Shepherd Center’s Legendary Party Raises $5 Million

By Susan Tucker and Leslie Jackson

November 4 marked one of Shepherd Center’s finest hours – a triumph of great philanthropy, showing the high esteem in which the nationally recognized spinal cord, brain injury and related conditions treatment center is held by Atlantans. Jenny Pruitt, one of the most admired stars in Atlanta’s pantheon of community leaders and philanthropists, chaired this year’s Legendary Party. The applause was deafening when she announced that the Legendary Party had reached her personal goal of raising $5 million for Shepherd Center. Jenny acknowledged that there were three million-dollar donors, including restaurateur and city leader Dante Stephenson, a legend in his own time.

Funds benefited Shepherd Center’s SHARE Military Initiative and the Andrew C. Carlos MS Institute. Presenting Sponsors were the Jenny and Bob Pruitt Family, Elaine and John Carlos, Thalia N. and Chris M. Carlos Foundation, Helen A. Carlos and Ron Hilliard, Peter A. Dames and Family, Lee and Sandy Sanford, The Home Depot Foundation and Dante Stephenson. Joining as Platinum Sponsors were Atlanta Fine Homes Sotheby’s International Real Estate, Cox Enterprises, Ed Voyles Automotive and Genuine Parts Company.

Themed “Legends of the Silver Screen,” the Legendary Party was held in Tony Conway’s incomparable event venue, Flourish, where he and his Legendary Events team created the décor and delicious cuisine. Klieg spot lights beamed over Flourish reminiscent of a Hollywood premiere night.

Jenny Pruitt, founder and CEO of Atlanta Fine Homes Sotheby’s International Realty, and her husband Bob greeted guests. At the entrance, actors portraying paparazzi captured photographs of guests, while hot-pink-satin clad Marilyn Monroe as she appeared in the film Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, Gone With the Wind’s Rhett Butler and comedians Charlie Chaplin and Lucille Ball made surprise appearances. Champagne in traditional coupes, cocktails and hors d’oeuvres were passed during the reception.

Flourish’s ballroom glowed with the sparkle of white sequined and shimmering silver cloths, mirrored table tops, glorious towers of white roses and delphinium, and silver vases of white feathers encircled by white roses, gold-and-crystal votives and brilliant candlelight from magnificent candelabras.

Sophisticated dinner music allowed everyone to enjoy talking with table partners and relish the gourmet dinner of beef with Cabernet jus and seared black cod, poached pear salad and the classic American dessert Baked Alaska.

When the fabulous Swinging Medallions, famous since the early 1960s as the “Party Band of the South” for their blend of beach, frat rock and R&B music, came on stage, guests raced to the dance floor to “Hey, Hey Baby”. When they played their multi-million seller and signature song, “Double Shot of My Baby’s Love,” dancers wouldn’t let them stop playing.

Topping off the evening was Legendary Late Night a “La La Land,” themed after party complete with a live Karaoke band, a menu of beef, turkey and crab sliders, chicken and waffles and mini-bites, while football fans caught big-screen broadcasts of major games.

The 2017 Legendary Party was truly an award-winning evening for Shepherd Center. All photography provided by Ross Henderson and Ben Rose.
Dear Auxiliary and Peach Corps Members,

December is already upon us, ushering in the holiday season, along with an array of fun and festive Auxiliary activities to benefit Shepherd Center patients and their families!

To begin the month, the Auxiliary will host the first annual Holiday Sing Along on Sunday, December 3rd from 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. at the Callaway Auditorium (7th floor). The afternoon promises to be a warm and wonderful time, bringing the Shepherd “family” of patients and their families, staff and volunteers together for spirited singing and a hearty dose of holiday cheer! The very talented pianist, Linda Fraser and “The Four J’s” (Jill Berry, John Langsfeld, Jim McDonald and Jade Slover) will lead us in song! Please join us to share in the fun, refreshments and festivities! To RSVP, contact Linda Morris at lindasmorris@comcast.net.

Our wonderful Sunshine committee, led by Karen Martin and Jeannie Worlock, has been hard at work, wrapping beautiful blankets to distribute to each Shepherd patient. The lovely blankets are a special holiday gift, providing warmth throughout the chilly winter season, and a “hug” for every patient from the Auxiliary. Thank you all for putting together such a wonderful gift for the patients!

The holidays would simply not be complete without our beloved Pecans on Peachtree™! Whether you choose chocolate-covered, Fancy Mammoth, roasted and salted or praline pecans (just to name a few) – they are all delicious, make wonderful holiday gifts for family, friends, teachers, hostesses, or business associates. BEST OF ALL, proceeds from Pecans on Peachtree™ support programs that assist patients and their families during their stay at Shepherd! PLEASE support this important fundraising effort by visiting us online at PecansOnPeachtree.org. Ti’a Joseph, our Pecans on Peachtree™ project manager, will be happy to assist you with your order, should you have any questions or concerns.

