

2017



## DC's Dancing Stars Gala Coverage Report





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# BISNOW

## (ALMOST) NEVER BORING

### DC Dancing Stars Gala Launch Party!

September 21, 2017 Travis Holler, Bisnow

Dance enthusiasts, community leaders and local D.C. celebrities headed to the Tower Club Tysons Corner last week for the D.C. Dancing Stars Gala Launch Party! Here, MeeHee Lee, SuHa Mousa, Javier Buentello, Irene Bueno, Felicia Budiman and Roddy Toms enjoy the fun at the 2017 D.C.'s Dancing Stars Gala Launch Party.



The launch party introduced the Corporate Challenge participants who will be competing in this year's Dancing Stars Gala to help win money for the charity of their choice. Here, 2017 Celebrity Dancer and Fox 5 film critic Kevin McCarthy gets some tips on winning the competition from 2016 D.C.'s Dancing Stars Gala Champion Krystal Koons of Koons Automotive.

The Dancing Stars Gala will be held Saturday, Nov. 11, at the Sheraton Tysons Hotel. Here, Fred Astaire Fairfax Professionals Javier Buentello and Jason Rushing flank the 2017 Corporate Challenge Dancers, Rosenthal Automotive's Geraldine Mendez, CACI's Erika Glon, Booz Allen Hamilton's Kari Merkel, Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation's Jennifer Myers and Sotheby's International's Joy Deevy.





## ***Markette Sheppard joins DC's Dancing Stars Gala***

Guess who's one of DC's Dancing Stars this year? One WUSA9 host is getting on her feet for a cause.

Author: Markette Sheppard

Published: 3:04 PM EDT October 24, 2017

Updated: 8:31 PM EDT October 24, 2017

When it comes to non-profit events in the Washington area, not too many can compete with DC's Dancing Stars Gala. The annual charity event has raised close to \$1 million in just a few short years.

It's due in large part to the involvement of high-profile Washingtonians who lend their names (and smooth moves) to the event each year and the popularity of the Emmy-award winning television series *Dancing With the Stars*, according to the event's founder Maria Coakley David.



"We started four years ago and just modeled it after the TV show," says David, a Fairfax County-based construction company CEO, who also happens to love the art of dance. "We just thought it would be really fun to get local celebrities involved."

National celebrities also join in on the fun, like DWTS cast member and professional ballroom dancer, Chelsea Hightower, who will serve as a celebrity judge this year.

Alumni of the event include WUSA9's Larry Miller, Mikea Turner and Andrea Roane. Miller, who took home the coveted Mirror Ball Trophy in a prior year, will emcee this year's event.

Adding to the roster of WUSA9 talent is yours truly. I was asked in September to take part, and even though I have two left feet, I strongly believe giving back to one's community is always a step in the right direction.

"It's really a lot of fun, especially when we get to work with the likes of Markette Sheppard coming into the studio," says Javier Buentello, co-owner and director of the Fred Astaire Dance Studio of Fairfax, Va.

"It's a great cause," says Buentello, who also donates his time as a professional dancer and instructor for the gala each year.

Money raised by this year's dance competition goes to non-profits that do work in the Washington Metro region. This year's beneficiaries include the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Operation Renewed Hope Foundation, the Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation and Marymount University.

# THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

## ***Reliable Source: Sean Spicer to judge DC dance contest because ... why not?***

By Helena Andrews-Dyer  
Washington Post

WASHINGTON – Well, it's not the Emmys but it's ... something.

On Saturday, Sean Spicer, the former White House press secretary who was famously lampooned on “Saturday Night Live” and later celebrated at the Primetime Emmy Awards, is set to judge a local dance-off pitting “Washington famous” folk against one another for charity.

Spicer, who's on the paid speaker circuit post-White House, joins ballroom dancer Chelsie Hightower and the Washington Ballet's artistic director, Julie Kent, at the judges' table for D.C.'s Dancing Stars Gala, which hopes to raise \$1 million for area nonprofits.

