

# Lighting the Dark

## One charity fights to prevent blindness

By Pasha Carroll  
Neighbor Newspapers Staff Writer

When Cindy Bachman's son, Reese, tugged at her skirt and asked his mommy in a teeny tiny voice to light the dark, Ms. Bachman knew her fight would be long and hard.

When Reese was only 2 years old, he was diagnosed with bilateral cataracts, a condition his pediatrician didn't catch. Reese completely lost the sight in his left eye before the severity of his condition was discovered.

"He had had vision, the part of his eye never formed," Ms. Bachman said.

Since then it has been a personal war for Ms. Bachman to prevent blindness, since it can be prevented if it is caught early.

Even Reese, now a 9-year-old with glasses, has waged a similar war. Each year when somebody asks Reese what he is doing for his birthday, he says, "I help blind people for my birthday."

Ms. Bachman tries to find different ways to get the word out that blindness is preventable. She joined the staff of Prevent Blindness Georgia as the Development Director more than a year ago.

The most recent brainchild of Ms. Bachman was Fashion Focus, an event which earned more than \$20,000 for PBGA.

Rex Weston, a Buckhead stylist, joined forces with PBGA, he said, "Because it is one of the true nonprofits."

Weston donated his time, and Saks Fifth Avenue at Phipps Plaza donated the space for the unique event. Weston sat each of the more than 50 guests in chair, for their personal consultation. He advised each woman on clothes, including colors,

necklines, sleeve lengths, and structure to work for them. He also suggested hairstyle and color, makeup and jewelry for each woman.

After the consultation, the women set out to find the "What to Wear" standards that Weston set. If the women followed Weston's guidelines, he delighted at the results. But if she strayed far from her set standards, he threw her back to the racks.

The \$100 ticket price was, of course the consultation, a Swag bag filled with beauty secrets (like SPANKS) of the stars, hors d'oeuvres and cocktails.

Weston said he was happy to lend his expertise to the cause, which he said, "Is a matter of life and death when you lose your eyesight."

Jenny Pomeroy, the President of PBGA, started in the '70s as a vision screener. She said the event was a success for PBGA and hopes to host another soon.

The work that PBGA does in the community is extensive. PBGA helps prevent blindness by going into preschools. They went into 22,000 last year and plan to make it into 25,000 this year.

With the help of a grant from Sandy Springs Society, PBGA provides vision screening to approximately 315 4-year-olds and also provided



Nathan Self/Staff  
Cindy Bachman, Development Director for Prevent Blindness Georgia, sits with her 9-year-old son Reese. Reese's vision problem was the catalyst for Ms. Bachman's crusade to prevent blindness.

eye examinations and eyeglasses to about 25 underprivileged adults in Sandy Springs through their Vision Outreach Program.

Ms. Bachman will continue to personally go into schools to teach how to prevent blindness.

"Reese is the reason this thing is so close to my heart and I am so passionate," Ms. Bachman said.

"When a kid asks you to light the dark, you want to light it for everyone."

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