

Celebrating personal triumphs



CAROLINE PHILLIPS
AROUND TOWN

The issue of mental illness came out of the shadows and into the resplendent rays of orange and yellow light that bathed the main hall of the Congress Centre for the **Royal Ottawa Foundation for Mental Health's 2008 Inspiration Awards Gala**. An elegantly dressed crowd of 460 attended the event Thursday, raising a record amount of \$170,000-plus in support of the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group's mental health research, programs and patient care.

The evening handed out five awards to recognize personal triumph over mental illness, extraordinary achievement in the advancement of mental health or exceptional dedication to help reduce the stigma. Recipients included former senator **Michael Kirby**, chairman of the new Mental Health Commission of Canada. His award was accepted on his behalf by one of the commission's directors, **Patrick Dion**.

New federal court judge **Russel Zinn**, police chief **Vern White** and the Royal Ottawa Foundation's board chairman, Perley-Robertson lawyer **Gregory Sanders**, were just a few of the faces spotted at the cocktail reception, which ended with a procession of gospel singers leading guests into the main hall. The gala was chaired by GAPP Management Development president **Kim Salvatore**, who donned a blue pure silk gown by Westboro designer Farah.

Asbury College students **Caroline Mierins** and **Alexander Bleeker** looked especially sweet in Holt Renfrew spring fashions they wore to sell raffle tickets for Holt Renfrew prizes — including a \$5,000 shopping spree.

Ion Aimers of The Works Gourmet Burger Bistro donated to the live auction the naming rights to a new burger to be carried at all five of his locations for three months (\$1 from each sale goes to the Royal Ottawa). The item was a hit on the auction block, selling for \$5,000 to MBNA Canada.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES 10

Bah, what's a little snow? Not even a freshly fallen foot of the white stuff could keep hundreds of partygoers away from the **Empire Grill's** 10th anniversary bash Wednesday.

Fabulous food and drinks flowed at a private VIP party held before doors opened to the public. Owners **John Borsten**, **David Mangano** and **Gary Thompson** were seen chatting with everybody from **Cyril Leeder**, COO of the Senators and Scotiabank Place, to Canadian Labour Congress president **Ken Georgetti**, to fellow By-Ward Market restaurateurs.

The newly renovated eatery had a lot to celebrate: it's grown from 2,100 to 6,400 square feet and employs 200. The evening featured live cooking stations and an Empire State Building ice martini luge with the anniversary cocktail, Perfect 10.

Food specialist **Korey Kealey**, whose clients include the Empire Grill and the same-owned Metropolitan Brasserie, was seen hanging out with her sister-in-law, **Krista Kealey**, and **Lindsay Firestone**. The Ottawa Wine and Food Show's **Halina Player** was joined by *Citizen* food columnist **Gay Cook** while Sens wives **Erin Phillips** and **Stephanie Richardson** arrived looking glam and gorgeous. Also spotted was the restaurant's designer, **Gord McTavish**.



Enjoying themselves at the 2008 Inspiration Awards Gala were: **FAR LEFT: From left, Patrick Dion, Kim Salvatore and Vern White; ABOVE LEFT: Caroline Mierins and Alexander Bleeker; ABOVE RIGHT: Gregory Sanders and Tani Sanders; NEAR LEFT: Ion Aimers and Karen Power.**

PHOTOS BY JEAN LEVAC, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN



Guests at the Mistura Beauty Solutions opening included, from left: **Karen and Martin Corsten, and Mimi Wongwinyuchon, Andi Marcus, Paula Clancy and Nila Matthews.**

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Having fun at the Empire Grill birthday bash were: **ABOVE: From left, Korey Kealey, Lindsay Firestone and Krista Kealey, and RIGHT: From left, David Mangano, Gary Thompson and John Borsten.**



Spotted at the Fine Wine Evening were: **ABOVE: Brian Webb, Mikhela Jason and David Daubney; LEFT: Norm and Myrna Barwin, and BELOW: U.S. Ambassador David Wilkins and Noora Sagarwala.**



PHOTOS BY CAROLINE PHILLIPS, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

featured wine experts **Konrad Ejbich** and **Tony Aspler**, raised just over \$100,000 for the Canada Dance Festival and Ottawa Public Library Foundation. Also auctioned off were hotel stays in exotic cities, wine-themed books, and tickets to the upcoming dance festival.

