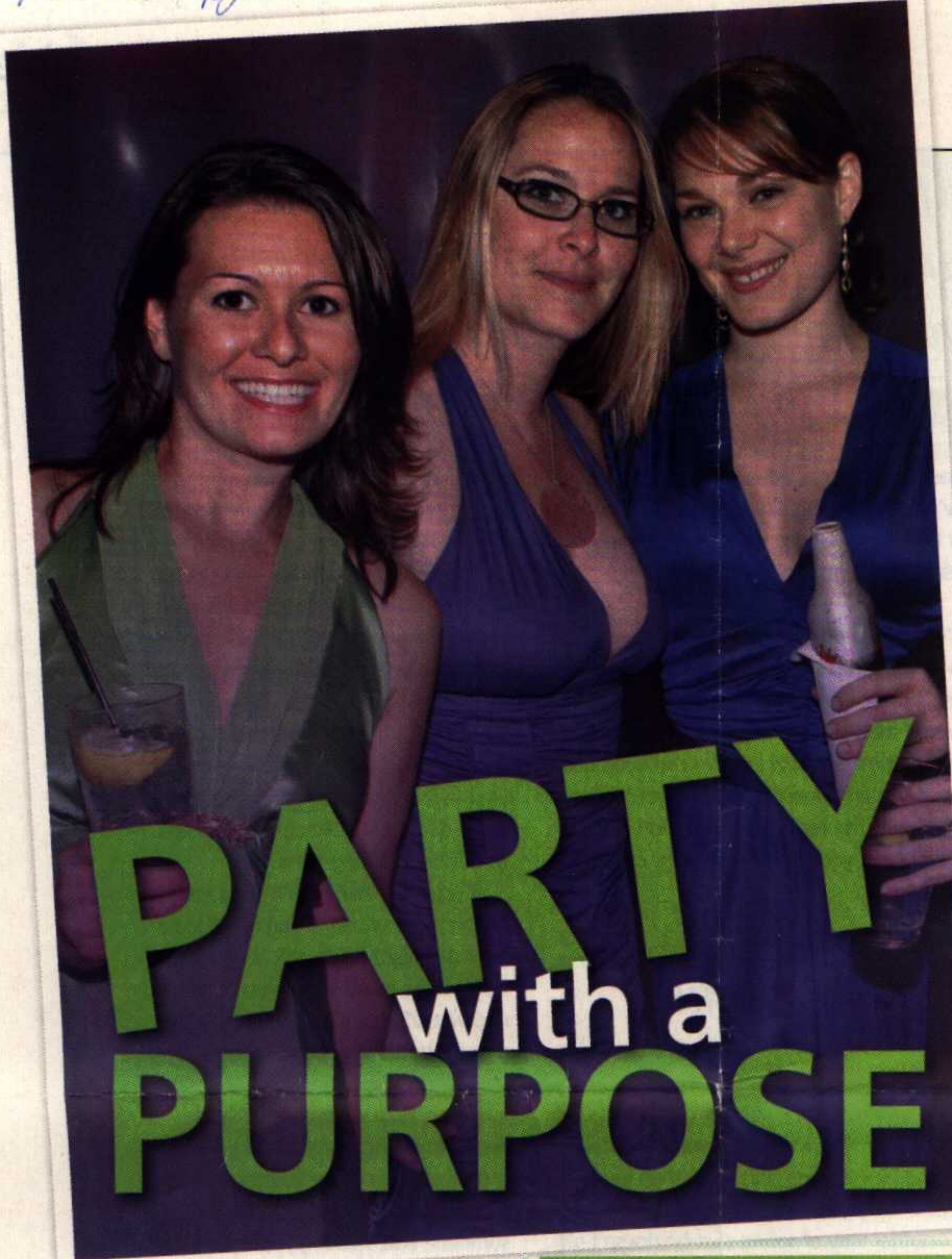


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STRUT YOUR CHOICE

Sally Montgomery, 27, raised over \$35,000 for NARAL Pro-Choice New York, the New York State Affiliate of Pro-Choice America, by organizing a fashion show called "Strut Your Choice."

"I wanted to raise money for something I consider to be a very important issue," says Sally (pictured left, in center), one of seven 20-something women in the Young Professionals Council for Choice (YPCC) who planned the second annual fundraiser/fashion show, "Strut Your Choice." The proceeds of the event benefit NARAL Pro-Choice New York, a group that supports reproductive health and a woman's right to choose.

