

# Gala for Life

Yanks help raise money, awareness for sick children

By Nathan Maciborski

**O**n March 18, the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital hosted its inaugural *Gala Por la Vida* — Gala for Life — at the Edison Ballroom in New York City, and the Yankees were proud to participate in the event.

In addition to a monetary donation, the Yankees contributed tickets and memorabilia to the gala's silent auction. Proceeds from the evening benefited St. Jude's International Outreach Program, which operates throughout Latin America.

"Children are obviously an important part of any sports team's fan base, but even more so for the Yankees," said Yankees director of Latino affairs Manuel García. "So it was without any hesitation that we jumped at the opportunity to assist this great international organization in its much needed crusade against cancer and other diseases that affect our children. We are truly proud and honored to be able to participate in such a worthy cause."

The mission of the International Outreach Program is to improve the survival rates of children with cancer and other

catastrophic diseases worldwide through the sharing of knowledge, technology and organizational skills. The program transfers the progress achieved in developed countries to those with limited resources, which has helped increase survival rates for children with cancer over the past three decades. Still, according to St. Jude, fewer than 30 percent of children with cancer have access to modern treatment.

Members of New York City's Latino community were invited to the gala, where they enjoyed an evening of food tasting, cocktails, dancing and live music performances, among other activities.

"We wanted to bring St. Jude to the Latino community and get people excited about it," said Beth Desai of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. "Unfortunately, too many kids are still dying of cancer. So something like this helps people know what we're about and then say, 'We want to get involved.' It costs \$1.5 million a day to operate St. Jude. If the Latino community can continue to work, along with the Yankees and other sponsors, to help us raise a chunk of that every year, it's huge to us." ❧

