

Sun-Sentinel

{ Community }

July 4, 2010

'Stars' get the red carpet treatment



Enjoying the recent JJCCF Star event are, from left, Magali Salazar, Cara Dennis, and Cindy and Wayne Eisen.

Submitted photo

By Julie Levin

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

There was a different type of red carpet event in town recently. The spotlight wasn't on celebrities, but rather on those who give of themselves to help children fighting cancer.

"It was our chance to make everyone there feel like a star," said **Sandra Muvdi**, founder and president of the Jessica June Children's Cancer Foundation.

The Fort Lauderdale-based nonprofit recently had its JJCCF Star event to recognize contributors, volunteers, in-kind donors, pediatric hospitals and social workers who help them complete their mission. The event, which drew about 80 guests, was staged at The Wasie Villa in Fort Lauderdale.

Created in 2004, the foun-

datation provides financial assistance for underprivileged children fighting cancer. Families who qualify receive assistance to be used on the basic necessities of life, such as rent, groceries, utilities and more.

"[Parents] are hoping to help their child with cancer, and their world is just upside down," Muvdi said.

Her inspiration came from her child, **Jessica June Eiler Muvdi**, who died of leukemia in 2003 at age 7. In her honor, the foundation now helps between 40 and 50 children and their families a year.

Each December, officials visit local organizations to thank them for their philanthropy. But the recent Star event was the first time the foundation honored individual donors and volunteers.

"We would be lost without them," Muvdi said.

Also getting the red carpet treatment were four families whose dire financial straits led them into the foundation's advocacy program. Under that program, the foundation helps raise additional funds for struggling families through media partnerships, charities and special events. Not only did the foundation present the four families with additional financial assistance totaling \$23,000, but they gave them a ride to the event in a stretch limousine.

"We made them feel like superstars," Muvdi said.

The foundation is always looking for new volunteers. "There is an incredible amount of need in our community that people just are not aware of," Muvdi said.

For more information, visit www.jjccf.org or call 954-593-5603.