

## PAWS Fur Ball raises \$1.2 million for its no-kill animal rescue mission



The annual PAWS Chicago Fur Ball raised \$1.2 million to fund its no-kill animal rescue efforts.

By **Candace Jordan** - Candid Candace

**T**he claws were out at the 17th annual PAWS Chicago Fur Ball, a pet-friendly, black-tie event benefiting the city's largest no-kill humane organization. More than 800 guests, many with canine companions in tow, along with 250 volunteers, helped raise funds for life-saving programs for homeless animals Nov. 9 at the Drake Hotel.

The hotel was beautifully decorated for the holidays, providing festive photo opportunities for guests and their pets. The elegant Kehoe Designs decor was evident in all three rooms dedicated to the event: the Gold Coast Room, Grand Ballroom and Camellia Room.

In each space, dynamic media hosts — Fox-32's Kaitlin Cody, Shae Pepler, Lou Canellis and Jake Hamilton, and Big 95.5's Lisa Dent — emceed programs that included moving video presentations, live auctions and rescue animal showcases. Twenty-four homeless dogs, puppies and kittens were in attendance, several of whom found loving homes that night.

In the Gold Coast Room, **a live auction conducted by David Goodman offered attendees the opportunity to name and purchase a rescue van (sold twice at \$27,000) and bid on a South African safari (sold for \$15,000) and luxury travel experience aboard the world's largest private residential ship, The World (sold twice at \$20,000 each). Bonnie Spurlock paid \$16,000 to have her PAWS rescue cat Remi appear on the cover of the 202 PAWS desktop calendar.**

Partygoers enjoyed a lavish dinner buffet, silent auction and dancing to two live bands: Maggie Speaks and Spoken Four. Canine guests were also treated to spa treatments and a healthy doggy buffet of boiled chicken, rice and carrots, served in crystal goblets.

A video presentation focused on one of PAWS' animal caregivers, Amia Davis, who shared her “heartbreaking” experience working for a local private animal shelter before she sought a job with PAWS Chicago.

Co-chaired by Melissa and Michael Canning and Jessica and Tim Canning, with honorary co-chair Stephanie Harris, **the event raised approximately \$1.2 million**, which will account for nearly 15 percent of PAWS Chicago's annual operating budget. These funds support the adoption and spay-neuter programs that have helped reduce the killing of homeless animals in Chicago by 87 percent, according to the organization, since its founding in 1997.