

Dinner under stars supports Stroke Recovery Center

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Stroke Recovery Center board members Lee Appel, Elva French-Casey, Marilyn Hirshleifer, Julie Rogers and CEO Beverly Greer

MURRAY ROSS/SPECIAL TO THE DESERT SUN

Location, location.

It was another stroke of genius for Stroke Center Auxiliary president, treasurer and event chairwoman Elva French-Casey. She managed to acquire the home of Allan and Henry Lamb for an evening of cocktails and dinner under the stars.

The auxiliary's fundraisers support the Stroke Recovery Center, with all expenses underwritten by supporters.

The 70 guests began the evening around the pool enjoying conversation, cocktails and music by Delgado and knowing the event would earn \$5,000 for the stroke center.

After dusk, guests were seated at tables lit by a multitude of candles to enjoy a prime rib and chicken marsala by Leon's of the Desert.

Board member Lee Appel praised French-Casey for her efforts, while center CEO Beverly Greer thanked supporters by drawing raffle prizes.

Director of development James Martinez greeted guests at the door, assisted by high school senior Turner Anderson. Anderson's sisters, Bryn and KC eagerly sold raffle tickets. The triplets have been volunteering at the center since they were freshman.

"We help out in the kitchen or wherever we are needed," Turner said. "Everyone is so friendly."

Former Palm Springs Follies dancer Shirley Claire has seen both sides of the stroke center. After serving as a board member and volunteer, Claire had a stroke six weeks ago and now spends five days a week at the center for therapy.

"I'm now reaping all the benefits and getting muscles back in my arms," she said. "There is no other thing like this center in the entire U.S. Every single penny from fundraisers goes into the client's fund. The auxiliary absorbs the overhead.

Board member Lee Appel, accompanied by Richard Victor, said she became a volunteer because her friend, the late Ann Angel, said it was a good place to volunteer.

"So I've been there eight years and have never had a raise," she joked. "The clients really appreciate the volunteers."

A Harley riding professional entertainer, Rocky Randall said she just walked into the center one day and started working -- doing shows to raise money, calling Bingo, or playing cards with the clients. "There's so much love here. I miss it when I'm out of town," she said. "Stroke can hit anyone, 20 to 90s."

Rhea Foley, who has volunteered at the center's thrift shop, has worked there two days a week for the last eight years. "It's fun -- the atmosphere is so up."

Marilyn Hirshleifer, widow of the center's founder, Dr. Irving Hirshleifer, was also in attendance, as were volunteers Joe Kirshenbaum, Virginia Allen and Hazel Spring.

Stroke Recovery Center

Where: 2800 E. Alejo Road, Palm Springs

Upcoming events:

* Oct. 26: Gallery and cocktail reception at Adagio Galleries

* Nov. 27: 32nd annual Winter Wonderland Ball at Westin Mission Hills

Information: James Martinez at (760) 323-7676, Ext. 112, or www.strokerecoverycenter.org