

New York City's real estate industry celebrates 30th anniversary of annual Empire Ball



New York, NY The Real Estate Division of the Diabetes Research Institute will host the 30th anniversary of its Empire Ball at the Grand Hyatt on Wednesday, December 11th. The annual fundraiser, supported by the New York Real Estate community and its affiliates, aims to raise \$1.4 million in support of the Diabetes Research Institute (DRI), located at the University of Miami's Miller School of Medicine. The DRI is currently developing the DRI BioHub, an integrated "mini organ" that mimics the native pancreas, which scientists around the world believe could be the secret to unlocking the [cure for diabetes](#)👉.

This year's Empire Ball honors Andrew Cooke, vice president of property management at Hines, the international real estate firm. Cooke, who will be presented with the Leadership Award, has been managing and leading real estate property and facility management teams for more than two decades, and is responsible for 60 Americas locations and 8 million s/f for Morgan Stanley. He is being honored for his commitment to philanthropic efforts, as well as his leadership within the New York community and [commercial real estate](#)👉 industry, especially in the area of sustainability and energy efficiency.

"I am deeply honored to be recognized by such a notable group within the [real estate industry](#)👉 that's so dedicated and passionate about this important cause," said Cooke. "The researchers at DRI are working hard every day to find a cure for this terrible disease and I had the rare opportunity to visit the campus in Miami and witness firsthand how the new DRI BioHub platform has the potential to better the lives of millions of people around the world with a biological cure - within our own lifetime."



Jay Badame, president and chief operating officer of NY/NJ/PA for Tishman Construction, an AECOM Co., will receive the Camillo Ricordi Humanitarian Award for his dedication and advancement of the New York City skyline with a focus on sustainable design and construction. With more than 35 years of experience, Badame has overseen the construction of some of the region's most notable projects, including the rebuilding of the

World Trade Center, Carnegie Hall and One Bryant Park—the first Platinum LEED skyscraper in the U.S.



Finally, Joseph Dussich, chief executive officer and president of JAD Corp. of America, one of New York City Metro area's largest independently owned [janitorial](#), plastic and paper suppliers, will accept the Distinguished Service Award for his accomplishments in and contributions to New York City's commercial real estate industry and his support of local charities and initiatives, including the Empire Ball, of which he is a former Camillo Ricordi Humanitarian Award recipient and one of the founders.

Charles Rizzo, principal of The Rizzo Group, vice chair of the Empire Ball and member of its board of directors, initiated the event in 1983 with his close friend Peter DiCapua, chairman of the DRI [Real Estate](#) Division and former COO of New York City's ATCO.

"When I first learned of my daughter's diagnosis with [type 1 diabetes](#) 30 years ago, I was devastated but I quickly turned my fear and lack of knowledge into action with the support of my friends and colleagues within the real estate industry, including Peter who has been fighting this with me from the very beginning," said Mr. Rizzo. "Nothing would make me happier than to see my only daughter cured of this disease that plagues my family and millions of others around the world."

Since 1983, the New York [real estate](#) community and its affiliates have raised more than \$32 million for [diabetes](#) research. Mr. Rizzo and Mr. DiCapua, along with 10 other members, including this year's honoree Joseph Dussich, founded the event. For 15 years, the annual fundraiser was called the Pyramid Ball. In 1998, the event was renamed the Empire Ball and began supporting the DRI.

"There have been many advances in [diabetes](#) research since we started the event but the DRI is the only organization that is dedicated to finding a cure today - one that we wholeheartedly believe will be discovered in our lifetime. The continuous support of New York City's real estate community over the years has been overwhelming and we know it will be an important contributing factor to finding the cure," said DiCapua.

Over the past 30 years, the event, which draws more than 1,000 attendees each year, has become the New York City real estate industry's social and fundraising event of the season. Past honorees include: Alton Marshall, Former Secretary of State under Governor Rockefeller; Businessman William "Bill" Shea, for which Shea Stadium is named; Charles Urstadt; David Baldwin; Jody Durst; William Macklowe; Gerald Schein; Lizanne Gaibreath; Edward S. Gordon; John Catsimatidis; Ted Moudis; Frank Sciame; Jason D. Pizer, and Michele Medaglia - all heads of corporations and leaders in their respective industries.

Tickets to the event are now available for purchase. The black-tie affair will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Grand Hyatt (109 East 42nd Street) in New York City with a cocktail reception, followed by

dinner and dancing. For more information on tickets, advertising opportunities and other ways to support DRI, please visit: <https://www.diabetesresearch.org/Empire-Ball-2013>.

To follow the DRI and NY [Real Estate](#)  Division of the DRI on social media, visit:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/NY-Real-Estate-Division-of-Diabetes-Research-Institute> and <https://www.facebook.com/DiabetesResearchInstitute>

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