

# Making Strides

The Children's Cancer & Blood Foundation gets a lift from the Breakthrough Ball. *by Charles Grodin*

I'M INVOLVED IN MANY CHARITABLE efforts, having worked with about 20 nonprofit organizations with focuses ranging from prisoners' issues to multiple sclerosis. I'm in great demand as a host (although I don't know if it's because I'm good or because I don't charge anything). This month I'll be hosting the Breakthrough Ball fundraiser for the Children's Cancer & Blood Foundation (CCBF), which provides funding for research and clinical care for thousands of children at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center's division of pediatric hematology and oncology.

When chairman Les Lieberman and his wife, Barri, who have dedicated themselves to this great foundation, asked me to become involved, I visited the hospital and research laboratory. This is where thousands of young people receive clinical care each year, and where the doctors and scientists seek new treatments and cures for cancers and serious blood diseases such as hemophilia, sickle-cell anemia, HIV/AIDS, ITP, and thalassemia. I watched as a young girl received a blood transfusion. Afterward, I asked the doctors about her prognosis. They said, "Good, but it wouldn't have been years ago." And now, because funding for healthcare—including research into children's diseases—has been cut due to the financial drain of the Iraq war, support for the CCBF is more crucial than ever before.

These committed doctors and staff are having an impact on the lives of sick children and their families. Each day their work contributes to the development of cures and enhanced treatments that can provide real hope and longer, healthier lives for our young patients. In other words, the CCBF saves children's lives.

The Breakthrough Ball is not only a great way to ensure that no child is refused treatment, regardless of his or her family's ability to pay, but it also provides an opportunity to recognize others for their charitable work. Last year's honoree, Tiki Barber, will present the Breakthrough Spirit award to baseball star and New York Yankee analyst Al Leiter; founder of Save One Life Inc., Lauren Kelley; artist and music producer Swizz Beatz; and actor/activist Steve Guttenberg. Our auction will include art-



Les Lieberman, Princess Ghida Talal of Jordan, and Charles Grodin.

work donated by Richard Serra, Tom Otterness, and Ugo Rondinone, while Sharon Jones and the Dap-Kings and Lightning Lou Christie will provide the entertainment. And I'll also make an effort to amuse.

*The Children's Cancer & Blood Foundation Breakthrough Ball will be held on October 28 at the Plaza Hotel, Fifth Avenue at Central Park South. For tickets call 212-297-4339; for more information or to make a donation, visit [childrenscbf.org](http://childrenscbf.org).*

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