

CASA raises funds for mission at 'Havana Nights'

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CASA supporters Vito and Patricia Spitaleri at "Havana Nights," held at the Waterfowl Building in Easton this May.

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EASTON — Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of the Mid-Shore's "Havana Nights" in May raised needed funds for its mission while providing a gala for party-goers.

"Arriving in colorful outfits, Guayabera shirts and jaunty hats, CASA's guests got into the spirit of the evening, thoroughly enjoying the incredible party," CASA stated in a press release.

Havana Nights Co-Chairmen Patricia Spitaleri and Sidney Davenport-Trond, along with committee members and generous event sponsors, presented an evening at which guests received the opportunity to support CASA's work with vulnerable children who are under court protection due to abuse, neglect, abandonment or their parents' inability to safely care for them.

Welcomed to a transformed Waterfowl Building in historic Easton, guests enjoyed posing beside two vintage cars, compliments of Jeff and Darlene Spence and Henry Petronis. Twinkling lights, leather couches and palm trees adorned the lawn of the cigar lounge, where an expert shared the nuances of rolling Cuban cigars.

Inside, guests saw streetscape of downtown Havana, complete with bursting colors, live plants, glowing lanterns, specialty cocktails and authentic Cuban cuisine prepared by Gourmet by the Bay.

During the program portion of the party, CASA Executive Director Robin Davenport welcomed guests and thanked CASA's many sponsors for making the evening possible.

Stephanie Nagel, CASA's first vice president, shared a poignant story about hope and how a child's life was positively impacted by CASA's involvement.

Knowing that the event proceeds would help this nonprofit organization serve as many children as possible in Talbot, Dorchester, Queen Anne's and Kent Counties, board member Patricia Spitaleri and husband Vito and retired board member George Torggler and wife Mary joined together to offer guests a chance to match a \$50,000 challenge grant.

With Sherry Truhlar of Red Apple Auctions as the emcee, donations quickly surpassed the challenge. Truhlar then led a game of "Popcorn," in which guests attempted to be the last \$100 donor to win a Hinckley sailboat cruise for six.

Guests also enjoyed a first glimpse of "Legacy," a carving begun last year for CASA by the late W.G. Sutter, a master carver from Trappe, which was completed in April by Canadian master carver Glenn McMurdo. The intricate and life-like "Legacy" features a family of ducks, including three little ones, which will be auctioned off in fall 2017.

"We deeply appreciate the incredible generosity of the Spitaleri's and the Torggler's for their legacy of hope, and we thank our sponsors, guests, and everyone who pledged during the challenge grant and the 'Popcorn' game for caring about the lives of some of our region's most vulnerable children," Robin Davenport said.

"Court Appointed Special Advocates give voice to the needs, wishes, and best interest of vulnerable children from our communities. We know that by advocating now for these children, we can help to improve their outcomes and their futures. Simply put, CASA gives hope to children," she said.

To learn more about CASA of the Mid-Shore, visit www.casamidshore.org or call 410-822-2866.

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