

# An Evening of Tasting and Giving with the Michael Magro Foundation

October 13, 2015 by PattyS

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, The Michael Magro Foundation presented their Eleventh Annual "Evening of Tasting and Giving". The charitable event, which raised close to \$90,000 this year, will benefit Winthrop Hospital's Cancer Center for Kids, The Children's Medical Center at Winthrop Hospital, and The Cancer Center at Stony Brook University Medical Center. To date, the foundation has raised over a million dollars to assist children with cancer in a multitude of ways.

Close to 675 attendees were present this year, over 200 more than last year. Terrie Magro, Vice-President of the Michael Magro Foundation, quipped, "We wanted people to feel welcome. We wanted to embrace them. We've mentioned to them that we want them to come back next year and bring their friends. This is the draw – to spread the word – and these people always do. We have a core of about 200 people who are present, year after year, and it's a really fun feeling. The event is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and it's grown so much in the eleven years." She says with a smile, "We change it up every year, so that there's something different for people to enjoy."

Honorees for this year's event include Louis Pannullo DDS, his wife Julie Pannullo MD, and Eileen Dolan RN, as well as the staff at Dr. Louis Pannullo's dental office in Williston Park. Louis, who has been a part of the foundation since the very beginning, began as Terrie and Paul Magro's dentist. Eileen Dolan was actually responsible for bringing Louis, Terrie and Paul together. Louis, an avid pool player and musician, began to host billiard events to raise money for the foundation. He also hosted dinner parties over the years that featured nights of great music and food. As a matter of fact, one of the live auction prizes at this year's event featured a dinner for six by Chef Paul Magro at the home of Louis Pannullo. Entertainment for that evening will be performed by Jeremy Stolle of "Phantom of the Opera" fame. Louis, who has raised over \$10,000 on his own for the foundation, gave an incredibly touching acceptance speech the night of the event. According to Terrie Magro, "He's a really generous guy." The Williston Park restorative dentist is also an accomplished classical pianist who has performed at both Carnegie Hall and Steinway Halls of Manhattan.

There were so many restaurants at the event that it's quite difficult to name all of them. Terrie Magro mentioned that her gratitude for those who have been a part of the event since the beginning (and continue on), as well as for all of the new partners in this grand adventure is immeasurable. "Every single one of them brought their 'A-Game', from the restaurants to the bakeries, to the wineries and breweries. They went 'over the top', and we appreciate everything that they've done for us. We encourage others to visit them, in order to help to keep the good feeling going all year round." Terrie mentioned that these restaurants go above and beyond what would normally be expected of them for an event of this magnitude. For example, Margarita's Café, who had two tables that night, ran out of their killer guacamole. A call was placed to the East Meadow location, and a short time later, a new bowl of

guacamole appeared. It's the attention to the detail that impresses the Magro family so very much, and it's something that they truly appreciate.

Aside from the twenty-something restaurants and bakeries that attended the event, Manhattan Beer brought in two special features – a pumpkin ale and a grapefruit beer, which was heady and full of citrus notes. The running joke at the table was "Drink our beer and you'll lose weight!" Two martini bars were available for guests, and Sparkling Point brought a delicious champagne that tickled the nostrils and was delightful on the tongue. Even Empire took two tables and offered thirsty guests a sample of their "Reyka", a small batched vodka that is crafted in Iceland. Sal and Jerry's Bakery of Brooklyn offered departing guests some bread to take home, and Cirella's of Melville handed out jars of their sauce as parting gifts. Every table was tastefully decorated with a floral arrangement by Black Dahlia; guests were thrilled to depart with the arrangements this year for a \$20 donation to the foundation. Cascon Baking of Whitestone and Cardinali's Pastry Shop of Carle Place offered containers of samples to guests, as well. Cardinali's brought enough bread to offer each guest a loaf to go home with. Even Ronald McDonald House donated sample chocolate boxes for guests to enjoy, long after the event was a pleasant memory. All the while, guests enjoyed the tunes of DJ Charles Henry while sampling some fabulous food.

Raffles were held throughout the evening. This year featured two-tiers of raffles – baskets that were worth \$300 or more, and grand raffles with values of \$500+. The grand raffles included VIP tickets to the Macy's Day Parade, tickets to a Giants vs. 49ers game, and luxury suite tickets to the NY Rangers vs. San Jose Sharks at Madison Square Garden, complete with a food and beverage package. Raffle baskets included a Nespresso Café, a date night basket, a Pampered Chef basket, original paintings, and a wine tasting tour.

The highlight of the evening was the special musical guest, who was kept secret until the night of the event. Richie Cannata, who is not only a well-known music producer and multi-instrumentalist but played saxophone for Billy Joel's band as well as for The Beach Boys, performed "New York State of Mind" with the accompaniment of Louis Pannullo and Christopher J. Clark. This was Cannata's first big gig back since his diagnosis of non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma several months ago. Throughout the performance, it was hard-pressed to find a single dry eye in the room. Cannata's spell over the guests was captivating, and his music left everyone feeling uplifted and hopeful.

According to Terrie and Paul, this event would never have been possible without the help of their partners. "It takes a village," Terrie offered. "The volunteers, the in-kind donors, all of the restaurants, bakeries, wineries, breweries – they're the ones who deserve all the credit. It's the people behind the scenes that make a night like this flawless. At the end of the day, all the extras add up and all the dollars add up in order to make a child smile. It's amazing. I can't say anything else but that it's amazing. The wonderful representation of friends from Winthrop, from the neighborhood, from all of the people who have been coming every year, to the new ones – it's simply amazing, and I am so grateful."

If you would like to find out more about the Michael Magro Foundation, or you would like to either donate or attend one of their upcoming events, please visit their website at [www.michaelmagrofoundation.com](http://www.michaelmagrofoundation.com). I can't wait until

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