In attendance was the library foundation's chairman, **David Daubney**, along with the dance festival's artistic producer, **Brian Webb**, and company manager, **Noora Sagarwala**. On hand were the event planners, **Mikhela Jason** and her husband, **Jesse Alboim**.

U.S. Ambassador **David Wilkins** was spotted among the guests, as were Dr. **Norman Barwin** with his wife, **Myrna**, past board chairwoman of the dance festival.

CHAMPAGNE CHARITY

Todd Nicholson wowed the room at the Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario's 5th Annual **Champagne Charity Auction** with his inspiring story of becoming a world-class sledge hockey player.

After being left paralyzed in a 1987 car accident on his way home from his high school prom, Mr. Nicholson followed his mother's advice to never give up on his dreams. He went on to win bronze, silver and gold Paralympic medals with the national team, the crowd heard Wednesday at the Congress Centre.

Mr. Nicholson, a public servant and newlywed, plans to make the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Games his last (he is turning 40 next year, after all).

The gala, which raised \$45,000, also heard from honorary chairwoman **Penny Colenette** and The Ottawa Hospital Rehabilitation Centre's Dr. **Jeff Blackmer**, who specializes in spinal cord injuries.

In the audience was Manitoba MP **Steven Fletcher**, who's taken self-promotion to creative levels with personalized all-star trading cards. The four cards, which come in sets of three for swapping purposes, include details about Mr. Fletcher. The quadriplegic was told by doctors he would spend the rest of his life in an institution following his car accident.

"I don't think they ever thought the institution would be Parliament," he's quoted as saying on the back of one card.

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From left, **Steven Fletcher, Jeff Blackmer and Todd Nicholson** at the auction for the Paraplegic Association.



From left, **Cybele Hamburg, Anita Bloom, Sharon Diamond, Anne Benedek and Michelle Sachs** at the Evita Gala for the Jewish Community Centre and the CHEO Foundation.

CAROLINE PHILLIPS, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

A NEW BEAUTY

The Empire Grill was back in party mode Thursday for the launch of **Andi Marcus's** new venture, **Mistura Beauty Solutions**. In between the mingling were cocktails to drink, mini makeovers to indulge in and a shot at winning both a trip to Manhattan and limited edition Jimmy Choo bag.

Guests whooped it up late into the night before heading home with Mistura gift bags in tow.

Among the friends helping Ms. Marcus to celebrate were Public Safety Minister **Stockwell Day** and **Dr. Martin Corsten**, who's to become new chairman of the otolaryngology department at the University of

Ottawa. Also present was Ms. Marcus's husband, CNG Global Services chief executive **Hayden Marcus**.

The comely crowd was further prettified by the presence of Ms. Marcus's cosmetic models — lawyer **Paula Clancy**, real estate agent **Nila Matthews** and Mistura's director of international business development, **Mimi Wongwinyuchon**.

DON'T CRY FOR ME

Broadway musical lovers enjoyed a lively night on the town Thursday at the **Evita Gala for the Soloway Jewish Community Centre and the CHEO Foundation**.

Guests gathered at the Na-

tional Arts Centre for dinner, show and post-performance party with the cast, where the tune *Don't Cry For Me Argentina* was surely stuck in everyone's head. "It's a relaxing evening that allows people to socialize, be entertained, enjoy wonderful food and support two great charitable organizations," Soloway JCC president **Anita Bloom** said during the cocktail reception catered by Creative Kosher Catering.

Dinner was held in the NAC's Panorama Room, which was decorated with flowers from Langdon's and balloons (sold as part of a raffle for a Jubilee Fine Jewellers prize).

On hand were gala co-chair-

women **Cybele Hamburg** and **Michelle Sachs** along with fellow organizers **Sharon Diamond** and **Anne Benedek** of the Soloway JCC.

SOME PRETTY FINE WINE

Looking around the ballroom at the Hampton Inn Ottawa & Conference Centre, it was hard to believe organizers pulled together **Fine Wine Evening** in just a few short weeks. Chefs cooked up pasta and gnocchi dishes at their stations while a string trio filled the nicely decorated room with classical music, all while guests checked out some 150 types of wine up for live and silent auction.

Wednesday's event, which

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