

Focus on Fundraising

Bon Appétit:

The World's Largest Dinner Party

by Eyal Goldshmid

October 14, 2006 marked the IFOPA's first-ever World's Largest Dinner Party. The IFOPA-sponsored event was created by FOP mother Hilary Weldon and her friend Marsha Meyer and was successful in raising funds and awareness for FOP and the IFOPA through a thematically arranged dinner party.

For the event, hosts from around the world each invited guests to a dinner party that used the intimate setting as a means to spread the word on FOP and raise money for the IFOPA and the upcoming Fourth

community center, a restaurant and the like.

"Parties included everything from a sit-down dinner, a picnic, an open house, an ice cream social, and many other themes," said Crawford.

To make the event easier to handle and ensure proper spreading of FOP awareness, the IFOPA sent dinner party hosts helpful items including party invitations, napkins, stadium cups, pens and thank-you cards — each one bearing the "World's Largest Dinner Party" logo.

In addition, guests received party-favor bags, the IFOPA's *In Search of a Cure* video on CD-ROM, the latest edition of the IFOPA's *Milestones* publication and an IFOPA brochure.

"I would like to thank and congratulate all of the wonderful people that hosted dinner parties from the West Coast to the East Coast as well as England and Germany," said Crawford.

"Many hours of hard work by each host went into creating a special evening for their guests, which built awareness of FOP and raised substantial dollars for the 2007 FOP Symposium. You should be very proud of what you have accomplished."

Hosts of the World's Largest Dinner Party included the following: Christine Birnbaum (New Jersey, USA); Angela Cali (New Jersey, USA); Theresa Caruso (Nevada, USA); Judy Crawford (Florida, USA); Roger Zum Felde (Germany); Maura Fitzgerald (Connecticut, USA); Lillian Geswelli (New Jersey, USA); Traci Gopshes (Maryland, USA); Marilyn Hair (Washington, USA); Lori Henrotay (Missouri, USA); Julie Hopwood (United Kingdom); Toby King (Illinois, USA); Jeri Licht (New York, USA); Linda Lucas (California, USA); Kerry Mooney (New Jersey, USA); Patty Pinkham (Maine, USA); Linnett Ruiz (New York, USA); John Shields (Virginia, USA); Ann Strainton (New Jersey, USA) Cidalia Vincitore (New York, USA); and Moya Weeks (United Kingdom).

Theresa Caruso of Nevada said of the event:



Luciana Wulkan (left) and Rachel Hopwood at a dinner party in England.

"The food was exceptionally good that night; everyone raved about the good time they had and how everything was delicious! They even announced that for next year everyone needs to bring a friend! I was really blessed!"

Julie Hopwood of England said the following:

"We had a great time at our party. We had potato pie supper and the band did really well. The drummer is only 13 years old and the other three are 16 years old; they were great. All of our five children were there and our gorgeous 12-day-old grandson Ethan, but he spent most of the time outside on the car park in his great granddad's motor home as the band was a little bit noisy for his tiny ears!"

Roger Zum Felde of Germany said:

"We rented a restaurant and celebrated with 80 paying guests. A three-person Klezmer Band was playing beautiful music....It was an interesting evening. The guests will talk about that evening for a long time."

Because of the success of the event, expect another Dinner Party event (maybe even two) to occur in 2007. Eventually, the organization hopes to make the World's Largest Dinner Party its "signature event."

For more information on hosting a World's Largest Dinner Party for the IFOPA, please contact Ken Crawford via email at kencifopa@bellsouth.net or by phone at (407) 365-4194.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Bill Ruth, Theresa Caruso and Nancy Ruth at the dinner party in Las Vegas, Nevada.

International FOP Symposium. In all, more than 20 parties were held across the globe, from the United States to the United Kingdom to Germany, among others. Individual party guest lists ranged from 12 to 80 people in size.

"It was a tremendous success," said Ken Crawford, the IFOPA's Director of Development. "Checks are coming in daily to the IFOPA office and a BIG thanks to Hillary Weldon and Marsha Meyer for coming up with this incredible event."

According to Crawford, most dinner parties were held on October 14. However, if a host experienced a conflict with the date, they were given the flexibility to hold it on a different day, such as the next day or the following weekend.

Also, added Crawford, the locations were very diverse. Some dinner parties took place at a host's home, while others were held in a school, a

View photos from the participating dinner parties at <http://www.ifopa.org/wldp.html>