

DRI holds 31st annual Empire Ball: Raises \$1.2 million for diabetes research

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New York, NY The Real Estate Division of the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation hosted the 31st annual Empire Ball at the Grand Hyatt on December 10th, 2014. The fundraiser, supported by the New York real estate community and its affiliates, drew nearly 1,000 guests and raised more than \$1.2 million in support of the Diabetes Research Institute (DRI).

A lavish cocktail reception that filled the hotel's ground floor was followed by dinner in the Empire State ballroom. Empire Ball chairman Peter DiCapua, chairman of CodeGreen Solutions, kicked off the program by thanking those in attendance for their tremendous support. According to DiCapua, close to \$34 million has been raised for diabetes research over the event's 31-year history. He singled out for acclaim Charlie Rizzo, principal of The Rizzo Group, a longtime friend and the man who brought the Empire Ball to fruition in 1983, when his own daughter was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes.

DiCapua then introduced the evening's master of ceremonies, CBS2News chief weathercaster Lonnie Quinn. Quinn discussed the groundbreaking work at the DRI and thanked the evening's Grand Patron sponsor, Hudson Yards, a Related Oxford venture.

Quinn introduced DRI Foundation president and CEO Joshua Rednik. Rednik then introduced the DRI's director, Dr. Camillo Ricordi, who cited soaring statistics associated with diabetes. There are more than 382 million people worldwide with diabetes and hundreds of millions more projected to contract the disease. Every seven seconds, one person dies from complications of diabetes. A biological cure is needed and the DRI could be the best hope for one.

Following Dr. Ricordi's remarks, a video was screened of the tour of the DRI taken by the events' honorees, who remarked how powerful the experience was meeting the researchers and seeing, in person, the laboratories where the research is performed. Clinical trials are now underway at the DRI, bringing us one step closer to a cure.

After the video, the evening's honorees received their well-deserved recognition. Following longstanding tradition, last year's honorees presented awards to their counterparts. Frederick Horwood, assistant general counsel of Time Warner, Inc., was presented the Distinguished Service award by Joe "Dee" Dussich, CEO and president of JAD Corporation of America. Stephen Soviero, senior managing director of Cushman & Wakefield, Inc., received the Camillo Ricordi Humanitarian award from Jay Badame, president and COO of NY/NJ/PA Tishman Construction, an AECOM Company. Finally, the 2014 Leadership award was presented to Jay Cross, president, Hudson Yards, a Related Oxford venture by Andrew Cooke, vice president property management with Hines and Morgan Stanley.

Each of the honorees expressed their gratitude for their respective awards and lauded the work of the DRI. Of note, Steve Soviero brought a hush to the room by expressing with heartfelt emotion the toll that diabetes has taken on his own family.

DiCapua closed the program by encouraging everyone to make a difference through their continued support of the Diabetes Research Institute. Following dinner, the guests danced the night away to the incredible sounds of The Jay Prince Band.