

People & Places

Fundraiser helps kids with cancer

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Without assistance from the Jessica June Children's Cancer Foundation, **Angel Nazario's** family would face even tougher times. The 5-year-old and his family are already facing plenty of challenges because Angel is fighting brain cancer, but figuring out how to pay rent, electricity and water bills and groceries is one less thing they have to worry about.

They were helped by the foundation's emergency financial assistance program. The foundation recently staged its fourth annual Fancy Jeans Party at the Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six in Fort Lauderdale. Angel was the event's honoree.

The event raised \$160,000 for the emergency assistance program, which helps children fighting cancer and their families with financial support for necessities such as food, shelter and medical treatments, said **Sandra Muvdi**, the foundation's founder and president.

"They are helpful, a lot of support when someone needs help with basic rent and light bills," said **Yanixa Nazario**, Angel's mother, who had to stop working and was pregnant. "They helped me a lot."

The event featured live entertainment, a best dressed contest, a silent auction and more.

"It's a direct benefit to help the local South Florida children with cancer and their families who are struggling," said **Jen Klaassens**, vice president of pro-



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At the recent Fancy Jeans Party are Sandra Muvdi, left, founder and president of the Jessica June Children's Cancer Foundation, and Jen Klaassens, vice president of programs for the Wasie Foundation.

grams for the Wasie Foundation, which sponsored the event.

Through the Jessica June foundation, Angel also was recently able to meet his idol, Miami rapper **Pitbull**.

"Everywhere he hears the music, he goes crazy," Yanixa Nazario said. "He's up late just talking about him."

Angel finished his last chemotherapy treatment in November and continues to battle the brain tumor, and he must get MRIs every three months, she said. He is being treated by Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood.

Muvdi established the foundation after her daughter, **Jessica June Eiler Muvdi**, died of leukemia in 2003 at age 7.

The foundation relies heavily on volunteers and donations and stages four fundraisers a year, Muvdi said.

"The good thing about the event is in addition to raising a nice amount of funds, it also makes people become aware of the foundation and what we do," Muvdi said. "... There is a really great need for the funds we raise; there is no other nonprofit that raises money for emergency funds in the tri-county area. Oftentimes, we are alone in trying to serve this population and what the family goes through after having their child diagnosed with cancer."

For more information, visit Jjccf.org or call 954-744-6535.