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CHARITY

Le Bal Masque event to benefit Road to Success

BY NANCY MCCARTHY
YourNews contributor

STUART — United for Families' Le Bal Masque provides an opportunity, for those with wanderlust to experience the flavor of exotic locales, if only for an evening. Last year, guests became immersed in the culture and cuisine of the Parthenon in Greece and this year, on March 2, 2013, at Mariner Sands Country Club, guests will be transported to the Black Forest of Germany. But behind the masks, beyond the thematic décor, and the cultured entertainment, there is a bigger purpose to the evening.

United for Families is a nonprofit organization that positively impacts the lives of virtually every known abused or neglected child in Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin and Okeechobee counties. The organization, which oversees the local child welfare system throughout the multi-county area, ensures that critical services such as foster care, adoptions and protective services are available.

The ultimate goal of United for Families is to break the cycle of child



Submitted to TCPalm.com/yournews

Sponsors for the 2012 Le Bal Masque stand in front of the ruins of ancient Greece. In back (from left) are Carissa Zerga and Tom Wilkerson, from Seacoast Bank; Fred Rieger, from Diamonds by Terry; Amber Gilbert, of Entertainment Connections; Karin Torsiello, of Behavior Basics/Secrets to Modern Parenting; Joann Prisco, from Family Preservation Services; and Ling Li. In front are Penny Morin, of Seacoast; Stacy Ranieri, from Firefly Group; Terry Rieger, of Diamonds by Terry; Brenda Woolston, of En Vogue Entertainment; Jessica VanValkenberg, from Tiktin Law Group; Dr. Takashi Koyama, of Florida Institute of OMS; Leslie Kroeger, from Leopold Law PA.

abuse through a diverse network of community partners and innovative services. While United for Families receives a portion of its funding through state and federal sources, the Le Bal Masque fundraiser provides an opportunity to raise funds for underfunded, critical programs,

such as their Road to Success Program.

Road to Success prepares teenagers for life outside the foster-care system by teaching independent-living skills such as financial planning and budgeting. Thanks to the Road to Success program, more teens are graduating high school

and pursuing college educations, while fewer are getting into trouble with the law or experiencing homelessness.

"Our company has worked with children in foster care throughout the state, and I am impressed with the innovation of United for Families' Road to Success Program," said Karin Torsiello, owner of Behavior Basics and Advantage Behavioral Group, one of the main sponsors of the event. "They grasp the unmet needs of these young adults who age out of the foster care system, and they work really hard to make sure they have the education, training and support they need to be successful."

Torsiello has worked with United for Families and has supported Le Bal Masque for many years. "United for Families fills a hole in these young men and women's lives and has become the family they don't have. The staff at United for Families take that job very seriously."

The event is coordinated by a volunteer committee; many of whom are also sponsors, including several volunteers from Seacoast

Bank. "We get involved in the community not only by donating funds to these events, but also by donating our time and really connecting with these worthwhile causes," said Penny Morin, branch manager at Seacoast National Bank and Le Bal Masque event chair.

Presale tickets for Le Bal Masque are \$100 each or \$700 for a table of eight until Jan. 15. The price after Jan. 15 is \$125 per ticket or \$875 for a table of eight.

Sponsors of Le Bal Masque include Seacoast National Bank, The Secrets of Modern Parenting/Behavior Basics, Jane's Dance Boutique, En Vogue Event Planning, Leopold Law, ComSquared and Cloudspace.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit <http://www.uff.us>

United for Families Le Bal Masque:

Saturday, March 2, 2013, 6:30 p.m.

Mariner Sands Country Club

6500 SE Mariner Sands Dr

Stuart, FL 34997-8723

Tickets: \$100 each or \$700 for a table of 8 before Jan. 15. Tickets are \$125 or \$875 after Jan. 15.