



Living Without Limits Foundation launch exceeds target

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The Living Without Limits Foundation not-for-profit children's charity, founded by a trio of noted Adelaide business identities, launched this week at the National Wine Centre.

Living Without Limits was recently founded by Phillip de Pinto of Universal Motor Auctions, Maras Group Managing Director, Steve Maras and BDO Adelaide partner, George Yatzis. It was created to raise funds for very specific purposes in relation to Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Juvenile Diabetes and Epilepsy – to fund critical research, support various children's organisations, assist in developmental practices and purchase all-important equipment.

Steve Maras says upon arrival, guests were treated to pre-dinner drinks and delicious canapés and were entertained by local smooth crooner, Heath Gambarotoo. Guests were also photographed by local photographer, Karen Roberts, on the Living Without Limits media wall.

He says MC Belinda Heggen was outstanding in her role. The Foundation was launched by SA Liberal Leader, Steven Marshall, who praised the founders' efforts for their great vision and benevolence.

Guests heard moving speeches from Chairman Phillip de Pinto and Vice Chairman Steve Maras and other heartfelt addresses followed - Jason Valentine from the Board of Treetops Special School for Autistic Children, Eszter Agocs of Future Footprints Conductive Education at Prospect, and Antigoni and Olga Tavlaridis, two young sisters who spoke about their lifelong struggle with Juvenile Diabetes.

Special videos relating to the impacts of Autism and Cerebral Palsy were played and certainly had the crowd well and truly captured.

Local band Lucifers Lounge entertained the packed house but the real star of the night was Mark Anthony, one of the world's best Elvis impersonators. Adelaide-born Anthony made a special trip home from Nashville, Tennessee, to perform at the event and he was a very popular choice. He performed after the main auction, appearing on the upper cantilevered balcony of the main auditorium and stunning the crowd with the Elvis classic, 'Burning Love'.

The spectacular main auction conducted by Phillip de Pinto made it clear the speeches and addresses before the main auction had a significant impact on all of the guests. Bidding on almost all of the main auction items was frenetic with guests trying feverishly to outbid one another. At night's close, Phillip announced an astounding \$86,000 had been raised on the night, well above the Foundation's initial expectations.

"We were absolutely stoked with the whole event, the fact that it had sold out in less than two weeks, the build-up to it, the line-up on the night and the generosity of those in attendance, which showed with the auction results. We sold all 17 main auction items and all 30 silent auction items. We cannot thank enough all of those who made the night such a resounding success," Phillip says.

He went on to inform the gathering that one of the primary objectives of the Foundation was to build or purchase a residence along the coast to provide a "place of respite" for the families, parents and siblings of children impaired in some capacity. "We want to give families, parents, a break, a chance to have some time away, something that thousands of people simply don't have the opportunity, or funds, to do so.

Maras Group MD and Vice Chairman of the Foundation, Steve Maras, paid particular tribute to Chairman, Phillip de Pinto : "Phillip has been truly inspirational, relentless, steadfast, persistent and uncompromising in his quest to build this Foundation. He is the driving force behind Living Without Limits and with Phil at the helm, the Foundation has a huge future. It is an absolute honour to be part of this magnificent organisation."

Maras also paid special thanks to Caitlin Johns of Maras Group for her tremendous efforts in organisation and coordinating the historic event.

Living Without Limits has several more fundraising projects in the pipeline and will announce them shortly.

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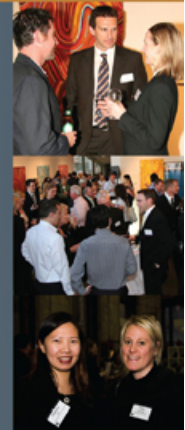
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