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Monday, February 8, 2010

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New Deal at the Health Center

By Rick Winterson

Please reserve Thursday evening, May 24. Come to the Plaza Ballroom in the Seaport Hotel for the Health Center's 2007 "Evening in Monte Carlo". This year, a casino has been added, with the theme "Bidding & Betting on Our Future".

For many years, some of the most elegant fundraisers in South Boston have been the "times" held to benefit the South Boston Community Health Center. This year, the 2007 "time" promises to exceed any prior events. It will take place in the Plaza Ballroom in the Seaport Hotel next Thursday evening, May 24, at 6 p.m.

As you have come to expect, the evening will begin with a complimentary cocktail party, a silent auction, and a buffet that typifies the fine food available at the Seaport Hotel. If you have gone the Health Center fundraisers in the past, you'll need no description: al dente gourmet pasta, seafood concoctions, viands led off by a huge steamship roast, and a host of finger foods. Enough said?

Between 7 and 8 p.m., there'll be a brief awards ceremony, followed by a live auction. Neil Fitzpatrick, who is chairing this year's Monte Carlo event, recently announced two award recipients.

NSTAR will receive the Leo Pistorino "Lifesaver" Award. NSTAR has been a Health Center supporter for many years. Last year, they set up a fund worth \$50,000 to pay the costs of a van to transport clients and patients to and from their South Boston homes and the South Boston Community Health Center.

(MARGARET: PLEASE REFRESH ME ON THE EXACT CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS AWARD, AND BARBARA LYNCH AND CHARLIE PETRIE. I WANT TO GET IT RIGHT.)

James Callahan, whose company, JCALPRO, does stage rigging and lighting, has been named the recipient of the 2007 "Heart of the Hero" Award. Callahan's good works are impossible to list briefly. As just one example, he recently set up a scholarship fund to assist young people in pursuing careers and education in the arts, which he has generously funded with contributions well into the five-figure range.

The live auction follows. Your auctioneer this year will be Dick Flavin. Sporting events one-of-a-kind experiences and marvelous vacation trips will be featured. One of the highlights of the evening will be the Grand Raffle where one lucky winner will walk

away with a trip for two to the French Riviera. Kate Fitzpatrick has generously donated the airfare for the trip, and accommodations are in Nice, France- so the winner can take their own side trip to the real Monte Carlo.

At 8 p.m., the casino begins. It will last until 11 p.m., so plan on spending an evening with Lady Luck. Close your eyes for a few moments and imagine a night in Monte Carlo. With the viaduct just outside the Plaza Ballroom windows and the lights of Boston, it shouldn't be too hard.

Available for your pleasure will be blackjack, roulette, and Texas hold 'em (the game everyone thinks they can play). You'll be among friends (yeah, right!), so bet away. The casino's theme is, "Bidding & Betting on Our Future".

In addition to spending the evening with Lady Luck, you'll be in the company of a few jokers, folks with a lot of hearts, and some well-known pairs. So what do you have against puns? Puns are good, clean fun.

There are going to be visits from celebrity dealers, who will advise you on your betting strategy (yeah, right!). Among them will be Chet Curtis, Jack Hart, Brian Wallace, Ed Merritt, Jim Rooney, and Jim Roosevelt.

By the way, even though this year's "time" stretches over an entire evening, the ticket price is still the same – \$100. You can't beat that with a stick. Call (617)464-7504 or 7505 for tickets.

The entire "Evening in Monte Carlo" depends on numerous sponsors and volunteers. Chief among them are Boston Freight Terminals – the International Cargo Center of New England, who's presenting the event, and Partners Healthcare, who is supporting the "time".