Get Involved Today! For details, visit www.stepupforautism09.kintera.org.

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www.littlefriendsinc.org

Save the Date


Annual Pizza & Beer Tasting Set for April 30

The Children's Center for Autism is once again teaming up with Nick's Pizza and Pub to host its sixth annual Pizza & Beer Tasting on Thursday, April 30. Local area microbreweries and beer distributors will gather from 6-10 p.m. at the restaurant's Crystal Lake location, 856 Pyott Road, to raise funds for children with autism.

Guests will sample an unlimited variety of Nick's award-winning pizza while tasting more than a dozen of the finest handcrafted micro-brews and bottled beers. Festivities will also include a silent auction, cash raffle, gift raffles and a host of children's activities. Tickets for the event are \$40 for adults, \$10 for children 13 and over, and children 12 and under are free.

Nick's Pizza and Pub will donate all net profits from the day, from both dine-in and carry-out orders, to the Children's Center for Autism in Cary. This year's participating microbreweries and distributors include: Charles Herdrich & Son, Emmett's Tavern and Brewing Co., L & V Distributors, Two Brother's Brewing Co., Bell's, Sierra Nevada, Sprecher, Fat Tire and Leinenkugel's.

The Children's Center for Autism operates a 24-hour therapeutic group home, Sage House, for children with severe autism. Located in Cary, the Children's Center for Autism was the first children's group home to open in McHenry County. In addition to providing state-of-the-art therapeutic, residential services, the Children's Center also offers autism information, resources and agency linkage.

For more information about the Children's Center for Autism or to purchase tickets for the sixth annual Beer & Pizza Tasting, please call (847) 639-4155. 

Of Note...

Autism Awareness Month

FROM THE DESK OF JACK RYAN

April is Autism Awareness Month, an annual opportunity to call attention to a disability that affects such a significant portion of our population. I really don't know how many years April has been so designated, but my unscientific observation is that it's reaching its goal. Whether you turn on *Oprah*, read the Features section of your newspaper, attend a conference of social service agencies or listen to public radio, it's almost common to hear the topic discussed -- the often devastating impact on families, the debate on autism's cause (or causes) and whether or not there's a cure. The only thing that's clear is that nothing is really clear. Arguments continue to rage over cause including everything from diet to genetics, and despite Jenny, there is no cure.

...but there is help! Krejci Academy, formerly known as the Little Friends School, has been working with children with autism since the late 1970s. Our group home for children with autism opened in 1980. In the subsequent years, teaching and behavioral training techniques have evolved that have become models for eliminating self-injurious behaviors, mastering independent living skills and participating in age appropriate activities in the community.

In late spring, the Little Friends Center for Autism will be relocating to a larger, more accessible location at 1001 E. Chicago Avenue. The Center, which opened in 2004, provides in-depth evaluations, speech and specialized therapies, as well as training for both parents and professionals. Through the amazing generosity of donors at our most recent Bids for Kids Auction, a fund has been established to help families cover costs not covered by insurance. In these difficult economic times, it's our effort to continue to meet the needs of those with autism in our community each and every day.

While April can renew our awareness, let's commit ourselves to a year-round effort to alleviate the difficulties for individuals affected by autism.

See you at the walk on June 28!



Bids for Kids Benefit Auction

concert at Wrigley Field.

"We are so thankful for the success of this year's Bids for Kids Auction," said Vice President for Development Kathleen Malecki. "We know that these are tough economic times, and the overwhelming generosity of our donors, local business and our very dedicated volunteers is truly inspiring," added Malecki.

This year's Auction was co-chaired by Kelly Eagan (Naperville), Sue Johanson (Glen Ellyn) and Jason Nagel (Aurora). Committee members included: Jenna Cole (Naperville), Steve Connors (Naperville), Kathleen Guterrez (Orland Park), Tara Homner (Downers Grove), Jeanne Koepke (Wheaton), Bonnie Marshall (Naperville), William McElroy (Naperville), Bob Johanson (Oswego), Heidi Pawelczyk (Darien), Lynn Piotrowski (Aurora), Clark Smith (Oswego), Kristen Sutherland (Chicago) and Janey Wagner (Naperville).

Premiere sponsors for this year's auction included 95.9 The River, Casey's Foods,



My Kind of Town: (L-R) Jack Ryan, Naperville Mayor George Pradel, Mary Morrissey and Naperville City Manager Doug Krieger pose for a photo at this year's Auction. Morrissey was the winning bidder of the much loved "Mayor for a Day" package, which she purchased for her 10-year-old son Jack.

Classic Party Rental, Mr. & Mrs. Tom Cole, *Glancer Magazine*, Matsock Insurance & Financial Services and the Naperville Jaycees. 

Agency Volunteers 'Step Up' for Naperville's St. Pat's Day Parade

Volunteers from the agency's Step Up for Autism walk planning committee participated in Naperville's St. Patrick's Day Parade on Saturday, March 14. The Little Friends walking group was one of more than 100 entries in the 16th annual parade, which kicked off at 10 a.m. from Naperville North High School.

Our enthusiastic volunteers sported their Step Up for Autism fleeces and handed out candy and walk flyers along the packed parade route. Parade organizers estimated that thousands of spectators lined the streets of downtown Naperville for this fun-filled event. 🌳



Takin' it to the Streets: Volunteers from the Step Up for Autism walk committee got the word out about this summer's walk by participating in Naperville's annual St. Pat's Day Parade last month.