The “stars” foxtrotting for charity include Michael D. Bellaman, president of the Associated Builders and Contractors; WUSA9's Markette Sheppard; Fox 5 entertainment reporter Kevin McCarthy; and Miss USA Deshauna Barber, among others.

This isn't the embattled former Trumper's first brush with the dance floor. Back in August, TMZ reported that Spicer turned down an opportunity to tango on ABC's competition show “Dancing With the Stars” because of an “overwhelming number of commitments in the fall.” Guess Saturday's show at the Sheraton Tysons Hotel is one of them.





# SPEY.®

## ***PAUL ASHE OF SPEY TO COMPETE IN DC'S DANCING STARS GALA***

What's round and shiny and envy-inducing? The famed mirror ball trophy of the hit show *Dancing with the Stars*, of course. So, when our very own Paul Ashe, founding chief executive of Spey, was invited to compete in DC's Dancing Stars Gala, he leapt (shall we say, jeté?) at the chance. He's pictured above with gala co-chairs Maria Coakley David and Jim David, and dancer Karina Vidal.

### ***What is DC's Dancing Stars Gala?***

To be held the evening of November 11, 2017, at The Sheraton Tysons Hotel just across the Potomac River in Virginia, DC's Dancing Stars Gala is a competition mirroring the glitz, glamour, and drama of the TV show – with all the beautifully choreographed dance sequences and sequined ball gowns that we've come to love. The event supports many excellent nonprofit organizations in the Washington, DC community, including The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, and Operation Renewed Hope Foundation. Over the past three years, the event has donated more than \$700,000 to an outstanding list of charities, with a goal this year to exceed \$1 million.

Mr. Ashe has been given the challenge of raising funds to support the cause while learning a polished ballroom dance routine to perform at the star-studded event, alongside a professional partner. A panel of celebrity judges, including famed dancer-choreographer Chelsie Hightower and the ever-lovely Artistic Director of The Washington Ballet, Julie Kent, will select the winner and decide who will take home not only the trophy, but also \$10,000 for the charity of their choice. The gala will include a VIP cocktail reception, a gourmet dinner, the competition, a silent auction, professional performances, and a live band.

There are eight notables dancing to compete against Mr. Ashe, including former Under Secretary of Defense Diane Morales, and Washington Redskins' Cheerleading Coach Michelle Stephenson. Football legend Charles Mann will serve as the evening's emcee. But the question on everyone's mind: what will he be dancing? Mr. Ashe has chosen the dance of the bullfighter, the Paso Doble, as his dance du jour. If he wins, the \$10,000 prize will be donated to support scholarship and engagement programs at the incredible Puerto Rico International Piano Festival.



### ***There are three ways to support***

If you'd like to get involved, and we'd be very appreciative if you would, consider supporting in one of these three easy ways:

1. Invite your friends and coworkers to donate in support of Mr. Ashe online. Every dollar counts toward his score and that must-have mirror ball trophy!
2. For businesses and individuals wanting to do more, consider sponsoring the gala, purchasing a program ad, or contributing to the silent auction. Simply get in touch and we'll happily provide you with all the necessary details.
3. Shop the collection of jewelry and little luxuries at [Spey.com](http://Spey.com) and include "Dancing Stars" in the Order Notes field during checkout online. All profits will be donated to the cause.

For our part, we'll make sure Mr. Ashe keeps his feet moving and practicing between now and the gala. A lot of money is on the line for a cause very dear to our heart!



# OPERATION RENEWED HOPE FOUNDATION

Ending Veteran Homelessness

DC's Dancing Stars Gala is an exciting new fundraising event full of all the fun, glitz and glamour of the hit TV show Dancing with the Stars! Local DC Celebrities will learn a polished choreographed routine and perform at the Gala with a professional partner from Fred Astaire Fairfax in a competition mirroring the television show. A panel of celebrity judges along with the audience will select the winner who will win the coveted mirror ball trophy and \$10,000 for the charity of their choice.



