

A GALA TO REMEMBER

The Clarendon Hills Chapter of the Infant Welfare Society of Chicago Bring Their Annual Benefit Back to the Westin

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Clarendon Hills resident Casselyn Tertell loves living life as a wife, a mother, and an accomplished real estate broker. And yes, she most certainly knows how lucky she is to live such a life.

"To be honest, we're all very fortunate to live in a place where we don't have to worry about taking our children to the doctor if they're sick," Tertell tells *Hinsdale Living*. "Sometimes, it's important to remind people that outside of our little bubble is a whole other world not far from us that could use our help."

It's this realization that propelled Tertell and fellow CHIW member Kafi Matusiewicz, who is also a fulltime working wife and mother, to take on the demanding role of Co-Chairs of the 2025 Annual Light Up the Night Benefit, taking place on February 1st at The Westin Lombard. Having raised over \$340,000 last year, the annual event shines a spotlight on the financial needs of the Angel Harvey Family Health Center, which 'offers healthcare services and education to medically underserved and vulnerable Chicagoans.'

"I really feel this (event) is an opportunity for the entire town to come together," explains Matusiewicz. "It's an extremely important cause that is really near and dear to all of our hearts."

Featuring keynote speaker Heidi Ortolaza-Alvear, the IWS Chief Executive Officer, this year's event will feature a Masquerade Ball theme which is sure to bring out the creativity within each and every one of the night's attendees.

"It's up to the invitee to decide how far they want to go in terms of the theme, but our vision is that we want you to feel like you're stepping into a grand ball type of aesthetic," explains Matusiewicz of the event whose dance floor will be most certainly propelled by the sounds of a seven-piece orchestra. "We're focusing in on an elegant, luxurious style delivered via the use of dark colors such as burgundies and navy and black."

And while the theme of this year's much-anticipated event has changed from last year, the venue in which it will be held has not.

"The great part about doing it at the same place for a second time is we can take all of the learnings from last year, and adjust the event accordingly to be inline with our theme for this year," explains Tertell, who has been a vital member of the Clarendon

Hills IWS for the past two years.

Yet another much anticipated piece of the Gala always seems to be the live auction, which will once again be led by the always rousing personality of Dan Campbell from *Raising Paddles*. But upon walking into the event, attendees will most certainly notice a brand-new piece of the live auction festivities.

"This year, we are also doing something called Mystery Boxes which can be purchased with your Gala ticket," says Matusiewicz. "They will be a hundred dollars each and what is inside of them is a mystery, but there will definitely be some big-ticket items. They will all be worth their weight! When you arrive, you get to pick out your Mystery Box, but make sure you get them before they're gone, as they will likely sell out! (That is the hope!)"

Certainly, the logistics of putting on such a lavish event comes with its share of stresses for both Tertell and Matusiewicz, especially as both work full time and have little kids at home.

"It literally takes a village, and that village is Clarendon Hills," remarks Matusiewicz, who too has volunteered her time with the Clarendon Hills chapter of IWS for the past three years. "The group that is working with us on this event this year has been just absolutely incredible. We have an amazing group of women, several of them who are new this year. In fact, 40% of our membership is new, so that's why this year has been a big change."

But with changes comes new ideas, and that's something both Tertell and Matusiewicz are excited to welcome when it comes to this year's gala.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the impact that we can make," says Matusiewicz.

The act of volunteering is also something that both accomplished moms like to demonstrate to their children.

"They might not like when Mommy goes to meetings at night, as that means we can't have dinner with them or put them to bed," concludes Tertell and Matusiewicz. "But we explain to them, all the time, that Mommy's doing work for people who aren't as fortunate as we are. It's a message we know doesn't fully resonate with them at this age, but a message we know they are picking up, one little tidbit at a time."

Light Up the Night is February 1. For tickets and more information, visit clarendonhillsinfantwelfare.org.

Kafi Matusiewicz, wearing Brunello Cucinelli from Neiman Marcus and Amanda Ruback stand behind Casselyn Tertell and Marissa Cadorin in a Carolina Herrera dress from Neiman Marcus

