

Fancy Jeans helps kids with cancer

BY KAREN A. DIAZ
STAFF WRITER

For the Jessica June Children's Cancer Foundation Fancy Jeans Cocktail Party, raffle ticket holders in designer denim came out for a chance to win lavish prizes and raise money for underprivileged children with cancer.

More than 150 people gathered at Blue Martini in Fort Lauderdale and raised \$18,000 through raffles and auctions.

"We decided to turn the drawing into a social event," said Sandra Muvdi, who founded the Fort Lauderdale-based organization in honor of her daughter **Jessica June**, who died from leukemia in 2003.

"We invited everyone who bought a \$20 raffle ticket," she said.

On a trip to her native country, Muvdi got Avianca Airlines to donate two, round trip tickets from Miami to Cartagena, Colombia. Hotel Sofitel Santa Clara, a convent turned luxury hotel in the heart of Cartagena, donated a four-night stay.

The foundation's volunteers were also honored at the event.

Chris Garvin of UBS Financial in Fort Lauderdale received a plaque for selling the most raffle tickets.

Allison Silitsky, a first-grader at Virginia Shuman Young Elementary, is the youngest volunteer, who also sold the

winning raffle ticket.

She also received a plaque.

The event was special for Coral Springs residents **Teresa Hugo** and her daughter **Catherine**, 6, who drew the winning ticket for **Jennifer Gottlieb**.

Catherine's leukemia is in remission.

Hugo said that families like hers sometimes fall through the cracks of larger cancer organizations.

"When you go to some of these [cancer] societies they give you all this information, but my light was about to be turned off, could they help with that?"

Hugo is a single mother who lost her job and car to be by her daughter's side while in the hospital.

"It was hard getting by and paying the bills," Hugo said.

"It's nice to know someone cared. Because of her daughter, we were helped and if Catherine could help in any way. I didn't know such wonderful people [like Muvdi] existed."

Muvdi said she has set out to help cancer families in every way possible.

"There is not a lot of help out there for patients and families of underprivileged children with cancer struggling financially to make ends meet. JJCCF helps relieve their financial stress whether it be paying their outstanding rent, utilities or medical bills.



SOCIAL EVENT: Back row, left to right, Teresa Hugo, Sandra Muvdi, Melissa Robinson; front, cancer patients Catherine Hugo, left, and Jordan Robinson. Photo courtesy of Sandra Muvdi

"Families go through enough emotional anguish having to cope with having a child suffering with cancer, and additionally they have financial stress," Muvdi said.

For sponsorship opportunities for the upcoming Fancy Jeans Cocktail Party, call 954-593 5603 or email Sandra@jjccf.org.

JJCCF is an IRS approved 501(c)3 public charity.

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