The gala will include a VIP cocktail reception, a sit down gourmet dinner, the competition, a silent auction, professional performances, and a live band.

Join in and dance (or vote) for ORHF!

# The Washington Post

## Sean Spicer to judge D.C. dance contest because why not

By Helena Andrews-Dyer | PUBLISHED ON NOVEMBER 9, 2017

Well, it's not the Emmys but it's . . . something.

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## D.C. dances the night away at annual fundraising gala

By Times Staff  
November 10, 2017

The fourth annual DC's Dancing Stars Gala returns to the Sheraton Tysons Corner on Saturday, Nov. 11, with nine local celebrities facing off for the DC's Dancing Stars Gala Champion Trophy in support of area nonprofits. The event has donated more than \$700,000 to their charity partners over the past three years, and expects to eclipse the one million dollar mark with the proceeds from this year's event.

The line-up of celebrity dancers includes: President & CEO of Associated Builders and Contractor Michael D. Bellaman; the Honorable Diane K. Morales; co-founder and partner of NVG LLC, Irene Bueno; WUSA9 Great Day Washington Host Markette Sheppard; Founding Chief Executive of Spey Paul Ashe; FOX5DC Film Critic & entertainment reporter Kevin McCarthy; 2016 Miss USA Deshauna Barber; Philanthropist and Real Estate Mogul Lola Reinsch; and Washington Redskins Cheerleading Coach Michelle Stephenson. The winner of the competition receives the coveted Mirror Ball Trophy and \$10,000 to the charity of their choice.

Corporate Challenge Participants Jennifer Myers – Executive Director of the Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation, Caroline Coakley of BeautyCounter, Erika Glon of CACI International, and Kari Merkel of Booz Allen Hamilton, will also compete for a chance to win \$10,000 for the charity of their choice. Celebrities and corporate challenge dancers are paired with professionals from Fred Astaire Dance Studio of Fairfax, and will be judged by Dancing with the Stars cast member Chelsie Hightower, The Washington Ballet's Artistic Director Julie Kent, and former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer.



The evening's program will be emceed by NFL veteran Charles Mann, and WUSA9 reporter Larry Miller, a DC's Dancing Stars Gala alum. In addition to the night's performances, the gala committee is pleased to present the Operation Renewed Hope Foundation (ORHF) Patriot Award to Everett Alvarez.

Commander Alvarez is a distinguished Naval officer, attorney, and civil servant best known to the public as the first American aviator shot down over North Vietnam. Alvarez will receive the award from Martha-Ann Alito, who is a member of the ORHF Board of Directors.

The gala will also feature a silent auction, with one-of-a-kind items such as an autographed pair of Oprah Winfrey's shoes and experiences such as a week in Turks and Caicos, a golfer's dream trip with four nights luxury accommodations in Ireland for two people with four rounds of golf on four unique courses with an elite golf coach accompanying the group on every hole.

DC's Dancing Stars Gala will generate hundreds of thousands of dollars to support local charities including The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Marymount University, Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation and Operation Renewed Hope Foundation.



## ***Sean Spicer To Judge Dancing Stars Gala In Tysons***

The former press secretary may have turned down "Dancing with the Stars," but he's judging a similar competition in Tysons this weekend.

By Emily Leayman, Patch Staff | Nov 10, 2017 9:55 am ET



TYSONS, VA—Sean Spicer was known for his quarrels with the media behind the podium at the White House, but would he be the Simon Cowell of dance judges? Guests at DC's Dancing Stars in Tysons will find out this weekend, as Spicer is one of the judges.

DC's Dancing Stars Gala is a fundraising event based off "Dancing with the Stars." Local DC celebrities will pair up with a professional partner from Fred Astaire Fairfax in a competition mirroring the television show. The gala will be held at the Tysons Sheraton Hotel Saturday, Nov. 11. Tickets start at \$195.