The mission of the Auxiliary and the Peach Corps is to brighten the lives of the Shepherd Center patients and their families. So, whether it was an unexpected gift, a holiday remembrance, a sweet treat or a fun activity that you have helped provide this year, your kindness has truly made a difference at Shepherd! At this time of year when we pause to remember those who have gone “above and beyond,” I would like to thank each of you who has so generously opened your heart to help another. Your kindness and generosity is so very much appreciated!

Wishing you health and joy this holiday season!

With love and gratitude,

Elaine Carlos
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Above/Below: Members contributed delicious baked goods for the Halloween Bake Sale.
Shepherd Center Brain Injury Peer Visitor Association Director
Ann Boriskie Wins Statewide Hospital Hero Award

Shepherd Center Brain Injury Peer Visitor Association Director Ann Boriskie was awarded the prestigious Georgia Hospital Heroes Award at the Georgia Hospital Association’s (GHA) annual Hospital Hero Awards luncheon Nov. 9 in Atlanta. Boriskie, who was one of only nine individuals statewide to receive the award, was recognized for her help in offering recovery and resources to brain injury survivors.

Nearly 20 years ago, a car accident left Ann Boriskie with a serious brain injury. With limited resources and no one to guide her through the traumatic experience, the recovery was long and painful. Not wanting others to be without support, she vowed that when she got better she would help others going through the same ordeal.

In 2006, Boriskie joined Shepherd Center as a volunteer peer visitor and, three years later, had logged an impressive 4,000 volunteer hours. Around this same time, she created the Brain Injury Peer Visitor Association, which is modeled after the American Stroke Association’s Peer Program for stroke patients and their families. Her volunteers began visiting brain-injured patients at Shepherd Center in 2009.

At Shepherd Center alone, Boriskie’s team visits patients, families and caregivers five days a week. All team members have either recovered from brain injuries themselves or are family or caregivers of brain injury survivors. The volunteers lend a supportive ear to patients and their family members while modeling how it is possible to thrive after sustaining a serious brain injury. Volunteers also distribute packets of information about brain injuries that Boriskie developed after struggling to find information about her own injury.

Today, the Brain Injury Peer Visitor Association has 150 trained volunteers who conduct peer visits in 41 hospitals and rehabilitation facilities in the Atlanta metropolitan area and throughout Georgia, as well as in Florida and Wisconsin. As of December 2016, approximately 40,000 peer visits have been completed and more than 41,000 volunteer hours have been donated, with Boriskie personally donating more than 10,000 hours.

“Recovery from a brain injury is a difficult and arduous process,” said GHA President and CEO Earl Rogers. “Thanks to Ann Boriskie and her volunteer efforts, many of these patients have found the support they need to ensure a full and complete recovery. She is most-deserving of this award.”

Holiday Memories

During this time of year it’s easy to get caught up in shopping lists, parties and hectic schedules. In an effort to reflect on what makes this season special, we invited volunteers to share their favorite holiday memories.

Mitzi Richardson (Clerical): I was elementary school age and on Christmas morning my brother and I both got bikes and our sister got a set of metal roller skates (the old fashioned kind that you needed a key to adjust the size). We lived across from a park, and all three of us went to the park and my sister wore her skates and my brother and I took turns pulling her behind our bikes in the park, then we rode all over the neighborhood.

Ken Hornbuckle (Welcome Desk and ABI Peer Visitor): My wife and I married and bought our home in 1998. It was late December when we moved, so we decided to forego the Christmas festivities, including the Christmas tree. The tree has always been exciting to me, so my wife knew I was disappointed. Since we were still living out of boxes, I didn’t complain. On Christmas Eve, I came home to a nice surprise - I came into the den to find a completely decorated tree! Yes...men do cry tears of joy. Even now, I am still using the toolbox she left under the tree to work on this old house. (Clever girl; she knew how to get me to work).
Membership in the Shepherd Center Auxiliary, Peach Corps, SCS, and Junior Committee is open to all volunteers. Members provide ongoing fundraising and volunteer support to Shepherd Center. For more information on becoming a member of one of these groups, contact Alex Seblatnigg at (404) 350-7315 or visit www.shepherd.org.

Shepherd Center’s mission is to help people with a temporary or permanent disability caused by injury or disease rebuild their lives with hope, independence, and dignity, advocating for their full inclusion in all aspects of community life while promoting safety and injury prevention.