

Galas

Gala raises \$700,000 toward Naples eye surgery center

By Lynne Groth
Daily News Correspondent
239-263-4896

The vision was clear: Raise money for the Ambulatory Surgery Center at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute — the new \$25 million, state-of-the-art, 20,000-square-foot, LEED-certified eye center in Naples.

The inaugural gala Jan. 22, an “Evening of Vision — Under the Stars,” drew a sold-out crowd of 250 guests whose generosity made that vision a reality.

“We are very excited with the success of our first gala and grateful to the Naples community, as the event raised \$700,000 toward the surgery center,” said Andy Cummins, member of Bascom Palmer’s Naples advisory board.

The sounds of the Stamps Jazz Quintet of the University of Miami Frost School of Music welcomed guests as they toured the center. Under the tent, the clear roof illuminated the sky where stars and twinkle lights created the ambiance for a special evening.

“The unique venue offered our guests a chance to see this magnificent building firsthand, enjoy a delicious meal and participate in supporting the new surgical suites,” Cummins said.

Dinner featured braised short ribs and seared Chilean sea bass with assorted miniature desserts catered by the Naples Grande Beach Resort. At



Under the tent, all was a vision of stars and twinkle lights.



John and Kathleen Passidomo



LANE WILKINSON, HEATHER DONLAN PHOTOGRAPHY (4)

Dr. Eduardo Alfonso with patient Jeffrey Zacarias



Tom and Sandi Moran, Dr. Pascal Goldschmidt and Shelia Smith Davis

the end of the evening guests were treated to s’mores by a campfire and received the coffee-table book “50 Years of Vision.”

Ranked the No. 1 eye hospital in the United States by U.S. News &

World Report, Bascom Palmer Eye Institute is the department of ophthalmology for the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. The 5,000-square-foot ambulatory surgery center on the

second floor of the building is scheduled to open later this year along U.S. 41, alleviating the need for Naples patients to drive to Bascom Palmer’s flagship eye hospital in Miami for specialized surgeries.

Shelter luncheon nets \$835,000 to combat domestic violence



Bev Haas, luncheon chair, with Honorary Chair Nancy White and Vice Chair Annette Pakula.

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The Shelter for Abused Women & Children’s “Believe that Hearts can be Mended” luncheon had many guests believing that the heavens were watching over them.

That is because only a slight delay resulted from some surprisingly bad weather. The skies produced a torrential downpour, with winds up to 60 mph, and a tornado warning was issued just one hour before the Jan. 15 luncheon.

So with the motto: when the going gets tough ... the tough go shopping ... the 700-plus guests were inspired to bid on silent auction items and shop in the Designer Boutique.

“As the chair of the event, my focus is on bringing all components of the luncheon together to create financial support and awareness for The Shelter,” said Bev Haas, luncheon chair.

That focus paid off when \$835,000 net was raised to



NICK SHIRGHIO (5)

Luann Terlizzi and Barbara Lauber shop the Designer’s Boutique during the Shelter for Abused Women & Children luncheon on Jan. 15 at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort in North Naples.

benefit The Shelter’s mission to prevent, protect and prevail over domestic violence and human trafficking through advocacy, empowerment and social change.

Adding levity, following the Invocation, Naples Pastor Steven E. Wigdal, of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, said, “If Jesus had called 12 women to be the disciples — they would have gotten more done!”

Changing things up this year, the luncheon’s usual guest speaker was instead a guest musical performer, Jackie Evancho. In recent years she was runner-up from NBC’s “America’s Got Talent” variety show.

“We selected Jackie because she is an empowered young woman, who has demonstrated that anything is possible, having won runner-up on ‘America’s Got Talent’ at just 10 years old,” said Linda Oberhaus, executive director of The Shelter. “Her moving performance truly embodied the peace and hope we seek for all survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking.”



Donna Glanzman, left, and Lorraine Keen check out the silent auction.



Susie Wolf, Francie Foster, Virginia Meuers and Linda Singer shop the Designer’s Boutique.



Joan Shipman, Susan Lamberson, Lacey King and Karen Blackwell.