

## **Red Hot Ruby Ball celebrates Beacon Center's 40th Anniversary**

Denver Post

A real sizzler

by Joanne Davidson on May 19, 2009

What: The Red Hot Ruby Gala

Where: Hyatt Regency Tech Center

Why: To celebrate Beacon Youth and Family Center's 40th anniversary

Chairmen: Annabel Bowlen, Jamie Angelich, Gayle Novak, Pamela O'Neal, Christina Richardson, Nancy Sevo, Ryta Sondergard and Sharon Sweeney, all of whom are officers in Beacon Center's Cherish the Children Guild

Forty years ago, Judge Marvin Foote established Court House, Inc. as an alternative to sending teen offenders to jail. Experience had taught him that these children, really, often wound up where they did because of circumstances beyond their control: abuse and neglect, lack of family support, and poverty. What they needed, Foote concluded, was not exposure to the criminal justice system, but treatment, supervision and guidance ... in a more friendly setting. Court House, Inc. — whose name was recently changed to Beacon Youth and Family Center — offered residential care for these troubled teens.

Seventeen years ago, Annabel Bowlen, wife of Denver Broncos owner Patrick Bowlen, was introduced to Beacon and was so struck by its programs and success rate that she adopted the Englewood-based agency as her charity of choice. One of her first acts was to form a guild, called Cherish the Children, that would raise money and awareness for the cause. "It breaks your heart to hear what those kids go through," she said at the recent Red Hot Ruby Gala, a dinner, dance and auction that marked Beacon Center's 40th year. "How can you not support Beacon Center's work?"

Bowlen led the group for many years before settling into the role of president emeritus. Also at the gala, Pamela O'Neal, the guild's immediate past president, and her husband, Michael, were given the Golden Cherub Award for their continued support of Beacon Center. And, president **Vance Wagner** accepted the inaugural Corporate Community Service Award on behalf of **American National Bank**.

"This is something we'll never forget," Wagner said of receiving the award. Among those he thanked: developer John Sevo and his wife, Nancy, who, along with Realtor Edie Marks, introduced him to the work Beacon Center does.

Pamela O'Neal described Beacon supporters as "the epitome ... of that helping hand of charity" that binds people together and brings character to communities.

About 600 guests turned out for the benefit made all the more special by the sizzling atmosphere created by interior designers Marc Roth and James Pfister. Roth got into the spirit by wearing a red silk suit he had custom made in Bangkok 15 years ago. It was accessorized by a pin that spelled out Ruby; it came, he explained, from the former Ruby nightclub on E. 17th Avenue, which he and Pfister also designed.

Layne Hunt and fiance Craig Fleishman also had key roles in the evening's success. She was in charge of the silent auction and was successful in landing such valuable items as a Rembrandt painting (snapped up by Edie Marks) and a pearl and diamond ring, donated by jeweler Jay Feder. Fleishman headed the corporate committee and secured the Bowlens, the Denver Broncos Football Club and United Western Bank as Red Hot Sponsors; American National Bank and High Sierra Energy (Burning Sponsors); Emergency Medical Services Corp., Tom and Cydney Marsico, Bill and Yvonne McCallum, MDC Holdings and the Anna and John J. Sie Foundation (Scorching Sponsors).

Gayle Novak was behind the live auction and was thrilled when auctioneer Rick Rolph was able to coax such high bids as \$9,000 for a trip to the Super Bowl, \$4,000 for a performance at the event of one's choice by country recording artist Pete Martinez, and \$7,000 for a custom children's playhouse.

Guests included Patty and Brian McConaty; attorney Marshall Fogel, who donated a tour of his world-class baseball memorabilia collection to the live auction; Phil and Andrea Gray; Edna Chang Grant; Ernie Blake and Sharon Magness Blake; Danielle Dascalos; Chris and Dr. Ron Yaros; Michael Miller, chair of the Beacon Center board, and his wife, Laura; and Diane Huttner, who was telling friends that her son, Michael, has written a book, "50 Ways You Can Help Obama Change America." It's due out in September and one of the biggest initial orders is from Borders. He will donate the proceeds to Progress Now, which he founded and directs.