

[back to article](#)



Printed on page BM4

Event raises hope for violence victims

By WENDY DEWHURST Correspondent

Published: Wednesday, March 11, 2009 at 1:00 a.m.

This year, organizers of Hope Family Services' 12th annual Black and White Dinner Dance and Auction added the word "Light" to the title.

In recognition of tough economic times, guests were asked to remember that challenges also are taking a toll on some of the most vulnerable people in the community, the clients of Hope.

Proceeds from Saturday's event at IMG Academies at El Conquistador Country Club will help Hope, which provides shelter for domestic violence victims and their families.

As guests dined on pork loin, grouper and pasta dishes, the music of John Rinell entertained the crowd.

In addition to silent auction items available for bidding, patrons also could give a direct pledge to a fund to help furnish the new Hope facility, which is expected to be completed this summer by Halfacre Construction Co. Hope's current facility has 16 beds, compared with 35 that will be in the new building.

"As everyone struggles with a difficult economy, our contribution is a wonderful way for us to give back to an important part of our community," Halfacre Construction President Jack Cox said.

The highlight of the evening was the live auction.

Auctioneer John Vita had the crowd in bidding wars for items such as golf vacations, fishing excursions, sailing cruises and dinner prepared by Hope supporter state Sen. Mike Bennett, R-Bradenton, and his wife, Dee Bennett.

After the auction, the much-anticipated 50/50 prize drawing ticket was announced, and winner Ken Brown donated his winnings back to Hope.

Laurel Lynch, the director of Hope Family Services, said she was thrilled with the sold-out attendance.

"We deal with a lot of negative situations in our day-to-day work, so it is nice to have these events to see all the uplifting support from the community," Lynch said.

This story appeared in print on page BM4