

Press Release

Media Contact: Alison Segebarth, Director of Marketing and Membership
asegebarth@dupagechildrensmuseum.org; (630) 637-8000, ext. 2600
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DuPage Children's Museum Champions for Children Benefit Ball raises nearly \$300,000

Naperville Mayor A. George Pradel recognized as Honorary Chairperson

(Naperville, IL) – “Champions for Children” was the theme and close to 250 champions gathered to raise nearly \$300,000 at DuPage Children's Museum's annual benefit ball on Saturday, April 17, at the Hotel Arista at CityGate Centre in Naperville. Proceeds from the annual event fund the Museum's award-winning exhibits and programs for young children.

This year guests joined emcee Anna Davlantes, Contributing Anchor/Reporter at Fox Chicago News at Nine, and the evening's honorary chairperson A. George Pradel, Mayor of Naperville, Illinois, for a glamorous ball celebrating the positive impact that the Museum makes in the lives of young children.

Festivities began at 5:30 p.m. at a pre-event reception with a special appearance by Blackhawks hockey legend Stan Mikita. The evening proceeded with a silent auction, a fabulous dinner prepared by the Hotel Arista's Executive Sous Chef Michael Dellamano, an exciting live auction and dancing to the music of the Al Sofia Band.

Auctioneer David Goodman led bidders with heart-stopping excitement through a dozen phenomenal packages ranging from fantasy vacations in Greece and Italy and a Napa Valley Wine Country insider's tour, to weekend experiences at the Grammy awards in Los Angeles and a VIP trip to New York's Fashion Week. Local destinations were also featured, including a “World's Best Slumber Party” at the Museum and a dream round of golf at Rich Harvest Farms. The latter prize was further enhanced when Stan Mikita agreed to join the lucky foursome for the round and Rich Harvest Farms Club Manager, Keith Rich, volunteered to match the package's winning bid.

“Proceeds from the 2010 Champions for Children Benefit Ball will be used to support the Museum's child-focused programs and exhibits. Each and every exhibit is designed to promote children's growth and development in the critical fields of math, science and the arts regardless of physical, social and economic barriers,” said Susan Broad, executive director of the nonprofit children's museum.

Last year's honorary chairperson with his wife Mae, John Calamos introduced Mayor A. George Pradel to the audience. Mr. Calamos welcomed him as a true champion for children remarking

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that “no one has demonstrated a higher concern for children than Naperville’s own Officer Friendly,” referring to Mayor Pradel’s early role on the Naperville police force.

Mayor Pradel modestly accepted his Champion for Children award and complimented the Museum. He acknowledged the importance of reaching children at an early age and stated, “We have the best vehicle to do this right here in the heart of our community with DuPage Children's Museum.” Mayor Pradel applauded his fellow guests by saying, “You are all champions tonight too for your contributions to the Museum. The best investment any of us can make is in children.”

Fittingly also honored at this year’s benefit was a special trio of champions – Michael, Tommy and Megan Hayes of Naperville. Last summer, these children set up a lemonade stand to raise money for DuPage Children's Museum. Their hard work is a testimonial to what the Museum experience means to children. Present with their families, the three cousins shyly accepted a standing ovation from the audience after being first seen in a short video featuring testimonies of other people the Museum has touched.

An anonymous Museum supporter pledged to match the proceeds raised for the ‘Champions for Children’ benefit up to \$50,000. “The generosity of all of our sponsors maximizes the fundraising impact of this event to the Museum,” said Rosie Sajak, CFRE, Director of Institutional Advancement. “Our donors help support Museum programs, making them accessible to special needs and underserved populations through our partnerships with over 50 social service agencies through our Community Access Network.”

Income raised from the gala benefit, as well as year-round individual gifts and foundation grants, ensures that the Museum experience is affordable and rewarding for families with young children. Community donations account for 40 cents of every dollar spent providing world-class educational experiences for young children and their families.

Event sponsors included Calamos Investments; The Harter Family; Bulley & Andrews LLC; Door to Door Direct – The Zink Family; Edward Hospital Pediatric & Neonatal Services; Ice Miller; Ron and Nancy Nyberg; Sara Lee Corporation; Naperville Jaycees; Rich Harvest Farms; Yellowbook; Dugan & Lopatka CPAs, PC; Harp Krug Venture, LLC; Naperville Magazine; Northern Trust; Southern Wine & Spirits; and Randall Studio.

DuPage Children's Museum helps develop curiosity, creativity, thinking and problem solving in young children via interactive exhibits and programs that make learning fun for children and adults playing together.

The Museum is located at 301 N. Washington Street in Naperville, Illinois, a quick walk from the Naperville Metra train station. Parking is free and the building is wheelchair accessible.

DuPage Children’s Museum is a top Chicago-area cultural attraction ...where learning comes in to play®! For information about hours, Museum admission and membership packages, visit www.dupagechildrensmuseum.org or call (630) 637-8000.

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Blackhawk legend Stan Mikita poses with DCM Board President, Jim Sheehan and wife, Sarah. Jim is holding his childhood Stan Mikita trading card that Mr. Mikita happily autographed.



Emcee for the benefit, Anna Davlantes, Contributing Anchor/Reporter at Fox Chicago News at Nine, is flanked by benefit committee co-chairs, Nancy Nyberg (l) and Brenda Harter (r).



Auctioneer David Goodman introduces the evening's youngest champions, (l-r) Tommy, Michael and Megan Hayes of Naperville.



John Calamos, the previous year's honorary chairperson, introduces and awards the 2010 honorary chairperson and Champion for Children, Naperville Mayor A. George Pradel.



DuPage Children's Museum Executive Director Susan Broad with Naperville Mayor A. George Pradel, the evening's honorary chairperson.

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