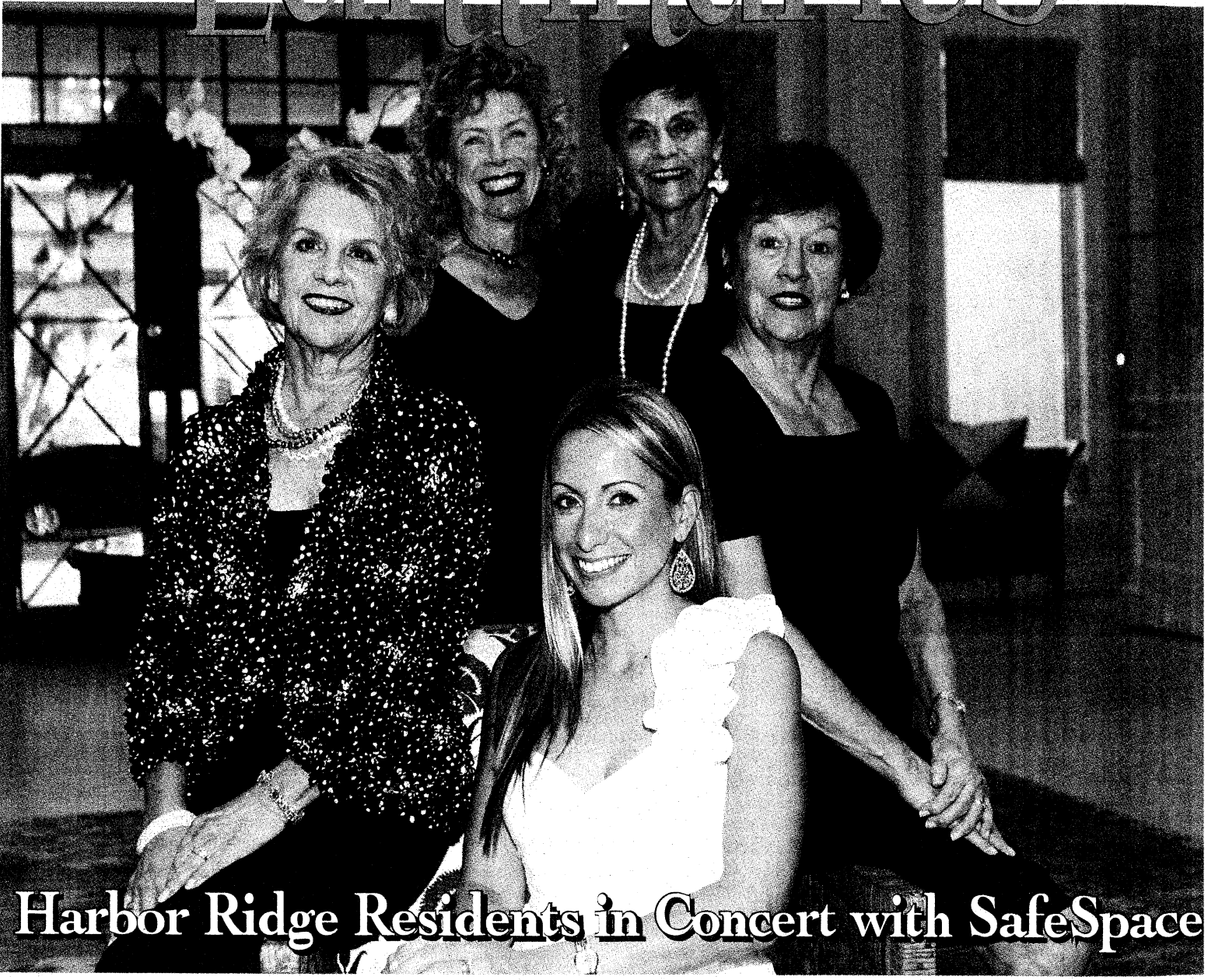


Martin County · St. Lucie County



Where the Stars Come Out Every Monday · January 30, 2012

Luminaries



Harbor Ridge Residents in Concert with SafeSpace



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Cover Story

Peabody Conservatory graduate chimes in to help SafeSpace

By Sue-Ellen Sanders, luminaries@scripps.com

Jill Borowicz can't imagine where SafeSpace might be without the support of Harbour Ridge, the country club community in St. Lucie County whose members were the driving force behind the construction of SafeSpace's Martin County shelter.

