

# SAN FRANCISCO SENTINEL.com

## SAN FRANCISCO PHILANTHROPISTS ROCK THE FOUR SEASONS FOR RAPHAEL HOUSE FUNDRAISING GALA

12 May 2008



*Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008*

**BY PAT MURPHY**

**Sentinel Editor & Publisher**

*Copyright © 2008*

Raphael House, the City's privately funded residence for mothers and children in distress, opened a new constellation of benefactors last week as patrons filled the Grand Ballroom of the swank Four Seasons Hotel for the Second Annual Raphael House Fundraising Gala.

Established in 1971, the facility was the first shelter in San Francisco for families experiencing homelessness.

Since that time, Raphael House has sheltered more than 17,000 individuals with the help of 12,000 friends who have invested financial and volunteer support.

Raphael House relies solely on private resources to meet its annual budget. Support is received from individuals, foundations, corporations, businesses, civic groups and churches that are committed to promoting stability for at-risk families.

It has more agility to more quickly individualize support for clients than do facilities accepting governmental funding.

Raphael House expanded its Board of Directors in April, in good part newly driven by local dynamos Kate Smith, Sophie Azouaou and Claudia Ross, who pledged a major fundraiser a scant six months ago and delivered on the pledge.



*Gala Co-Chair Kate Smith*



*Kate Smith, right, with Diana Britt*  
*Photo by Heather Wiley for Drew Altizer © 2008*



*Claudia Ross*

*Photo by Heather Wiley for Drew Altizer © 2008*



*Claudia Ross, right, and Sophie Azouaou*  
*[Photo by Heather Wiley for Drew Altizer © 2008](#)*



*Francis Rigney, Past Executive Director of Raphael house; with Raphael House Executive Director Father David Lowell, and Raphael House Board Member and Press Committee Chair Sophie Azouaou wearing 34-carats Diamond and Rose*

Cut diamond Chandelier Earrings from [Jewelry by Rosalina](#) and 14.38-Carat  
Kunzite, Cognac Diamond and Diamond Princess Cut Ring  
[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)



*Joy Venturini Bianche and Jean-Noel Fourmeaux du Sartel*  
[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)



*Sophie Azouaou, Seán Martinefield, Bella Farrow and Mark Calvano*  
[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)

Ross and Azouaou work in tandem on many society events.

Ross fell in love with Raphael House many years ago and Azouaou pulled the facility to her breast irresistibly as primary devotion.

So much so that philanthropist Azouaou [donated](#) her [interior design skills](#) and colleague Ross brought her veteran [marketing savvy](#) to bear.



*Raphael House Playroom Rebirth*  
[Photo by Noble Vision](#)



*[Photo by Noble Vision](#)*

Three weeks ago, the Raphael House Board of Directors [appointed new members](#), including Ross taking the reigns as Chair and Azouaou serving as Chair of the Board Press Committee.

Another woman of influence, NBC's Jessica Aguirre, took Raphael House to heart after her introduction by Azouaou, and Aguirre [brought its good works](#) to the home screen several times.



*Sophie Azouaou, left,  
and Gala Emcee Jessica Aguirre*  
**[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)**

Last Thursday night, Aguirre rose to emcee the gala.



*Gala Emcee, NBC's Jessica Aguirre, keeps the show rolling with her skills of being an on-air personality for the Bay Area.*

*[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)*

“My ties to Raphael House run deep and they are strong because I believe so much in what they are doing,” Aguirre told the crowd.

“I’ve been doing stores on them for the last few years so it really is from the heart that I am here to be with you this evening — and we have a fabulous evening planned for you!

“I want to start things off with a very important quote.

“It was said by the woman who truly understood homelessness and poverty, perhaps more than anyone who has ever graced this earth, and that is Mother Theresa.

“Mother Theresa said, ‘We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked, and homeless.’

” ‘But poverty is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for — that is the greatest poverty.’

“And that’s exactly what Raphael House understands.

“That it’s not just about being homeless. It’s about giving people dignity. It’s about giving them love. About showing them the path and giving them back their life, their souls.

“And that’s what Raphael House does.

“It is not a shelter because it doesn’t really shelter people, it nurtures them.

“Raphael House’s mission officialy is to help at-risk children and their parents achieve stable housing and financial independence.



*Claudia Ross speaks with Jean-Noel Fourmeaux du Sartel*  
*Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008*

“And it does it by strengthening the bonds of those families and teaching them how to be a parent. How to be a mother. How to be a leader of that household.

“Their mission is very, very clear.

“They take families in crisis and they move them into a community, and in some cases that community lasts a lifetime.”