With a career in public relations, Sally's skill set was a perfect fit for organizing the fashion show. She helped secure the venue—New York City's trendy AER Lounge—and gained publicity for the May event, which drew over 500 young professionals. During more than eight months of preparation, Sally helped with many aspects of the event, including ticket sales, which often consumed up to five hours of her time per week. "We raised over \$35,000, and provided cocktails, fashion and food in an effort to educate and provide a vital message: Roe vs. Wade must be protected," she says.

These four women put their party-planning skills to good use—by helping to throw successful fundraisers for their favorite charities!

BY Tracey Porpora

Many of us will admit we should make time in our busy lives to volunteer for a worthwhile cause. But there are many women who have turned these "shoulds" into "coulds." Through hard work and dedication, they plan everything from gala balls to cutting-edge fashion shows to raise money for charities they really believe in. *CW* spoke to four avid volunteers about what it takes to organize big parties that raise even bigger bucks for important causes.

FIVE DESIGNERS AND A POODLE FASHION SHOW

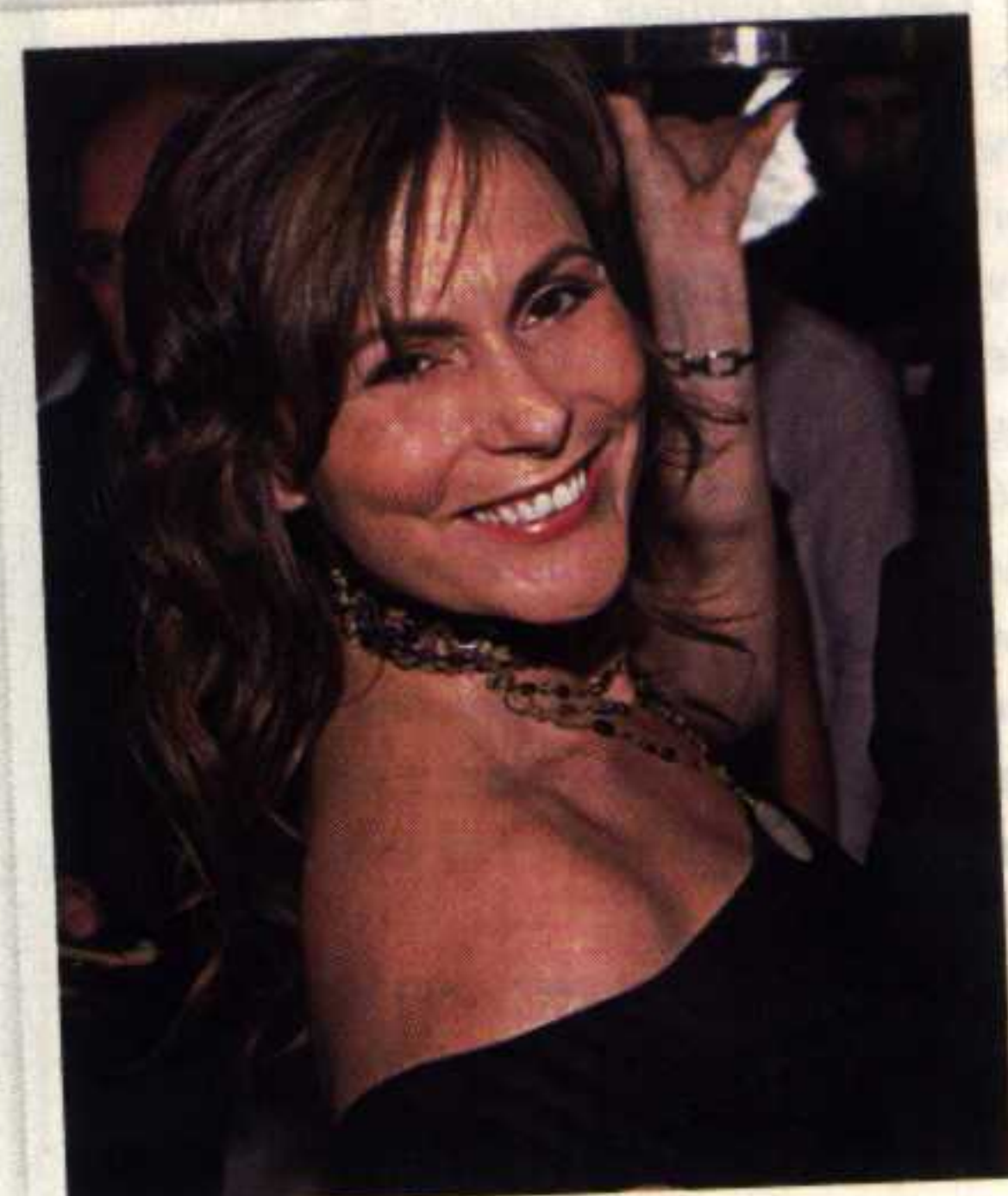
Teresa Rodriguez Williamson, 37, raised \$110,000 for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society at a fashion show dubbed, "Five Designers and a Poodle," as well as at a series of other events.