Spicer and the other celebrity judges along with the audience will choose the winner, who will get \$10,000 for the charity of their choice. He will be joined by "Dancing With the Stars" cast member Chelsie Hightower and The Washington Ballet's artistic director Julie Kent, making him the only non-dancer judge.

So why pick Spicer?

Since resigning from the White House in July after Anthony Scaramucci became White House communications director, he has been no stranger to the entertainment industry. He made a surprise appearance at the Emmy's, poking fun at his infamous tirade about President Trump's inauguration crowd size.

He also reportedly turned down a stint on "Dancing With the Stars" in August, according to TMZ. A source told the entertainment news site, "He's not a good dancer."

Well, he'll get to judge dance moves of other people. Or at least the crowd size.

# Globalnews

## ***D.C. dances the night away at annual fundraising gala***

Posted By: adminon: November 10, 2017



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Corporate Challenge Participants Jennifer Myers – Executive Director of the Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation, Caroline Coakley of BeautyCounter, Erika Glon of CACI International, and Kari Merkel of Booz Allen Hamilton, will also compete for a chance to win \$10,000 for the charity of their choice. Celebrities and corporate challenge dancers are paired with professionals from Fred Astaire Dance Studio of Fairfax, and will be judged by Dancing with the Stars cast member Chelsie Hightower, The Washington Ballet's Artistic Director Julie Kent, and former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer.

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## ***DC's Dancing Stars on Good Day DC!***





## **Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation received \$100,000, the largest check ever presented in the DC's Dancing Stars Gala's four-year history**

Posted on 02/12/2018 by Jen Myers

### *In Four Years DC's Dancing Stars Gala Donates \$1,042,500 for Local Charities*

Washington, D.C. (February 12, 2018) – On Thursday, February 8, DC's Dancing Stars Gala presented seven local charities with a total of \$333,000 in donations raised at this year's Gala bringing their four-year total to \$1,042,500. Beneficiaries included The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Marymount University, Operation Renewed Hope Foundation, the Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation, Operation Second Chance, the Amelia Morgan Foundation and the Raymond A. Wood Foundation.

The Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation (JB-LF) received the largest check presented in the DC's Dancing Stars Gala's four-year history. The \$100,000 donation will aid in the charity's mission to assist economically vulnerable mothers and infants by working to increase access to maternal and pediatric health care and support. "We are immensely grateful to Maria Coakley David, Jim David and the rest of the DC's Dancing Stars team for the opportunity to participate in this charity event, and we were floored when we learned that JB-LF would be the recipient of this record-breaking \$100,000 donation," said Jennifer Myers, executive director of the Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. "Through this generosity, we'll be able to help even more low-income expectant mothers and their babies get a fair start to life."

The post gala celebration and check presentation event was attended by many past celebrity and corporate dancers including the 2015, 2016, and 2017 Mirror Ball Trophy winners: Matt Shank, President of Marymount University, Krystal Koons, spokeswoman for Jim Koons Automotive Group, and Lola Reinsch, CEO of the E.G. Reinsch Companies. Krystal set a new fundraising record for the gala, raising \$115,000 when she competed in 2016.

The main event, which took place on Saturday, November 11, 2017, was hosted by founders Maria Coakley David and Jim David at the Sheraton Tyson's Corner and featured 9 local Celebrities and 4 Corporate Challenge Dancers.



The winner of the Mirror Ball Trophy and \$10,000 for her charity, Marymount University, was Lola Reinsch, a commercial real estate developer, and philanthropist currently serving as CEO of the E.G. Reinsch Companies, who raised \$60,000 in cash and sponsorships from more than 55 donors.