“From the moment the family walks in, and until the day that they leave, they know that they’re always welcome there, and that long after they are in their own homes Raphael House in always a home to them.

“Raphael House has had this vision for some forty years.

“A vision about how to change the situation of homelessness and it is a vision that we’re fortunate enough now to have a mayor who has that same vision, who sees the problem and sees that path to solution.”



*Claudia Ross and her father Jorge Castillo*  
*[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)*

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom concurred through video presentation.





*David Miree represented San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom at the gala*  
*[Photo by Heather Wiley for Drew Altizer © 2008](#)*

“The homelessness issue is so much broader than the images that most of us see that is associated with a large shopping cart along with all sorts of personal belongings,” reflected the mayor.

“That’s just one aspect of homelessness. That’s the most visible aspect. That’s just the face of chronic homelessness.

“What people don’t really realize is the face of a homeless individual is an eight-year-old girl or boy.

“The old approach to homelessness that you can solve it somehow by putting people in shelters, that a ‘cot and a hot’ was a way of providing a solution.

“Increasingly now, people are recognizing that you’ve got to move away from a shelter system to a housing-first model, that housing with supportive services solves homelessness.

“In the interim, obviously places like Raphael House that have been at this for thirty-some years are stopgap between someone being out on the streets and having the dignity of having a place that they can call home.

“It’s credible. It’s just warm, inviting.

“There’s an intangible sense of there being spirit and pride by the people who are working there in their life’s mission and purpose.

“I don’t think that — I know that.

“They’ve solved the problem for over 17,000 people.”

Festivities included a silent auction and drawing for a trip to Europe courtesy of [Lufthansa](#).



*Danielle and husband Jon Mewes enjoy their second Raphael House  
Annual Benefit Gala*

***Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008***



*Ali Grosslight and Chet Kowski browse the silent auction offerings, which ranged from private chef party's to jewelry*  
*[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)*



*Raphael's Gala fundraiser rallies San Franciscans in raising funds to assist those wishing to get off the streets*  
*[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)*



*Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008*



*Joy Bianchi and Jorge Castillo comment on the auction for various chefs and food*

*Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008*

A live auction of fineries kept the house moving.



*Trent August's rapid fire approach assist the Raphael's Gala fundraiser to assist those wishing to get off the street*  
*Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008*



*Kimberly Givsan and Harry Denton*  
*Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008*



*Photo by Heather Wiley for Drew Altizer © 2008*



*Clara Shayevich takes a playful pose with top hat and matching silver appointed walking stick*

*Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008*



*David Costello and Clara Shayevich*  
**Photo by Heather Wiley for Drew Altizer © 2008**



*Kimberly Givsan, Ludmila Eggleton, and Mark Calvano*  
*[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)*



*[Photo by Heather Wiley for Drew Altizer © 2008](#)*



*Francis Rigney, Past Chairperson of Raphael House, chats with Robert Sztam*  
*[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)*



*Francis Rigney and Sophie Azouaou*  
*[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)*



*Joel Goodrich, left, with Joe Alioto Veronese*  
*[Photo by Heather Wiley for Drew Altizer © 2008](#)*



*Joe Alioto Veronese, left, and Pat Murphy*  
*[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)*



Jose Cisneros, Sophie Azouaou and Pat Murphy  
*[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)*

Napata and the Kisses moved action to the dance floor.



*[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)*



*Inessa Oberhuber and Stanislav Mikhailou rock-it on the dance floor*  
*[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)*



*[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)*



*After the various fundraising auctions a band gets the crowd up on their feet to dance the night away*

**[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)**



**[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)**



*Theresa Villa, proprietor of [Foot Candy](#) in Walnut Creek donated for auction a high end Jimmy Choo bag which scored heavy bidding from the crowd*

*[Photo by Jason Steinberg © 2008](#)*

To donate online to Raphael House, [click here](#).

See Related: [PHILANTHROPY](#)



[Jason Steinberg](#)

**San Francisco Photojournalist**

Jason Steinberg is a San Francisco based photographer whose photojournalistic style (San Francisco Sate University- B.A. Journalism-photo emphasis) documents the Bay Area scene while capturing those fleeting moments of grand emotion that last. Jason has a sense of ease that transforms his clients' apprehensions and anxieties about having their image made. Additionally, his personality enables him to move amongst the crowd, to capture hidden moments. Visit Bay Area events at [Steinberg Imagery's Galleries](#). For a complete selection of photos, [click here](#). Email the photographer at: [jason@steinbergimagery.com](mailto:jason@steinbergimagery.com).