Teresa's fundraising activities for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society started when she was nominated for the group's San Francisco Chapter Woman of the Year title. Her extensive fundraising efforts, which earned her the title, included a series of events that ran from April to June 2006, and included everything from a Passover dinner to a Cinco de Mayo party at her own home, to a wine tasting event and "mini facial" party.

"I spent around two hours a day finding volunteers, sponsors, donations, etc.," recalls Teresa. "Then, two weeks before the event, it was ramped up to three hours a day, which usually occurred at night when I found myself posting advertisements for the

event on free Web sites, and making silent auction signs. During the final few days, it was a

full-time production because of all the volunteers, sponsors, donations and silent auction items that were involved," says Teresa, who is an author, and also publishes an online travel magazine for women.



If you're planning to live with us—the other sex—it's probably a good idea to come to terms with the concept of "plausible deniability." Coined in the late '50s, when the CIA was up to its shadiest dealings, the political figures of the time wanted to cover their rears. So instead of ordering groups like the CIA to stop doing things like putting LSD in Fidel Castro's drinks, they just stopped taking briefings from them. Suddenly it was plausible for politicians to deny knowing about shady dealings. Voila! I present to you plausible deniability.

For us guys, plausible deniability basically means willfully not knowing the status of a relationship with a female. We get the girl and keep the single status. Sex when you want it, but also impunity to hook up elsewhere. For you, it probably means confusion and anguish. But, hey, all's fair in love and war, right?

If he hangs out with his friends and invites you along, you can safely assume he considers you more than just a piece of booty.

exact same way as when we're with a girl we're just stringing along for sex or company (or both), and whom we have absolutely no desire to take to the next level.

what's your status?

So how do you know if he sees you as a casual piece of fun or something more? It doesn't matter how long you've known him; it doesn't matter how long you've been going out; it certainly doesn't matter if you're having sex or not. The real question is: Do his friends know about you? When he hangs out with

make him decide

So, if your situation looks questionable, how do you get him over the boyfriend/girlfriend line? It's simple—just call his bluff. If you're a Wednesday girl, start making him take you out on Friday nights, or vice versa. Don't take no for an answer, and know this: He's not going to like it. He'll say things like, "We're enjoying each other's company, isn't that enough?" (At least, that's what I said.) But it has to be done, and it'll actually be better for him in the long term.

If you press him, you'll get a result—for better or worse. If you're a Friday/Saturday night booty call, it's probably not looking good. But if you've got a mid-week/Sunday thing going, there's a much better chance you'll be able to pin him down.

Please, help stamp out plausible deniability, if not for your sake, then for ours. If you don't, we'll keep stringing you along until we end up sleeping with someone else, making you miserable. Or worse, you'll sleep with someone else, and suddenly convinced you're the love of our lives, we'll become complete stalkers and start listening to U2 all the time. And nobody wants that. **CW**

Ben McKelvey/acpsyndication@acp.com.au

We get the girl and keep the single status. For you, it probably means confusion and anguish.

why he waffles

I've never set out to do this deliberately. Looking back, however, I realize that every relationship I've been in, I've held onto plausible deniability for as long as I could. I've gently steered conversations about the status of the relationship elsewhere; I've spread out dates so they don't have too much regularity. In fact, I've probably missed a lot of good times just so when Jessica Alba finally comes to my house and says, "Ben, are you single?" I can say yes. It was tough, but I think Jess is worth it.

Men see marriage everywhere. And not as a shining goal to march toward, but as an inescapable vacuum of monogamy. Which is only marginally preferable to that other inescapable vacuum—lonely old age and death. In the same way that every time a guy sees a hot girl get on the bus (and sees an image of what she looks like having sex), we also get an image of marriage, a place where relationship rules are completely unambiguous, laid down in common law and even in the Bible where, if you mess around, you'll be damned by all. In short, a scary place.

This makes things confusing because superficially, when we meet someone we actually like and want to be with, we act the

them and invites you along, you can safely assume he considers you more than just a piece of booty.

Another way of telling that he doesn't see you as girlfriend material is when he's the one always setting up the meetings—and he only calls on certain days. If you're exclusively getting drunken phone calls at 3 a.m., you're probably serving a need. So, too, if you're only getting calls in his downtime, like maybe one day mid-week and then Sunday afternoon.