The winner of the Corporate Challenge, Caroline Coakley of Beautycounter, chose as her beneficiary the Raymond A. Wood Foundation, an organization that provides quality of life support for childhood brain tumor survivors and their families. With the winning \$10,000 donation, the organization will be able to provide a handheld blood analyzer to a child suffering from diabetes insipidus. Handheld blood analyzers are hospital grade devices that are expensive, not covered by insurance and difficult to purchase for home use.

# SPEY.®

We at Spey are renowned for our exceptional collections of jewelry, particularly our most lustrous pearls (and the newest limited-release amber collection). With smooth, glistening, mirror-like surfaces of the richest nacre, Spey pearls are a step above the rest. But this weekend, Spey pearls reflected something a little extra special: **mirror ball luster**.



Image: Miss USA 2016 Deshauna Barber, Kari Merkel, Michelle Stephenson, Washington Redskins' Charles Mann, Paul Ashe, Karina Vidal, Irene Bueno, and Kevin McCarthy. Credit: Washington Life.

## Dancing with the pearls

Most will be familiar with the hit television show *Dancing with the Stars* – celebrities pair with professional dancers to compete for the coveted mirror ball trophy – and for one night each year, this entertainment is brought to our nation's capital. **DC's Dancing Stars Gala** brings together local celebrities and Washingtonians for an evening of dance in support of a good cause. This year, our very own Paul Ashe was selected to compete. Over the course of 12 weeks, he studied the dramatic Paso Doble with professional ballroom dancer Karina Vidal. This weekend, he performed this intense dance of the bull fighter (while wearing 72 inches of pearls) in front of a crowd of hundreds.

## A reason to dance

Through some incredible sponsorships and the leveraged networks of the competing celebrities, the gala raises crucial funds for several area nonprofits and charities, like Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, The Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation, and Operation Renewed Hope Foundation. To up the ante, the winner of the competition may give \$10,000 to an additional charity of their own choosing. That's certainly a reason to dance! Mr. Ashe selected the Puerto Rico International Piano Festival to support. The incredible artistry and talent of the students proves the organization's worth, but the spirit and heart it engenders is beyond measure. And while Puerto Rico remains in great need of even the most basic essentials following the devastation of recent hurricanes, the Festival helps to uplift and nourish the soul of the island. Art brings people together, helps people cope with the toughest of times, and inspires people to celebrate the beauty that can be found around us. The Festival does just that.

## The judges' choice

Emmy-nominated dancer and choreographer Chelsie Hightower, The Washington Ballet's Julie Kent, and former White House press secretary Sean Spicer judged the nine contestants' dances and, after anxiously bated breath, delivered their verdict. With three 10s, the only perfect score of the evening, Mr. Ashe clenched the title of Judges' Choice! The mirror ball trophy he was presented raises awareness for the Puerto Rico International Piano Festival, and is a standing and shining reminder of the good that comes from art and a little dance.



## DC's Dancing Stars Gala nets more than \$300,000 for local charities

By Gregg MacDonald/Fairfax County Times  
November 17, 2017

On Nov. 11, the fourth annual DC's Dancing Stars Gala in Tysons netted more than \$300,000 for local charities, and it was done with the utmost of style.

The event was hosted by co-chairs Maria Coakley David and Jim David at the Sheraton Tyson's Corner and featured nine local celebrities including Former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer (the real one, not the Melissa McCarthy version) and four 'Corporate Challenge Dancers' who spent the past several months training for the gala performance. Local businesswoman Lola Reinsch took first prize, raising more than \$50,000 in cash and sponsorships from more than 100 donors.

Spicer served on the judge's panel, where he was by far the harshest critic of the trio, which also included Chelsie Hightower from TV's *Dancing With The Stars* and Washington Ballet Artistic Director Julie Kent.



Celebrity Dancer Paul Ashe (of Spey Pearls and fine jewelry) and Fred Astaire Fairfax professional dancer Karina Vidal perform the 'Paso Doble' which won them the only perfect score of the evening, and the Judges Choice Award, during DC's Dancing Stars Gala in Tysons Corner.

