



Sunshine Ranches Super Bowl Party Raises Thousands

BY DEBBY TEICH

MORE THAN 100 PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, AS well as several local celebrities, gathered at Loretta and Larry Weiner's Sunshine Ranches estate home for their 11th annual Super Bowl party. They watched the game on a 109" screen, feasted on a 90 lb. roasted pig and enjoyed trays of fried chicken, sides and desserts. Once again, the party was much more than just an opportunity to enjoy a football game. It was a chance to help raise funds and awareness for Friedreich's Ataxia (FA), a debilitating, life-shortening, degenerative neuro-muscular disorder that has disrupted a local family.

This is the second year that the Weiners turned their annual Super Bowl party into a fundraiser to benefit others in the community who need help. Last year, they asked guests to donate money to the Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA) instead of bringing the traditional dish to share. The party raised more than \$5,000 for COTA, in honor of Joshua Pelling. The Sunshine Ranches toddler had recently received a life-saving bone marrow transplant and his family was struggling to pay the medical bills.

This year, they asked guests to donate \$25 to FARA, a non-profit organization founded in 1998 by parents wanting to make a difference in FA. The donations were made in honor of Isabel and Christian Maugee, 11-year-old Ft. Lauderdale twins who were diagnosed with this disease several years ago. "I see every party as an opportunity



Loretta and Larry Weiner turned their Super Bowl party into a fundraiser for twins Isabel and Christian Maugee, who were diagnosed with Friedreich's Ataxia. (l to r) Back: Larry Weiner, Isaac Weiner, Loretta Weiner, Jake Weiner, Eric Maugee, Stephane Maugee and Caroline Maugee. Front: Isabel and Christian Maugee.

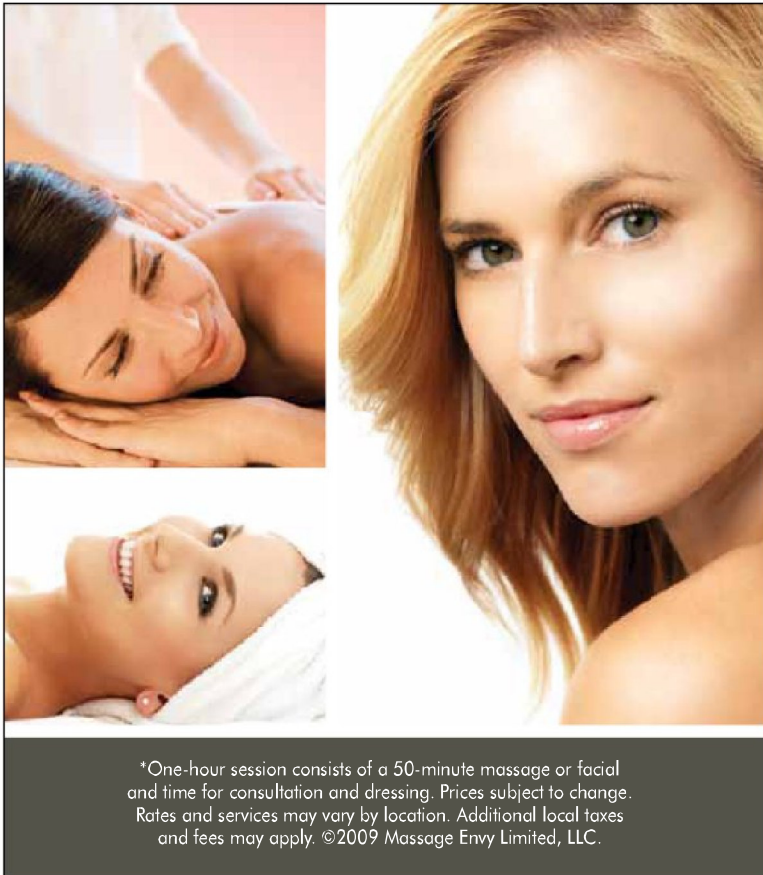
to take back ground that the enemy has tried to steal," said Loretta Weiner. "So many good people coming together for a common goal is a very powerful thing. We were already having a party so why not use this event to raise funds to help families like the Maugees."

For the Maugee family, their lives changed when the twins entered third grade. Isabel was taken to a neurologist because she began to have difficulty walking and was falling often. She was also getting tired at school and taking longer to finish school work because of fatigue in her hands. The neurologist recommended a genetic blood test which showed she had FA. Christian has also been diagnosed with FA however, shows no signs of the disorder. Unfortunately, like many diseases, there is no cure yet and the disorder affects 1 in 50,000 people.

The party raised approximately \$25,000 for FARA. Many guests gave more than the suggested \$25 per person entrance fee. Several activities at the party also helped

raise additional funds. There were free raffles during commercials for a variety of Steelers and Packers items. There was also a silent auction which included a signed Dan Marino ball (which sold for \$800), a signed and cased Stephenson ball, Al Harris memorabilia, and an official Super Bowl program. In addition, a sports memorabilia dealer displayed his wares on the grand dining room table and ten percent of the proceeds went to FARA.

For information, visit www.curefa.org or call 484-875-3015.



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