

NYNP New York Nonprofit Press

Leake & Watts Raises \$550K at Gala

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Leake & Watts raised nearly \$550,000 at their 2014 Annual Awards Gala at The Pierre on Thursday, October 30, 2014, making it their most successful gala to date. With 250 attendees, the gala is the agency's largest fundraising event of the year, raising funds to support their child welfare, special education, early education, developmental disabilities and juvenile justice programs. The agency, a finalist for the 2014 New York Nonprofit Excellence Awards, serves over 8,000 children, adults and their family members across Manhattan, the Bronx and Westchester County each day.

This year, Leake & Watts honored David Anthony Pope, President and CEO of the Generoso Pope Foundation, with the Excellence in Achievement Award. Although Pope was the main honoree of the evening, he surprised guests by presenting distinguished service awards from the Generoso Pope Foundation to Dr. Donald Antonecchia, Assistant Executive Director and Superintendent of Schools at Leake & Watts, and Joe Ruback, Assistant Principal and Athletic Director at the Leake & Watts Biondi School. Pope explained to the audience that although an honoree does not usually present his own awards, it was very dear to his heart to acknowledge the significant contributions that Antonecchia and Ruback have made to the students at the Biondi School, which supports teens with emotional and behavioral challenges.

"We are so grateful to our generous friends whose support, year after year, continues to grow," said Crossan Seybolt, Leake & Watts Board President and co-chair of the 2014 gala.

This year's Gala Chairs were Crossan and Peggy Seybolt, and the event was hosted by WABC-TV Senior Meteorologist and New York Times Best-Selling author Bill Evans. Notable guests included Hockey Hall of Fame New York Ranger Rod Gilbert, Arlyn and Edward Gardner, Agnes Hassell and Thomas and Beth Renyi. Along with cocktails, dinner and award presentations, guests had the opportunity to participate in a live auction including items such as A Night of Hockey with New York Ranger Rod Gilbert, A Tour of WABC-TV with Bill Evans, and A Tour of Brooklyn Brewery and Beer Tasting Led by Brewmaster Garrett Oliver.

Founded in 1831, Leake & Watts assists children, adults, and families who face a myriad of challenges, including poverty, disabilities, and a lack of access to quality education and basic services. The agency's programs include family stabilization services; special education programs for preschoolers, elementary school students and teens; child care and Head Start, family foster care, residential, day, and recreation services to people with developmental disabilities, juvenile justice services and residential treatment services and group homes for youth who have experienced trauma.