

AZ Insider: Secret of the Power Breakfast

Written by Written by Kathy Shayna Shocket

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Kathy Shayna Shocket has the inside scoop on Arizona's social scene and celebrity news.



, Gabriel, is still making a difference today in the lives of so many children.

How Gabriel's Angels are helping pets help at risk kids.

What is it that draws over 1,000 people to get up early during the week and be at a fundraising breakfast? (Especially when many of them know they'll probably be dealing with parking hassles when that many people arrive around the same time.)

Well, it's the secret which many non-profits would like to unleash. Gabriel's Angels has accomplished that—literally. The Phoenix based organization provides healing pet therapy to 13,000 abused, neglected and at risk children in Arizona. And over 1,000 people turned out for its “Unleash the Love. End the Abuse” fundraising breakfast.



It's one of a handful of charitable organizations that has been able to attract over 1,000 supporters to their breakfast events and have the chance to tell their story. Yes, these types of awareness breakfast featuring testimonials and videos are free, but that's not why most supporters attend.



Gabriel's Angels, which has other types of fundraisers during the year, including a golf tournament, has unleashed the secret of the successful power breakfast.



“Through this event we hope to build lifelong relationships with active and community oriented individuals interested in helping Gabriel's Angels with its mission to help abused and neglected children,” says Pam Gaber, CEO and founder. “There are so many generous people in our community and this is a time for us to cultivate new relationships, by creating awareness about our organization.”



A big thanks to Easel Photography and Urbane distortions for letting me use their photos within my story. In 2004, the organization's first fundraising awareness breakfast had 240 people. This year's breakfast, with 90 captain table members who each invited 10 people, was a particularly emotional one. In May, Gabriel, the beloved dog for whom the organization is named, passed away from his battle with cancer.

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When he was one years old, Gabriel, Pam Gaber, then a volunteer at the Crisis Nursery in Phoenix brought her new dog to the holiday party. It was a magical twist of fate. She discovered the gentle Weimarer offered unconditional and non-judgmental love to the children. It proved to be life- changing and Gabriel continued to visit children at the Nursery as well as a group home until January of 2010 when he retired due to his fight with cancer.



During his 10 years as a Pet Therapy Dog and as an ambassador for pet therapy, Gabriel changed the lives of thousands of children and adults. "While we mourn the passing of an amazing therapy dog, we also celebrate the unconditional love, hope and compassion Gabriel shared with everyone he met," says Pam.



Currently Gabriel's Angels has nearly 150 registered volunteer Therapy Teams and 40 Helping Hands delivering pet therapy to over 100 agencies. All services are free of charge to the agency and the children. The therapy assisted activities are provided by the Pet Therapy Team, usually consisting of a companion dog and his/her owner. Occasionally a therapy cat joins the program!



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