CW INSTANT MAN DECODER

So... is he into you? Or just making you think he is? Answer these few questions and find out now...

1. Have you been somewhere other than your/his bedroom?
2. Would his friends know who you were if they answered his phone?
3. Does he call or text you regularly during the week?
4. When you're together at the bar, will he talk to you a lot?
5. Is he still satisfied when your dates don't end in sex?
6. Would he call to see how you are if you took the day off sick?
7. Is he willing to meet your friends? And does he make an effort once he's there?

MOSTLY YES: Congratulations! You're in what we call the beginning phase of a relationship. Take it sloooow.

MOSTLY NO: Um, yeah. You know you're having casual sex, and you just don't want to admit it. Get over him and find a new guy.

Models in photo used to illustrate story only.



BREATHING IS GLORIOUS! (B.I.G.) BALL

Debbie Roney, 38, raised over \$75,000 for The Coalition for Pulmonary Fibrosis (CPF) through the Breathing is Glorious! (B.I.G.) Ball.

After several members of her husband's family died of Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF), which is a lung disorder that slowly robs its victims of their ability to breathe, Debbie knew she had to help find a cure. "I wanted to plan an event that would create awareness about this disease," says Debbie, noting that approximately 83,000 Americans are suffering from IPF.

The inaugural B.I.G. Ball, which Debbie co-chaired, was held in October 2005 at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum in Chicago. "We had 320 guests from across the country for cocktails, followed by a silent auction, and

then dinner that included a program where we gave a

humanitarian award. We also had a live auction," says Debbie.

Preparation for the ball was "constant" since the January prior to the event, admits Debbie, who is the mother of three daughters, and also works part-time as a freelance writer. "I had no idea how much work would go into it. A big part of my job was obtaining the 30 auction items, which included hotel and dinner packages, sporting event tickets and two boat trips."

At the time this story was written, Debbie, as sole chairperson, was busy working on this year's event that was scheduled for Oct. 21 at the Renaissance Hotel in Chicago. "By raising as much money as possible, I want to provide hope for patients with the disease."

RED OR WHITE BALL

Lauren Dettloff, 25, raised over \$60,000 for the Steppenwolf for Young Adults Program by co-chairing Steppenwolf Auxiliary Council's 2006 "Red or White Ball."

Having been involved with theater throughout high school and college, Lauren knew she had to give back to this community. When she was looking to volunteer her time, the renowned Chicago-based Steppenwolf Theatre—known for producing thought-provoking productions in an intimate setting—was a natural fit.

Since 2003, Lauren took time out of her busy schedule to devote many long hours to planning the annual fundraising event for the Steppenwolf Theatre, which benefits its program for teen audiences and families. This year's event—held in May at Chicago's River East Art Center—drew over 450 guests for an evening of wine tasting, food pairings

and dancing. "Each year since the council was founded in 2000, they've done a signature event. It started out as a very small wine tasting event. This year, we sought to make it bigger and better. As a first step, we christened it the Red or White Ball. But we maintained the intimate, edgier feel for which Steppenwolf events are known," she says, noting she devoted several hours each week to planning the event. "I was in charge of managing publicity, and directing the Steppenwolf in-house team. I was also in charge of the logistics for the actual event. I worked to find the venue and caterer. In addition, I managed sub-committee heads that headed up the goodie bags, silent auction and entertainment components."

The evening of the event was launched with a VIP reception for the

SWEET CHARITY

Looking for a way to help raise money for charity? Get involved!

1 NARAL PRO-CHOICE AMERICA

works to protect safe, legal abortion and expand the full range of reproductive rights for women, regardless of age, race or income.

Call: 202-973-3000

E-mail: membership@ProChoiceAmerica.org

2 THE LEUKEMIA & LYMPHOMA SOCIETY

is dedicated to funding blood cancer research and providing education and patient services.

Call: 800-955-4572

Visit: www.leukemia-lymphoma.org

3 THE COALITION FOR PULMONARY FIBROSIS (CPF)

seeks to further education, patient support and research efforts for interstitial lung disease, specifically pulmonary fibrosis.

Call: 888-222-8541

Visit: www.coalitionforpf.org

4 STEPPENWOLF'S AUXILIARY COUNCIL

strengthens the Chicago-based Steppenwolf Theatre's ability to advance artistic experimentation and collaboration by developing new financial resources and new audiences for the creation and presentation of innovative, cutting-edge theater.

Call: 312-654-5601

E-mail: bwalters@steppenwolf.org



ball's honorary co-chairs, followed by music and a silent auction. As vice president of the auxiliary, Lauren is currently overseeing the work of the chairpersons for the 2007 event. **CW**