



GOES FROM TROPICAL ISLAND TO CONEY ISLAND

By Karly Kehres | Photos by Rya of RYAPHOTOS

Haven Hospice, the choice in North Florida for end-of-life and palliative care, knows that life is not always a day at the carnival. This year's VIVA! 2012 celebration, Haven's premier fundraising event on April 14, reminds us that it can be at least one day a year.

Diverging from the Polynesian theme of the past two years, event planners are extinguishing their tiki torches and hanging up their hula skirts to make way for drapery and carnival games. They will transform Rembert Farm into a different kind of island –

Coney Island.

"It's a struggle to find something that's fun, unique and not overdone," said Haven Hospice Vice President of Organizational Development, Michael Morse. "The first year you do something different it's always exciting and nerve-racking, but I think it's going to be great."

Guests will toss ping pong balls into glass jars, receive glimpses into their futures from a mystic clairvoyant and take photographs all while they snack on gourmet classic carnival treats.

This event raises more than funds for

Haven Hospice. It raises awareness and educates people about the importance of end-of-life care.

Having touched more than 55,000 people since its opening in 1979, there likely isn't a guest in attendance who doesn't have a hospice story to share. In typical VIVA! fashion they will be unable to walk 10 feet without meeting an old friend.

"Haven does pretty poignant, heavy work and yet those people who do the work are so compassionate that there is a lot of laughter, and fun and love," said Karen Thomas, event coordinator. "People want to have joyous,

happy memories in those last days, and that's how we tie into it. There are joyous moments to be had."

About 130 volunteers and 650 guests attended last year's luau, and planners are expecting the same number of carnival-goers to fill the stylized vintage 1920s boardwalk.

Embers, which provided the food in 2011, will cater the event with an equally elegant spin on traditional carnival food.

Close to 100 items will be on display in the Remberts' barn for both the silent and live auctions that will take place during the event. This year's items will be organized into themed packages such as Dine Around Tioga and Dine Around Haile, which will include gift cards to restaurants in the area.

Tickets cost \$150 each, and the proceeds raised go to unfunded Haven Hospice services and programs like Camp Safe Haven, Transitions, pre-Hospice programs and community grief and loss support.

"Life is a carnival ride. You have ups downs, peaks and valleys. Some parts are faster than others, and there are turns we don't anticipate, but in the end we all get off," Thomas said, "and I think that it is when it's time to step off that roller coaster that Haven Hospice extends its hand." ■ ■ ■

To purchase tickets for VIVA! 2012 or to learn more about the event go online to www.vivameanslife.org, or call Stephanie Brod, Fundraising and Special Events Coordinator for Haven Hospice, at 352-271-4665.



Don't miss the 8th Annual ViVA

JOIN US AT THE REMBERT FARM IN ALACHUA, FL

SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 2012 • 5:30 P.M.

Live Music & Entertainment • Cuisine • Gaming
Live and Silent Auctions

For tickets, auction or sponsorship opportunities, call Stephanie Brod at 352-271-4665 or e-mail smbrod@havenhospice.org

All proceeds from ViVA! 2012 benefit unreimbursed patient care, programs and services provided by Haven Hospice.

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