

TWO RIVER LIFESTYLES

TIGGER STAVOLA FOUNDATION MARKS DECADE MILESTONE WITH 'PHANTOM OF THE OPERA'-THEMED GALA

Community leaders and generous donors gather to remember a life lost too soon

STORY BY JENNIFER EGAN



Founders Rick, Lisa and Alex Stavola.



Honoree Mitch Ansell, Esq., Mary Ansell with First Lady of New Jersey Tammy Snyder Murphy.



Sen. Joe Kyrillos (Ret.), Susan Kyrillos and Monmouth County Commissioner Director Thomas A. Arnone.

RED BANK – Over 400 guests gathered at the Shadowbrook in Shrewsbury Nov. 3 to support the Tigger Stavola Foundation (TSF). The “Phantom of the Opera”-themed fundraising gala commemorated the 10-year passing of Richard “Tigger” Stavola Jr. in whose name the foundation has persevered to fight addiction, raise awareness and save lives.

The glamorous and celebratory event, which honored Monmouth County defense attorney Mitchell Ansell, featured a performance from the “Phantom” on Broadway, Craig Schulman, a remembrance ceremony and a silent auction. Generous donations signaled a strong commitment to combat substance use disorder, which afflicts many in the community. Funds raised will be directed to expanding TSF’s innovative drug education programming, which is gaining momentum at middle and high schools throughout Monmouth and Ocean counties.

Lisa Stavola, mother of Tigger, led off the evening by recounting the incredible journey of the foundation. She expressed heartfelt gratitude for the attendees, many of whom



Evarett and Joyce Cruz.

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The Knopf family.



Brian Reilly, Andrew Weber, Chuck Kron, Charlie Kron, Jason Cruz, Alex Stavola, Bart Henderson and David Cruz.



Jon Eckert, advisory board member, and Debbie Eckert.

have been donors since its inception. “Because of you, we are alleviating the pain of losing a child, one family at a time.”

Ansell spoke about the blessing of knowing and representing Tigger Stavola, who died at the age of 25 to accidental overdose. He commended Rick, Lisa and Alex Stavola for channeling their grief from an unimaginable tragedy into a foundation that is spreading awareness and saving lives through drug prevention and education. “I am committed to this organization because I know it will do whatever it can to fight this horrible, dreaded disease,” said Ansell. “It’s a war that I believe we can win with education, awareness and light.”

The foundation also took this opportunity to introduce the next phase of its drug prevention education – LED by Tigger, which was recently rolled out to five schools. This new platform is the first of its kind – delivering engaging content via text messaging to help teens make safe and informed choices.

Elected officials, several of whom attended the Infinity event, have thrown their support behind TSF programming as it helps fill the gap for parents and educators who are challenged without a nationally-funded drug education program. Monmouth County Commissioner Director Thomas A. Arnone, who attended the Infinity event and was instrumental in securing TSF a \$200,000 ARPA grant, said, “Funding the Tigger Stavola Foundation is an investment in our future generation. Please join us in our efforts to raise awareness and spread the message that the tragedy of overdose death is preventable.”

All involved in the foundation were thrilled with the success of the fundraiser and proud of the decade of work that keeps Tigger’s memory alive. “Tigger lives on in our hearts and helps us break through the barriers to change the stigma every day,” said Lisa Stavola.



Carol Stillwell, advisory board member, and Lisa Stavola.



Diane Bollerman, Gloria Van Biert, Nancy Cosgriff and Shannon Cosgriff.



Sara Velez, Bridget Beggans, Addie O’Beirne and Beth Stavola.