

A Magical Evening By Alice J. Levine

Most of us remember the incredible strength and courage of Christopher and Dana Reeve. Their commitment to improve the lives of people who have suffered spinal cord injuries and to help find a cure for spinal cord paralysis inspired them to establish the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation.

The Foundation's most important fundraiser will be a star-studded event called "A Magical Evening", to be held on Wednesday, November 17th at 6:30 P.M. at the Marriott Marquis in New York City. The evening will begin with a cocktail hour, followed by dinner, dancing and presentations to the recipients of the Foundation awards.

The 2010 recipient of the "visionary leadership award", which is given to an individual or corporation that leads by example and makes significant contributions to people with paralysis, is Armonk-based IBM. In addition to making a conscientious effort to provide diversity in the workforce and hire employees with disabilities, IBM has also been an innovator in developing software, hardware, and web applications that help everyone living with a disability. Aimee Hunnewell, Vice-President of Development for the Reeve Foundation, said, "IBM has always been a visionary in developing software and creating many other innovations for employees with disabilities. They also try to make the work environment as user-friendly as possible. They are a company that truly cares about their community and all their employees, including those with disabilities."

Tickets for "A Magical Evening" are available through the Foundation Benefits Department, and can be ordered by calling (212) 763-8594. The cost of each ticket is \$1,000. Aimee explained, "While the price may seem high, it is truly a wonderful, enjoyable evening that lives up to its name year after year, while also benefiting a great cause."

Susan Allison, owner of NatureScapes in Armonk, is also involved in a fundraiser for the foundation. Susan was a neighbor of the Reeves in Bedford, and she recalls the positive attitudes that both Christopher and Dana possessed. Susan commented, "Both of them were truly inspirational to me. They never focused on the constant hardships they endured. Instead, they worked tirelessly to help others with paralysis and push for a cure."

Susan collaborated with Colorblends, a flower wholesaler based in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and the Foundation in 2008 to form a daffodil fundraiser entitled "Spring Forward". One daffodil bulb available is glowing-yellow with orange cups, while the other is a double bulb with yellow petals, speckled with a reddish-orange color. Daffodils, fortunately, are both rodent and deer proof. The colors of the daffodils are reminiscent of Superman, which many of us remember as one of Christopher Reeve's

defining roles as an actor. Colorblends will donate 40% of the purchase price of the daffodil bulbs to the foundation. Last year 300 of the Spring Forward bulbs purchased by local patrons were planted in front of the Armonk Firehouse. If you are interested in ordering these beautiful bulbs and supporting the foundation, go to colorblends.com or call (888) 847-8637.

Christopher Reeve's children have always been very involved with the Foundation, which not only raises money to support research and help those with spinal cord injuries, but also continues to raise public awareness of spinal cord research. Christopher's and Dana's positive energy and strength continues to live on through the Foundation.