

## Party With A Purpose

# Two Friends, One Mission

Chairing a fundraiser is a full-time job. Ask anyone who's volunteered on a publicity or silent-auction committee thinking a few hours here and there would get the job done. Each month, we tip our cap to those who make it all happen.

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By Tiffany Figueiredo

pro bono project turned into a passion for Kristin Wallach and Amy Yanez, co-chairs of this month's Party on the Patio, a casual yet festive annual fundraiser at Joe T. Garcia's outdoor gardens. The event benefits Child Study Center Foundation, and it also kicks off the spring party season.

The two friends, who along with their husbands, Allen Wallach and Andrew Yanez, run Concussion advertising and marketing company in Fort Worth, were introduced to Child Study Center when the firm was approached about donating design services for printed materials and a Web site. Digging a little deeper, the couples learned about Child Study Center's mission and became more involved, with Andrew eventually joining the board of directors and Kristen and Amy co-chairing the party's silent auction last year.

"We had to be involved," Amy Yanez says. "We just love the staff at the center. They're so amazing, and we believe so strongly in their purpose. What they're doing is life-changing for so many Fort Worth families."

Child Study Center diagnoses and treats children who are at risk for or have been diagnosed with developmental disabilities and behavioral and emotional problems. The center's services include initial evaluation, family counseling, follow-up care for graduates of neonatal intensive-care units and behavioral therapy for children on the autism spectrum. The center, located near downtown, also houses the private Jane Justin School for children with special needs, making it the only facility of its kind in the Metroplex.

The party, to be held rain or shine, raised more than \$480,000 last year and features dinner and silent and live auctions. Proceeds provide scholarships and financial assistance to families involved with the center.

Anjanette Woody's 9-year-old daughter, Dakota, has Asperger's Disorder and has attended the Jane Justin School for almost five years. Woody says that without a scholarship, her family would not be able to send Dakota to such a specialized school.

"Dakota has several medical issues that we have been dealing with since she was a toddler," Woody says. "She sees a pediatrician, a neurologist and a psychiatrist, and has been hospitalized. Our medical bills alone are unbelievable, so affording a school like this, because Dakota cannot function in a public school, would be out of our range. I hate to think about her not being there."

Raising a special-needs child can be physically and emotionally exhausting and can take a toll on a family, Woody says. But, she adds, the support of the staff at Child Study Center has made a difference to her family. "They all work together as a team and have us working together as a team at home," she says. "Just knowing that Dakota is somewhere safe and protected each day and learning makes a huge difference in our lives."

"We have heard so many success stories since we've been involved, which is why our hearts are really in this," says Kristin Wallach. "It's a fun party, a fun way to spend a Sunday evening, but is truly an important cause."



Friends and co-workers Amy Yanez, left, and Kristin Wallach also are sisters-in-arms when it comes to the Child Study Center.

Photo by Robert Hart

**Party on the Patio**  
Benefiting Child Study Center  
5-9 p.m. April 19, at Joe T. Garcia's  
2201 N. Commerce St., Fort Worth  
For tickets and more information, call  
817-390-2804 or go to [www.cscfw.org](http://www.cscfw.org).