President and CEO of Associated Builders and Contractors Michael D. Bellaman was the runner-up winning \$5,000 for the Morgan Amelia Foundation. Caroline Coakley, Director at Beautycounter, was the winner of the Corporate Challenge, and will direct her \$10,000 prize money to the Raymond A. Wood Foundation. The Corporate Challenge winner was determined in the same way as the overall winner: 60 percent judges scores and 40 percent funds raised. Coakley raised over \$60,000 and had one of the top scoring performances.

"We're thrilled to have hosted another successful and fun evening for our local charities," said Maria Coakley David, CEO of C.J. Coakley Co., Inc. and co-chair of DC's Dancing Stars Gala. "I'm so proud of all of our dancers, who rehearsed tirelessly and gave it their all. My husband Jim and I are avid dancers, and we're so pleased to share our love of dancing with others as we change lives one dance step at a time."

Former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer made his debut at the judges table and he kept the crowd laughing! He was joined by Chelsie Hightower, best known as a dancer, partner, trainer and choreographer for ABC's hit show *Dancing with the Stars*, and Washington Ballet Director Julie Kent. Emceeding the event were Larry Miller of WUSA9 and former Washington Redskin Charles Mann.

Local charities were beneficiaries of the event, such as: The DC Chapter of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society,

Operation Renewed Hope Foundation, Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation and Student Scholarships to attend Marymount University.

## In Four Years DC's Dancing Stars Gala Donates \$1,042,500 for Local Charities

Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation (JB-LF) received \$100,000 the largest check ever presented in the DC's Dancing Stars Gala's four-year history

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# WASHINGTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Reality Checks

**D.C.'s Dancing Stars Gala presented seven local charities with donations raised at the November 2017 benefit totaling \$333,000, of which the largest gift was a \$100,000 check for the Jennifer Bush-Lawson Foundation. Other beneficiaries includes the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Marymount University, Operation Renewed Hope Foundation, the Amelia Morgan Foundation and the Raymond A. Wood Foundation. The check presentation was held Feb. 8 at the Mosaic Ballroom in Fairfax.**



**D.C.'s Dancing Stars Gala 2017 Corporate challenge winner Caroline Coakley of BeautyCounter, left, with Maria Coakley and Elaine Doody, both of C.J. Coakley Co.**

## Sean Spicer Judged a Dance Contest Last Weekend

WRITTEN BY BENJAMIN FREED | PHOTOGRAPHED BY EVY MAGES | PUBLISHED ON NOVEMBER 15, 2017

Former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer hasn't been able to get a permanent television-commentator role since leaving the Trump Administration in August. But that doesn't mean he doesn't still get gigs soliciting his spot reactions. Last Saturday, Spicer turned up in Tysons Corner to judge a ballroom-dancing contest featuring participants from the famous-for-Washington and local-philanthropist sets.

The fourth-annual DC's Dancing Stars Gala raised about \$300,000 for area charities, according to its organizers. The evening also featured remarks by Martha-Ann Alito, wife of Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito, who turned misty-eyed when she spoke about veterans' service organizations.

As for the dance-judging, Spicer was, thankfully, joined by two others with more choreography knowledge: Julie Kent, who took over this year as artistic director of the Washington Ballet, and Chelsie Hightower, a trainer featured on *Dancing With the Stars*. Spicer's own commentary, while less flustered than some of his White House press conferences, was mostly limited to repeating silly lines like "you stole some moves from me." (Such a claim would seem to be at odds with reports last summer that Spicer had been approached to appear on *Dancing With the Stars*, to which a source told TMZ that the former press secretary was "not a good dancer.")

Still, those who can't dance, judge dancing. And even if many on the outside are uncomfortable with Spicer's attempts to ingratiate himself back into the public's embrace with stunts like his appearance at the Emmy Awards, among the dancing-gala set, he appeared to be quite welcome.