Jill, CEO of the Treasure Coast's only domestic abuse prevention program, can write a book about their largesse. Built in May 2008, the Martin County shelter is the only domestic abuse shelter completely paid for with private dollars, with two-thirds of the dollars donated by Harbour Ridge residents Douglass and Patty Stewart and much of the remainder by other residents of the community.

But that would be chapter one. There's more. In fact, since SafeSpace first opened its doors on the Treasure Coast in 1979, the commitment in both volunteer hours and financial consideration from Harbour Ridge has grown in scope every year.

"That's important," says Jill, "because the need has never been greater."

Of the 30 homicides on the Treasure Coast last year, 13 of them involved domestic abuse. None of those killed sought help at any domestic abuse shelter or program before the murder, which follows the national trend of 99-percent of those killed in domestic abuse cases not asking for help. And sadly, last month, right in our own back yard, a Palm City woman was killed helping her relative escape an abusive situation.

Because SafeSpace only receives 28-percent funding from state and federal sources, including all three of the Treasure Coast's United Way agencies, the remaining 82-percent must come from private donations.

This is where communities like Harbour Ridge step in. Through fundraisers and individual donations, the private community has provided more than 20-percent of those local funds.

"The Harbour Ridge residents are our heroes," says Jill. "They put the fundraisers on themselves and then tell us when to show up and give us the funds they raise."

One such event, featured on today's cover, is a dinner, concert and silent auction to be held Feb. 11 at Harbour Ridge for members.

It's their third annual dinner concert, with continued high expectations, says Karen Boyle, who is co-chairing the event with Susie Chase. The ladies' hard work has already paid off with more than \$38,000 raised in sponsorships alone from

members.

This year's concert features vocalist Lorrianna Colozzo, a Palm City resident who has been featured in operatic and musical theatre roles around the country. With her classical opera training and an effortless vocal range, Lorrianna will perform a wide variety of American favorites, from Broadway show tunes to familiar standards, accompanied by Evan Ferrar on piano.

The event, already sold out, also features a silent auction and raffles that include jewelry donated by local merchant Diamonds by Terry.

Jill Borowicz continues to be astounded at the planning committee's success. "Two years ago this event raised \$50,000; last year it was \$65,000. Even throughout the recession, the Harbour Ridge community has continued to prioritize SafeSpace both financially and through volunteer work."

Although this is her third year co-chairing the dinner concert, Karen Boyle has already given much more of her time, energy and funds to SafeSpace. Selected as their Volunteer of the Year, Karen is a founding member of the Friends of SafeSpace and a long-time volunteer, who, among other things, helped to stock the Martin County shelter when it opened, buying all the household items, linens and towels. She has also recruited other donors and volunteers to lend a hand to the agency.

SafeSpace is a non-profit organization helping victims of domestic violence, through counseling, support groups and shelters in Indian River, Martin and St. Lucie counties where families can escape to a safe environment.

Says Jill, "One in three women will become a victim of domestic abuse during their lifetime. We need the public's help more than ever - both in promoting awareness and support through partnerships and donations."

The next fundraising event for SafeSpace, and open to the public, are the "Every Woman is my Sister" luncheons on March 24 Grand Harbor Country Club in Vero Beach and March 29 at Wilmoughby Clubhouse in Stuart. Dr. Stephanie Haridopolos is the scheduled keynote speaker. Tickets are \$125 a person and can be obtained by calling Tracy Levy at (772) 223-2399. Sponsorship opportunities also are available.

For more information about SafeSpace, call Jill Borowicz, SafeSpace CEO at (772) 223-2399.



Douglas and Patty Stewart

Cover photos by Bob Dobens: (Seated) Karen Boyle, Lorrianna Colozzo, Barbara Wolff, (standing) Susie Chase and Dodie oyle proudly support SafeSpace, helping victims of domestic violence.



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