



## **Casa de Esperanza's Annual Gala raises over \$1 million to help children and families in crisis.**

HOUSTON, TX, May 5, 2019 — The Casa de Esperanza 2019 Building Hope for Children Gala raised \$1 Million to support their organization's efforts to break the cycle of child abuse and neglect for at-risk infants, children and their families.

A festive 600 guests gathered on May 5 at The Hobby Center dressed in their fun "fiesta casual" attire and enjoyed music with a Latin flair by Moodafuruka, a brightly themed photo booth, and delicious food by Churrasco's. Event co-chairs: Lynne and Mike Morris, Daniel Morris, Kelley and Matthew Morris, and Katie and Patrick Morris; along with Corporate co-chairs Mary D. Bass and Meg Gentle. The DeShon Family and Churrascos Restaurants continued their tradition of hosting the event to benefit the children of Casa de Esperanza.

Casa de Esperanza has been serving the needs of children in crisis from the greater Houston area for the past 37 years. The State of Texas, and Harris County in particular, has among the highest rates of childhood risk factors in the nation – infant homicide, infant mortality, infants prenatally exposed to drugs, infants born to mothers who were HIV-positive or at risk, low-birth weight infants and child and family homelessness. Monies raised from the evening's events directly support the programs provided by Casa de Esperanza to care for the children. Casa de Esperanza does not charge fees for any services and does not receive government funding.

Shelley Starr, Executive Director of Casa de Esperanza, welcomed the gala attendees and presented awards to the 2019 honorees. Co-chairs Lynne and Mike Morris shared personal stories of their involvement at Casa de Esperanza. They thanked the generous donors and many friends for supporting the mission of Casa de Esperanza. Baylor College of Medicine, under the direction of Claire Bassett, produced the evening's sentimental video featuring Emily Foster who was adopted through Casa de Esperanza nearly 30 years ago. Foster and Colleen McLaughlin, a Casa de Esperanza adoptive parent, touched the hearts of the audience with their personal stories and journey with Casa de Esperanza, and kicked off the evenings "Paddles Up."

The live auction was equally as thrilling with items such as vacations to: Scotland, Telluride, Sonoma, and Las Vegas. There were experience packages such as: Lunch with Houston Rockets Legends and Chef Chris Shepherd and Chef de Cuisine Nick Wong at UB Preserv, original artwork by Houston artist GONZO247, Club level seats to Game 4 of the Houston Rockets Playoff game, Dinner with chef Paul Miller, and more.

Tom Koch of ABC13 News and Casa de Esperanza Advisory Board Member served as the evening's emcee.

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### **Event 2019 Honorees:**

Marsha and Sam Dodson: Spirit of Hope Award

Prelude Music Foundation: Volunteer Group of the Year

Arza Funk: Community Volunteer of the Year

Brian Gendron: Young Professional Volunteer of the Year

Seen in the crowd to support the mission of Casa de Esperanza: Mary and Mike Espinosa, Katie and Patrick Hwu, Rickie Prichard and Joe Davis, Karen and Hank Dixon, Flo McGee, Wade Upton, Mary and Ron Neal, Barb and Dan Molinaro, Richard Morris, Julie and Stephen Chen.

**About Casa de Esperanza**

Casa de Esperanza de los Ninos strives to break the cycle of child abuse and neglect for at-risk infants, children and their families, by providing comprehensive residential and aftercare programs that transform people and communities.

For more information, contact: Shelley Starr 713-529-0639.

[www.casahope.org](http://www.casahope.org)

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