Celebrity Bartender Event to Benefit Little Friends

A number of Naperville's most notable residents will channel their inner-Tom Cruise *Cocktail* skills when they step behind the bar to take part in a Celebrity Bartender event on Wednesday, April 22, at Zaidi's Steak Sushi Seafood. Proceeds from this fun-filled evening will benefit Little Friends, Inc.

Celebrity Bartenders will include Naperville Park District Executive Director **Ray McGury**, Minuteman Press Partner **Ray Kinney**, *Glancer Magazine* Publisher **Lindy Kleivo** and *Naperville Sun* News Editor **Cynthia Goldberg**.

Festivities will get underway at 6 p.m. in the Z Bar and continue throughout the evening. All tips generated during the Celebrity Bartender event, along with 20 percent of Z Bar food sales, will benefit the programs of Little Friends, Inc. Located at 1975 Springbrook Square Drive, Zaidi's offers the finest in steak, sushi and seafood infused with the flavors of tropical fruits and vegetables and Asian and Latin spices.

Mark your calendars and plan to join Little Friends for this very special evening! 🌳

Little Irish for Little Friends Event Raises \$4,000

More than 200 area residents celebrated St. Patrick's Day by participating in the agency's first-ever *Little Irish for Little Friends* event on Saturday, March 14. This spirited day-long moveable celebration raised more than \$4,000 for Little Friends, Inc.

As part of the festivities, agency supporters visited three of downtown Naperville's most premiere establishments, enjoying complimentary food and drink specials along the way. 100 percent of the entrance fees for the day benefited the agency. Special thanks to Sullivan's Steakhouse, Hugo's Frog Bar & Fish House and the Grumpy Bulldog for participating in this year's event.

Mark your calendars and plan to join us in 2010! 🌳



Happy St. Patrick's Day! (L-R) Chief Operating Officer Kristi Landorf, V.P. of Development Kathleen Malecki and V.P. of Community Living Services Sue Iona celebrate at Hugo's Frog Bar.

Family Council Picnic Slated for June 20

The sixth annual Family Council Picnic will be held on Saturday, June 20, at the Little Friends Administrative Building, located at 140 N. Wright Street in Naperville. Clients and their families are invited to be our guests at this summertime celebration. The rain date for this year's picnic is Sunday, June 21.

This annual get-together provides Little Friends families with the opportunity to meet and visit with each other. Festivities include a picnic lunch, entertainment, games for the kids and much more. Little Friends staff members will be on hand to assist throughout the picnic, but one-to-one assistance will not be available. Make sure to bring lawn chairs or a blanket.

We hope you will join us for this fun-filled afternoon. Watch for more details in the next issue of *Focus*. 🌳

WISHES GRANTED...



Thank you to the following organizations for their generous support:

- ◆ *O'Shaughnessy Foundation*- \$30,000 for renovations at Krejci Academy
- ◆ *Exchange Club of Naperville*- \$25,000 in support of the LFCA expansion
- ◆ *St. Raphael Catholic Church*- \$800 to purchase computer software at Krejci Academy
- ◆ *Sunrise Rotary Club of Naperville*- \$1,000 for renovations at one of our residential sites
- ◆ *Naperville Evening Kiwanis*- \$850 for the installation of new carpeting at one of our residential sites

Family Council to Host Information Session on Autism

In celebration of Autism Awareness Month, the Little Friends Family Council will host an information session on autism presented by Little Friends Center for Autism Executive Vice President Patti Boheme. This free seminar will be held from 6:30-8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 21, in Meeting Room C at Naperville's 95th Street Library, 3015 Cedar Glade Drive.

Designed for parents and guardians of children and adults with autism, this information session will cover several aspects of autism and answer many of the most frequently asked questions about this puzzling disorder. Boheme will discuss the differences and similarities of many pervasive developmental disorders and present several successful treatment strategies by addressing the importance of teaching social and communication skills.

Admission is free, but seats are limited. Parking is available at the 95th Street Library. For details, contact Special Events and Volunteer Manager Cally Edwards at (630) 281-1882 or via e-mail at credwards@lilfriends.com. For more information about the Little Friends Family Council, please visit www.littlefriendsinc.org.



Little Friends to Host Business After Hours on April 14

Little Friends, Inc. is teaming up with the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce to host a *Business After Hours* event on Tuesday, April 14, at Krejci Academy. Festivities will get underway at 5 p.m.

In recognition of Autism Awareness Month, Little Friends invites you to visit and tour Krejci Academy to learn about our programs and this unique school, which has been serving children with autism since the mid 1970s. Of the 120 children currently enrolled at the school, 95 percent have a primary diagnosis on the autism spectrum. Small class sizes, high staff-to-student ratios and cutting-edge therapies are the reasons that more than 60 school districts across Illinois turn to Krejci Academy as their primary referral source.

As part of the evening's festivities, guests will also have the opportunity to learn about the agency's newest fundraiser- the Step Up for Autism 5K walk and fun run.



Tuesday, April 14
5-6:30 p.m.

Krejci Academy
619 E. Franklin Street

All guests in attendance will have the opportunity to win a Walker's Gift Basket, which includes an iPod shuffle, in anticipation of this new and exciting special event. Refreshments will be provided by Chef by Request. Parking is available at the Little Friends Administrative Building, located at 140 N. Wright Street. Street parking is also available.

Make your plans to join us for this exciting evening.



JOIN US IN SEPTEMBER

Seventh Annual Little Friends Golf Classic

Monday, September 21, 2009
Naperville Country Club



Little Friends, Inc.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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