

So Many Reasons to Believe: Fabulous AARC Gala raises 1.1M BY BILL BROOKS

The Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre's (AARC) annual — and largest — fundraising initiative of the year is an event not to be missed.

This year's gala, the 17th annual held May 22 at the Telus Convention Centre, was an enormous success and netted \$1.1 million. Aptly themed So Many Reasons to Believe, the fab fundraiser saluted the 526 AARC graduates and their families who, over the past 22 years, have transitioned from hopelessness and defeat to freedom and hope. When a young person walks through the doors of AARC, their lives, and their families' lives, are in shambles due to the devastation caused from addiction. Yet by the time they graduate, their relationships with their families have been restored and they experience the joy that comes with being clean and sober. Think of the ripple effect 526 inspired and happy adolescents can make to the community.

And inspiring was the theme resonating throughout the 17th annual gala which saw 700 guests dig deep to support the miracle of AARC. Whether bidding on live auction items (a golf trip to Trickle Creek Golf Resort for 16 aboard a private plane garnered \$15,000 while an adorable 12-week-old male Labradoodle puppy fetched \$4,200) or raising one's hand to donate during the Miracles segment of the evening which raised well over \$200,000!

Other highlights this night included: an on stage interview with AARC graduate #446 Katherine M and her father Tod M which was masterfully facilitated by Clinical Director Natalie Imbach; AARC board chair Ann McCaig's superb address; Jim Peplinski's masterful emceeing; and auctioneer Danny Hooper's amazing ability at garnering top dollar for live auction items as well as Miracle funds.

Kudos to all involved on the success of the million-dollar evening and take a well-deserved bow gala committee members: Donna Edwards, AARC director of development; Jackie Bilsky; Kara McLennan; Anita Pasveer; Kevin Turner; Robyn Junghans; Heather McLeod; Laura Nalder; and Brent Latimer.

Others in attendance this night included: Remington Development Corporation's Randy Remington and his wife Donna with Ryan and Caley Remington and Jamie and Lisa Cooper (and here, I must salute Remington on being the presenting sponsor of The Miracle Gala since Day 1); AARC executive director Dr. Dean Vause and his wife Joanne; Lindsey Edwards; Official Opposition Leader Danielle Smith with colleague Sally Mansour; Aboriginal Friendship of Calgary executive director George Calliou with his wife Cecile Calliou; former mayor Dave Bronconnier; Werklund Foundation's Dave Werklund and his wife Susan; Calgary Jewellery's Bernard Florence and Carol Burch; Don and Joan Wilson; Marg Thorson; Alberta Justice Minister Jonathan Denis with colleague Troy Black; Dr. Gerry Turcotte, president and vice-chancellor, St. Mary's University College; Source Media Group's Jean and Pepper Rodriguez, Norma Robertson, John Kearney, Donna Roberts and Heather Dougall; Sather Real Estate's Brenda McMahon; Anne Harding; Anne Timmons; Helen Fitzpatrick; Joan Cameron; Ella Joy Maybin and others pictured below.



Dr. Dean Vause and his wife Joanne cut an elegant swath at the Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre's (AARC) Gala Benefit Dinner held May 22 at the Telus Convention Centre. Dr. Vause is the executive director of AARC.
Photograph by: Bill Brooks, For the Calgary Herald



From left, are Cecile Calliou, AARC board chair Ann McCaig and George Calliou, executive director of the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary.



From left: Gala emcee Jim Peplinski with his wife Cathy, daughter Anny, John Whittaker and Matt Peplinski.



From left: Lisa Cooper, Randy Remington and his wife Donna Remington, Jamie Cooper, Ryan Remington and Caley Remington. Remington Development Corporation was the gala presenting sponsor again this year.



The AARC Gala benefit dinner was a resounding success and attended by 700 guests, some of whom were AARC graduates, pictured above.



Source Media Group's Jean Rodriguez, Norma Robertson, John Kearney, Pepper Rodriguez, Donna Roberts and Heather Dougall.



Katherine M, left, with her father Tod, mother Marlene and sister Rebecca. Tod and Katherine shared their AARC experiences with the 700 guests in attendance.



AARC's Donna Edwards, left, and her daughter Lindsey Edwards.



Flames assistant coach Marty Gelin and his wife Jane Gelin.



International's Brian Hunter and Gaia Clinic's Dr. Tracy Thomson.



Singer, writer, actor and producer Tom Jackson and his wife Alison Jackson were among the VIPs in attendance.



From left, Troy Black, special adviser to Alberta Justice Minister Jonathan Denis, centre, and auctioneer this night, famed Danny Hooper.



The benefit dinner netted more than \$1 million. From left, are AARC executive director Dr. Dean Vause, AARC board chair Ann McCaig and Wildrose leader Danielle Smith.



Pictured at the AARC Gala benefit dinner are AARC parents and gala committee members Robyn Junghans, left, Anita Pasveer, right, with, back row, from left, Kevin Turner, Heather McLeod and Brent Latimer.



Werklund Foundation's Dave Werklund and his wife Susan were among the 700 guests who attended the benefit dinner.



From left: Anne Timmons, Helen Fitzpatrick, Joan Cameron and Ella Joy Maybin



Doug Jessen and Elizabeth Lensen.



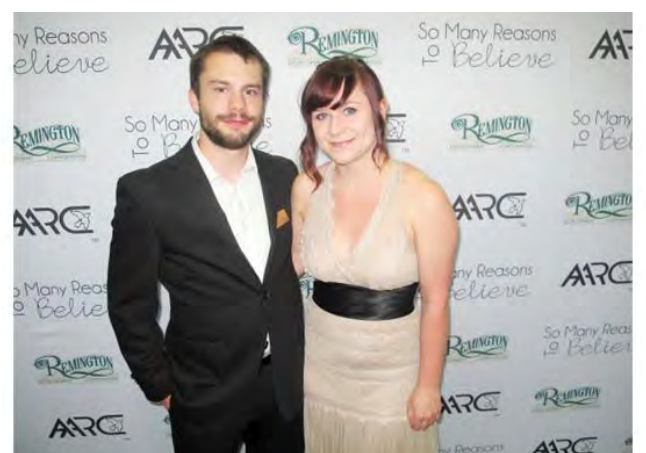
From left: Harvard Buildings managing director Rosanne Hill Blaisdell and her husband Brad Blaisdell, Respect in the Workplace managing director, and Tara Robinson, executive director, Youth Link Calgary Police Interpretive Centre.



AARC's Jackie Bilsky, left, and Kara McLennan strike a pose at the AARC Gala.



From left, Don Wilson, Marg Thorson and Joan Wilson.



AARC graduate and peer counsellor Greg McKenna and Carly Winzinowich.



Gala committee members Robyn Junghans, left, and Anita Pasveer, right, with former mayor Dave Bronconnier.



Sally Mansour and Dr. Gerry Turcotte, president and vice-chancellor, St. Mary's University College.



Anne Harding and Sather Real Estate's Brenda McMahon.