



Noche de Gala 2009 from heartbreak to hope

STORY: KENDAL NORRIS

The great success of last year's Noche de Gala fundraiser for the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation laid the groundwork for continuing progress in the Foundation's important mission: to advocate and fundraise 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 impetus for these goals is rooted in tragedy — the death of Sebastian Ferrero, a happy and healthy, three-year old, in October 2007 from a series of preventable medical errors, including a medical overdose, during a routine scheduled outpatient test. Almost immediately thereafter, Sebastian's parents, Horst and Luisa Ferrero began to turn unthinkable personal loss into a miracle of hope for others.

"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 Fer-

rero. 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 want to prevent other families from living through an unnecessary tragedy like ours," said founder Luisa Ferrero. "Our children deserve the dedicated care only a full service children's hospital can offer. We want Sebastian to be remembered as the little "hero" who brought us all together to improve pediatric care for all children in our community and beyond."

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 guests 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 October 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 extravagant live performances by Italian Opera singers along with honorarium guest, Broadway sensation, Ted Keegan, who has played the lead role in the Broadway production, "The Phantom of the Opera", a live band and dancers, Paso Fino champions horse shows, cigar rolling and exquisite dining. The event, which is black tie with masks encouraged, will also feature a silent auction and catering by Dean Cacciatore. Keith Watson of Keith Watson Productions is the event producer and has been in charge of all preparations.

The silent auction will offer guests a chance to win a bevy of prizes including cross-country getaways, autographed musical and sports memorabilia, original artwork from our local Gainesville artists, and beyond, beautiful jewelry from local jewelers, spa and dining vouchers, and much more. The Foundation has received a very meaningful and significant donation from local artist, Irene Salley who lost her granddaughter last year. As a tribute to her beloved granddaughter, Josephine Athena Kail,

the artist has donated over \$70,000 of art from her gallery to support the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation. The artwork includes oil landscapes that capture the earthy, vibrant essence of North Central Florida. For a preview of Salley's art, please visit www.irenesalley.com.

Noche de Gala 2009 corporate and individual sponsors will be acknowledged through over \$100,000 of 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 Horst Ferrero.

This year's Noche de Gala event chairs are Pediatrician Dr. Doug Barrett and his wife, Macky who have lived in Gainesville since 1980. Dr. Barrett recently retired as the UF Senior Vice President for Health Affairs and has returned to clinical practice and teaching on the pediatrics faculty in UF's College of Medicine. Dr. Barrett also serves on the Board of Directors of the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation. "We are proud to serve as Event Chairs for the 2009 Noche de Gala," said Doug and Macky Barrett. "The Foundation has galvanized the community and many long-term

Sebastian Ferrero Foundation Announcements

Children's Hospital Needs Analysis: Most recently, the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation, the University of Florida and Shands HealthCare have agreed to conduct an analysis of the attributes and resources of premier children's hospitals in a cooperative effort to achieve a level of patient safety and quality that is second to none in a full-service environment devoted to children. "Together we are working toward our shared goal of achieving the highest possible patient safety and quality in an environment dedicated to optimal care for children," said Dr. David Guzik, UF's senior vice president for health affairs and president of the UF&Shands Health System.

Deborah Peoples, New Executive Director, Sebastian Ferrero Foundation: Deborah Peoples joins the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation as Executive Director. Deborah has extensive non-profit and fundraising experience and was recently recognized as "Professional Fundraiser of the Year 2008" by the Washington DC branch of the National Association of Fundraising Professionals. Deborah is a native of Florida, a graduate of the University of Florida and has maintained ties to the local Gainesville community. "We welcome Deborah to the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation and back to Gainesville," said founders Horst and Luisa Ferrero. "We are thrilled to have found a leader that embodies our mission and goals, both in spirit and in accomplishments."

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.

Macky Barrett further commented, "I'm a mother and a grandmother. Our 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 expects to have 1,000 guests at this year's gala.

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

for information

Sebastian Ferrero Foundation

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www.NocheDeGala.org

PHOTOGRAPHY: SHANDON SMITH OF LIFEPRINTS PHOTOGRAPHY, BESILU COLLECTION AND THE SEBASTIAN FERRERO FOUNDATION

From the left: Noche de Gala 2009 Venue — Besilu Collection; Sebastian Ferrero, Age 3; Jose Ochoa riding Sensacionalista at Noche de Gala 2008

