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COURTS AND LAW

An uplifting evening in Brooklyn: Fighting rare genetic disorder through philanthropy

July 27, 2023 Rob Abruzzese

Camille Fortunato (center) and her husband Stefano Filippazzo (second from left) are both Brooklyn attorneys active in various local bar associations including the Columbian Lawyers Association of Brooklyn. They are pictured at the Columbian Lawyers' 50th anniversary party with (from left) Yolanda Guadagnoli, Hon. Lizette Colon and Linda LoCascio. Brooklyn Eagle photo by Robert Abruzzese

In an extraordinary show of compassion and community resilience, Brooklyn attorneys Camille and Stefano Filippazzo are set to host their annual fundraiser, A Night of Love, A Celebration of Life, on Nov. 3, 2023, at El Caribe Country Club.

The event's mission is as personal as it is far-reaching, aiming to generate much-needed resources for research into Williams syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that has touched the lives of the Filippazzo family personally.

The event is organized under the auspices of the Anthony Filippazzo Grant for Williams Syndrome Research, established by the Williams Syndrome Association (WSA) in honor of the couple's son, Anthony. The aim of the grant is to deepen the understanding of this medically complicated syndrome and potentially discover therapeutic drugs that could enhance health care outcomes for individuals with Williams syndrome.

Anthony Filippazzo, the heart and inspiration behind the unyielding fight against Williams Syndrome. Photo courtesy of Camille Filippazzo

Williams syndrome affects approximately one in 10,000 people worldwide and is characterized by cardiovascular disease and a variety of developmental and cognitive issues. Through tireless effort, the Filippazzos have sought to spread awareness of this condition and the unique struggles faced by those it affects.

This year's event will honor Dr. Barbara Pober, a Pediatric Geneticist at Massachusetts General Hospital and a professor of Pediatrics (Emeritus) at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Pober is the Director of the Williams Syndrome Clinic at Massachusetts General Hospital and has been pivotal in the clinical research and care provided for individuals with Williams Syndrome since 1987. Her pioneering work has significantly contributed to the medical understanding of the disorder and its comprehensive management.

The evening will also witness the participation of many notable committee members, including Theresa Marie Aberle, Camille A. Armand, Bianca Corozzo, Samantha Dardani, Steve Finkin, Esq., and Annamarie Fortunato, Esq., among others.

The road towards this momentous occasion has not been without trials. The Filippazzos have long been committed to securing the best care possible for their son, navigating the challenges of a rare disease with fortitude and grace. From countless hours spent in therapy sessions to fundraising initiatives, the couple has sought to ensure that Anthony and others with Williams syndrome can live their healthiest, longest lives possible.

In their continued pursuit of a therapeutic drug for their son's condition, the Filippazzos have held fast to their professional lives while also making significant strides in the arena of Williams syndrome research and awareness. The upcoming event is a testament to their perseverance and unwavering dedication to a cause that holds both personal and universal significance.

For more information about the event, please visit https://wsresearch.org.