



Big Sisters
of Rhode Island

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NEWEST MEMBERS OF BIG SISTERS OF RHODE ISLAND'S "MAGICAL CIRCLE" HONORED AT 2nd ABRACADABRA BALL

CRANSTON, R.I., -- On Saturday, March 21, 2009, 250 guests honored the five newest members of Big Sisters of Rhode Island's "Magical Circle" at its Abracadabra Ball. The women were honored for both their personal achievements and their work performed on behalf of the community. The five newest members of the "Magical Circle" include:

- Kimball Hall: Vice President of Rhode Island Operations for Amgen, Inc.
- Beverly Ledbetter: Vice President and General Counsel for Brown University
- Kati Machtley: Chair/Director of the Women's Summit at Bryant University
- Anne Szostak: President and Chief Executive Officer of Szostak Partners, LLC
- O. Rogeriee Thompson: Associate Justice for the Rhode Island Superior Court

The second gala for Big Sisters was held at the Westin Hotel in downtown Providence and NBC10's Gene Valicenti served as the Master of Ceremonies for the magical event. Cheryl Snead, President and Chief Executive Officer of Banneker Industries, Inc., and Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth H. Roberts, two founding members of Big Sisters "Magical Circle", served as the honorary co-chairs.

The black-tie-optional event was kicked off with cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and a silent auction. Guests were then welcomed into the Narragansett Ballroom where the event continued with dinner, dessert and a program filled with touching stories and magical surprises.

Former Little Sister Gwen Andrade shared her story with the audience. At six-years-old, she was matched with Trudy DeCanio, a Rhode Island School of Design student. Gwen went on to graduate from Rhode Island College with a Bachelor's degree in Management. Her diverse career includes service as Director of Public Policy for the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and 15 years of Human Resource Management. In 2003, Gwen became the first former Little Sister in the agency's history to join the board of directors. Today, Gwen is a proud mother of two wonderful children and her friendship with Trudy continues 41 years later with many visits between Providence and Philadelphia, where Trudy lives.

A live auction led by professional auctioneer June DeLair followed Gwen Andrade's touching speech. The guests also enjoyed a thrilling performance by America's premier female illusionist, Lyn Dillies and danced the remainder of the night to the sounds of John Allmark's East Side Horns.

"This was an incredible event because of our "Magical Circle" honorees, the entertainment and Gwen Andrade's heartfelt story that underscores the significant impact our mentoring programs have and will continue to have on the lives of at-risk girls in Rhode Island," said Mary Capobianco, Big Sisters Executive Director.

Big Sisters of Rhode Island raised \$45,000 from the Abracadabra Ball. The money will allow the statewide agency to continue to mentor at-risk girls throughout Rhode Island. Some of the event's generous sponsors included Amgen, Amica, Bank of America, Bryant University, GTECH, MetLife, Astro of New England, CVS Caremark, Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP, Dr. Dorothy Pieniadz, Washington Trust Company and NBC10.

Founded in 1967, Big Sisters of Rhode Island is the state's only mentoring program exclusively for girls. The agency matches caring women with girls between the ages of 7 to 15 in one-on-one mentoring friendships. It also operates school-based mentoring, pairing high-school girls with younger girls, and offers Life Choices workshops to groups of girls in elementary or middle school. For more information about Big Sisters'

programs or to volunteer as a Big Sister mentor, go to www.bigsistersri.org or call 921-2434.

The mentoring agency established the Big Sisters Donation Center in 1997 to augment the agency's fundraising income. The Donation Center sells clothing and other items of cloth by weight to the local Savers thrift stores. For more information about the Big Sisters Donation Center go to www.bigsistersri.org and click "Donation Center," or call 921-2434.

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