

# BIGGER IS BETTER



The Shelter for Abused Women & Children held its inaugural Old Bags Luncheon in tent at the Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, April 8.

## TWO NEW SPACES OFFER FLEXIBILITY AND ELEGANCE

by John Osborne

**N**ONPROFIT EVENT PLANNERS AGREE THAT having a suitable canvas upon which to work can go a long way toward the painstaking process of painting a flawless fundraising masterpiece.

Whether it's raising money for women and children whose lives have been impacted by domestic violence or generating funding that's earmarked

for providing care and resources to those in the final stages of a terminal illness, most agree that using the proper venue can mean all the difference between an event's smashing success or crashing failure.

With that in mind, we turn our spotlight on a pair of new and improved spaces around town that have done a remarkable job of helping the local nonprofit

world spin around from one fundraising season to the next.

Playing host to everything from casual get-togethers to black-tie soirees, event planners said these fresh new spaces have played an integral role in assisting area nonprofits achieve the same admirable goal: Helping the least fortunate among us who are unable to help themselves.





The Shelter for Abused Women & Children held its 15th Annual Mending Broken Hearts with Hope Luncheon in tent at the Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort, March 12, 2015.

## GRAND LAWN PAVILION

NAPLES RITZ-CARLTON GOLF RESORT

In January, more than 20 distinguished community leaders gathered for “The Reveal” of the new Grand Lawn Pavilion at the Naples Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort.

Built to accommodate elegant dinner receptions, trade shows, art exhibits, concerts and more, the 14,000-square-foot ballroom also played host to 20 nonprofit fundraisers during the 2015 season that collectively raised around \$20 million for local charities.

Located at the southeast tip of the Ritz-Carlton property, the Grand Lawn Pavilion features carpeted flooring throughout, fine linens adorning the pavilion walls and ceiling, advanced air conditioning and heating systems for climate control, built-in chandeliers, a full-house sound system and high-speed wireless Internet in a space that’s divisible by three.

Able to accommodate 1,400 people in theater-style seating and 900 with reception-style seating, the Grand Lawn Pavilion served as the gathering point for The Shelter for Abused Women & Children’s inaugural “Old Bags Luncheon” in 2014 and its “Mending Broken Hearts With Hope Luncheon” in 2015.



Juan Varella plays the electric saxophone while patrons enjoy hors d’oeuvres during the Council of Hispanic Business Professionals’ 6th annual gala Saturday, Sept. 27, 2014 at the Wyndemere Country Club.

Event organizers for both fundraisers said “the tent” proved to be an outstanding venue.

“The new space made the event feel like a truly special and unique experience,” Old Bags chairwoman Kristen Ferrara said of the location for her nonprofit’s humorously named fundraiser that drew more than 500 people to the Ritz. “The





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natural light and airy feel made the event truly extraordinary, and the majestic chandeliers hanging down from high peaks made it feel like we were dining among royalty.”

Ferrara said plenty of elbow room inside the Grand Lawn Pavilion helped ensure a successful event.

“We were not cramped for space as in past events, and it felt like the space was created strictly for our event,” she said. “The event was a great success and a great time was had by all. We are looking forward to using the pavilion again for Old Bags on March 24th, 2016.”

Gwyn Sanford, chairwoman of this year’s “Mending Broken Hearts With Hope Luncheon,” echoed those sentiments, while at the same time offering a tiny bit of constructive criticism.

“For our first time using the tent venue, we were quite pleased with the overall look and space,” she

said of her experience with the Grand Lawn Pavilion during her organization’s fundraising luncheon attended by about 750 people. “However, visual needs to be addressed. It was difficult for all to see the speakers. We feel the stage area needs to face ‘outward,’ and not recessed in.”

That mild critique aside, Sanford also cited an abundance of space at the Ritz as a key selling point for hosting a nonprofit event inside the Grand Lawn Pavilion.

“The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort has more room and parking, which was one of our biggest factors for our change of venue,” she said. “The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort had space to accommodate our boutique, and auction items were much easier to stage.”

*For more information on the Grand Lawn Pavilion: [ritzcarlton.com](http://ritzcarlton.com).*