

From Heartbreak to Hope

By Faith Reaves

A New Children's Hospital for Our Community

Few can imagine the pain of losing their child. To rise above such an unthinkable tragedy and turn heartbreak into hope is a rare feat. Gainesville is privileged to have a couple who have done just that.

Horst and Luisa Ferrero lost their happy and healthy three-year-old son, Sebastian, after a series of preventable medical errors during a routine scheduled outpatient test in October 2007. Almost immediately, the Ferreros formed the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation in his honor.



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The foundation is dedicated to advocating and fundraising for a full-service, state-of-the-art children's hospital in Gainesville, while promoting excellence in patient safety and insuring that all families are treated with compassion, courtesy and dignity.

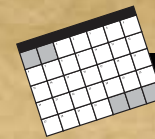
"The loss of a child is the most terrible loss anyone can face. We knew in our hearts that the best way to honor our loving son, Sebastian, and ensure his legacy was through the creation of the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation," said Horst Ferrero.

The immediate and overwhelming support the Ferreros received from more than 150 local pediatricians and pediatric specialists, community leaders and hundreds of parents validated the Foundation's mission.

"We share the foundation with the community and want to prevent other families from living through an unnecessary tragedy like ours. We want Sebastian to be remembered as the little 'hero who brought us all together," said Luisa Ferrero.

The Sebastian Ferrero Foundation's annual fundraising event, *Noche de Gala*, began in October 2008. Last year's inaugural sold-out gala was attended by over 700 people and raised close to \$1 million through ticket sales, donations, sponsorships, pledges, silent auctions and the Ferrero's match of all funds raised.

This year's *Noche de Gala* 2009 is scheduled for Oct. 3, from 7 p.m. to midnight, at the spectacular 642-acre Besilu Collection in Micanopy, generously hosted by owners Benjamin and Silvia Leon, Jr. The theme is a Venetian masquerade ball and will feature music, singers, dancers, Paso Fino champions, cigar rolling and exquisite dining. The event, which is black



tie with masks encouraged, will also have a silent auction and catering by Dean Cacciatore. Keith Watson of Keith Watson Productions has been in charge of all preparations.

"Additionally, the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation is honored to have an extraordinary performance by Broadway sensation, Ted Keegan, who recently performed the lead role in the Las Vegas production of "The Phantom of the Opera." Keegan will perform songs from the Broadway show including his signature song "Music of the Night." According to critic reviews, Keegan's performances are emotional and perfectly capture his portrayal of the Phantom. His emotional connection with the audience is astounding - when it's over, you want more. "He really is the best kept secret in American musical theatre," say long-time friends, Keith & Roberta Watson of Keith Watson Productions."

Sponsorship level packages for *Noche de Gala* 2009 are: Gondola, \$1000; Rialto, \$2000; Murano, \$5000; Castello, \$10,000; Gran Canale, \$15,000; Piazza San Marco, \$25,000; Palazzo, \$50,000 and Venezia Presenting Sponsor, \$100,000. Corporate and individual sponsors will be acknowledged through advertising, media, signage, event promotional materials and public service announcements. As with last year's event, Horst and Luisa have generously committed to continue to match all funds raised.

"To maximize the impact of all contributions raised through this year's Gala, Luisa and I have decided to continue our match program, matching dollar for dollar, up to \$1 million dollars," said Ferrero. "The match program is allowing us to dedicate 100 percent of every dollar donated to support the foundation's mission. Our match dollars are paying for the fundraising efforts, such as the gala, patient safety initiatives and educational programs and all administrative expenses."

This year's event chairs are pediatrician Dr. Doug Barrett and his wife, Macky, who have lived in Gainesville since 1980. Dr. Barrett recently retired as the chief administrative and executive officer for the UF Health Science Center and will return to clinical practice and teaching on the pediatrics faculty in UF's College of Medicine. Dr. Barrett has dreamed of a dedicated children's hospital for years.

"The Foundation has galvanized the community and many long-term dreams of UF&Shands' medical and nursing staff. The goal is to transform today's excellent pediatric care into the safest and most outstanding care provided in a world-class Children's Hospital," said Dr. Barrett. "The ripple effects of the foundation's unwavering efforts continue to improve the quality of pediatric care throughout our community. In just its first year the Ferrero Foundation has already had impressive successes achieving some of its goals."

Macky Barrett further commented, "I'm a mother and grandmother, and children and grandchildren are the most precious part of our lives. A facility that specializes in their needs is the last piece of the health care puzzle that already features an amazing world-class pediatricians and nurses here in Gainesville."

The foundation hopes to have at least 1,000 guests at this year's gala.

For more information on how to become a sponsor or purchase individual tickets, please visit www.nochedegala.org. **H**



Sebastian Ferrero FOUNDATION

Sebastian Ferrero Foundation Successes

- **Improvements in Pediatric Emergency Care:** Under the leadership of the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation, a group of local organizations Stop! Children's Cancer, Tyler's Hope, Climb for Cancer and the local March of Dimes chapter have all come together to work with Shands Hospital to improve pediatric emergency care for all children. The new Shands Emergency Room will include a separate pediatric waiting and treatment areas.
- **Patient Safety Helpline:** The foundation continues to work, in collaboration with the University of Florida College of Medicine and Shands, to develop and implement a nationally-recognized, comprehensive patient safety program. Early results include a patient helpline called "Condition H," established at Shands so that any patient can reach a rapid response team of healthcare providers available 24/7 to assess patients' concerns. The UF College of Medicine has initiated a national search for a Chief of Clinical Quality and Safety who will lead the Sebastian Ferrero Office of Clinical Quality and Safety.
- **Children's Hospital Study:** The Sebastian Ferrero Foundation has been working with Shands to engage an independent national consultant to conduct a needs assessment for a full-service children's hospital.
- **Deborah Peeples, New Executive Director, Sebastian Ferrero Foundation:** As of Sept. 1, 2009, Deborah Peeples will join the foundation as executive director. Peeples has extensive non-profit and fundraising experience and was recently recognized as "Professional Fundraiser of the Year 2008" by the Washington D.C. branch of the National Association of Fundraising Professionals. Peeples is a native of Florida, a UF graduate and has maintained ties to the local Gainesville community.

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