



INVITED NYC



Group holding up blue bracelets that lit up when money was donated

DREAMS in the City 2017

MAY 08, 2017

On Thursday, May 5th, the Diabetes Research Institute held the DREAMS in the City gala at the astounding Cipriani 25 Broadway. The goal of the DREAMS in the City gala is to bring people together to raise funds for research to help find a biological cure for diabetes. Guests were able to place bids on items, or simply make donations of however much they pleased. After tasty appetizers and a few rounds of drinks, attendees were welcomed to their tables by the Master of Ceremonies, Chris Wragge, Co-Anchor of CBS 2 News This Morning and CBS 2 News at Noon. Chris introduced the event co-chair Samantha Shanken Baker, who recognized the significance of the event, which had raised millions of dollars in the search for a diabetes cure. She fondly acknowledged the work and dedication of her co-chair colleagues Bonnie Inserra, Meryl Lieberman, Susan Weiner and Young Professionals' Chair Lindsey-Inserra Hughes.



DREAMS in the City Co-Chairs (from left) Susan Weiner, Samantha Shanken Baker, Bonnie Inserra, Young Professionals' Chair Lindsey-Inserra Hughes and Meryl Lieberman



Tariq Trotter and Chris Wragge at DREAMS in the City 2017

DRI immunologist Dr. Allison Bayer, this year's proud recipient of the Marc. S. Goodman Prize for Outstanding Young Scientists, spoke about her work. The DRI has pioneered a technology known as islet transplantation, a procedure that replaces insulin-producing cells to normalize blood sugars. The DRI has had great success in getting people off daily insulin injections; some for more than 10 years. The need for life-long use of powerful anti-rejection drugs has limited those who can participate to the most severe cases. Now, the DRI is doing everything possible to eliminate these drugs, re-educate the immune system and offer cell replacement to all who can benefit.

Next to the stage was DRI Foundation President and CEO Joshua Rednik to introduce this year's Dare to Dream Award recipients, The Besner Family, Greg, Leslie, Willa and Lana Besner from the Willa's Wish Foundation. Willa Besner, now 15 years old, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at age four.

Ever since, she and her family have been committed to finding a cure. They put together a heart-warming movie that brought attention to the struggles a person with type 1 diabetes deals with on a daily basis and inspired hope for a cure. The audience had tears in their eyes by the end, when Willa told the audience she had hope that one day she would be able to identify "no longer as type 1, but type none".



Joshua Rednik and Dare to Dream Award recipients (from left) Greg, Leslie, Willa and Lana Besner

Chris Wragge began the first donation period of the night, giving seven minutes for everyone to use the devices on their tables to donate a dollar amount of their choice. Each guest was given a bracelet, and when donations were made, they would put the glowing bracelets on. In just seven minutes, the room was filled with glowing wrists and the screen displayed over one hundred thousand dollars' worth of donations. The energy was incredible.



Kids with type 1 diabetes surprise the crowd and inspirational sing to hundreds during DREAMS in the City

After the program, guests enjoyed a delicious dinner followed by dancing to a fantastic live performance by The Jay Prince Band. Guests were also welcomed to a dessert bar. It was a beautiful night filled with inspired people and hopeful vibes.

Although DREAMS in the City is a lovely event, hopefully one day it will not be necessary to raise money for a cure, because the cure will have been found.

For more information on the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation please visit www.DiabetesResearch.org or call 1-800-321-3437.

Special thanks to Nicole T. Lesson from the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation.