

Chef's Gala Celebrates 20 Years of Support for Heart of Florida United Way

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla., May 23, 2012 - Joining forces to help alleviate hunger and homelessness in Central Florida, 24 top chefs from the finest local restaurants served up some of their best creations during the 20th Annual Chef's Gala. The May 19 event, held at Epcot World Showplace, raised a record \$219,175 for the [Heart of Florida United Way](#) (HFUW).

Walt Disney World Resort has been involved with Chef's Gala since its inception as the primary sponsor and underwriter.

More than 1,000 attendees were on hand to enjoy an evening of extraordinary foods, fine wines, live music and a silent auction. Funds raised from the event will support United Way programs and agencies that provide food, shelter and other services to Central Floridians in need.

"Over the past two decades, Chef's Gala has raised more than \$2 million and has grown to become Central Florida's premier food and wine charitable event," said Robert H. (Bob) Brown, President/CEO of Heart of Florida United Way. "That this year's event was our biggest, most successful ever is a true testament to the generosity of Disney and so many other outstanding partners and individuals. We are deeply grateful for their trust, compassion and support."

Of the 24 chefs participating in Chef's Gala, half have ties to Disney. Some of the establishments represented included Artist Point (Disney's Wilderness Lodge);

California Grill (Disney's Contemporary Resort); Cítricos (Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa) and Jiko—The Cooking Place (Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge).

Disney's involvement in Chef's Gala is just one example of its ongoing support to HFUW. Walt Disney World Resort is historically the largest corporate contributor to the HFUW's annual workplace campaign, with Cast Members generously giving more than \$2 million each year. Thanks to a matching gift from the Walt Disney Company Foundation this year, Disney gave a record \$5.7 million contribution to HFUW, which helped them exceed their campaign goals.