

"The AZ Insider" with Kathy Shayna Shocket: Get the inside scoop on Arizona's social scene and celebrity news.



This week: Your great odds of winning a car and benefitting the Foundation for Blind Children

I can't wait to tell you about this fantastic deal and the driving forces behind it! Because here's your chance to win a new Scion XB series 7.0 and help support the Foundation for Blind Children (FBC). The highly respected non-profit organization is raffling off the car for \$100 per ticket, and only 500 tickets will be sold!

Those are great odds, especially compared to many charity raffles which sell 1 - 5,000 or more tickets to win a car. The drawing will be on Dec. 21 at the FBC's Phoenix headquarters, but you don't have to be present to win. For more details you can check out FBC's Web site at Seeitourway.org.

The Scion was one of the exciting opportunities that people were chatting about at FBC's "Night for Sight" awards dinner. The car raffle was the brainchild of **Walt and Addison Brown** who are pictured above with the colorful set of wheels outside the FBC office in Phoenix. The Browns made the car donation possible through Walt's company, Diversified Partners and through a collaborative effort between **the Berge family** and Riverview Toyota. It's one of the many reasons that Walt, Addison and **Walt Brown III** were honored at the dinner with the 2010 Visionary Award. (Walt Brown III, a sixth grader, raised money at his school to donate money to FBC to purchase a Braille book for its media center.)



John and Maja Langbein

With fellow visionaries **John and Maja Langbein** as event co-chairs, the dinner was an enthusiastic success. John (the king of Ticket Exchange) and Maja (pregnant with their second child) have also been very instrumental in raising money and awareness for the FBC. John was the recipient of the 2009 Visionary Award.

The fundraiser at Mastro's City Hall Steakhouse boasted an intimate setting and a menu of filet, roasted chicken breast or Atlantic salmon. Not to mention the shrimp cocktail and side dishes which were served family style.

There were several emotional moments during the program which detailed the generosity of FBC's supporters. A case in point was the story of how Walt and Addison arranged for a visually impaired blind man to fulfill his dreams of driving again. They coached and cheered him on at the Bondurant Racing School when the blind driver navigated the course alone. In fact, **Bob Bondurant**, the former race car driver and owner of the race school was among the 250 guests who gathered at this year's "Night for Sight." So, the pictures I snapped of the Browns mingling with Bob Bondurant and his wife **Patricia** are meaningful.



Addison Brown, Patricia and Bob Bondurant

Another one of the highlights of the dinner was when 14-year-old **Max Ashton** who is blind, took to the stage. Max is one of the many FBC success stories and a reflection of FBC's mission of helping blind and visually impaired children, adults and their families lead lives of independence and dignity through mastery of their environment. The foundation offers education, training, counseling, communication and technological resources.



FBC hikers Mount Kilimanjaro

The organization first made national headlines last year when eight blind and visually impaired hikers, along with a group of 16 sighted hikers climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. Max, then 13-years-old, made the Guinness Book of World Records as the youngest blind climber to summit Mount Kilimanjaro. The group's feat also broke the world record of the most blind people to make it to the top of the African mountain.



Walt Brown

An FBC group also made national headlines this year when 13 blind and visually impaired hikers, along with adult chaperone hikers trekked the 24.3 miles of the Grand Canyon from rim to rim in one day. The route is a challenge even for sighted hikers. "Our goal was to prove to the world that blind people can do anything," explains **Marc Ashton**, CEO of FBC, who hiked both Kilimanjaro and the Canyon with his son **Max**.



John and Maja Langbein previewing the raffle car

Those like the Browns and the Langbeins are proud of what FBC has accomplished. "Last fiscal year the teachers provided 5,900 hours of direct services to families in their homes across Maricopa County, not including the Monday and Friday programs at FBC for families," notes John. And don't forget – you could have a chance to help the FBC and be in the DRIVER's seat of the new Scion!



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