

Dining with Friends and Dining for Friends

THP neighborhood dinner benefits HIV/AIDS victims

The theme of this week's column is dining with friends and dining for friends. I really didn't know what to expect as I arrived on the beautiful tree-lined Edgedale Drive. It was a neighborhood party. It was a neighborhood dinner. It was a fundraiser. It was all of those things ... a neighborhood progressive dinner party to benefit and to bring awareness about the Triad Health Project. It had been a while since I have written anything about the Triad Health Project so I was definitely very intrigued when Sallie Bardelas made sure that my events calendar included the Edgedale Drive "Sheltering Hope" Progressive Dinner.

In case you need a reminder, the Triad Health Project, a partner agency of both the United Way of Greensboro and the United Way of Greater High Point is a total-support program for those affected by HIV/AIDS. Incredible strides have been made in the past 30 years since the HIV/AIDS crisis was first discovered. At that time the diagnosis of HIV/AIDS meant an automatic death sentence. Today the illness is viewed as a chronic and manageable disease. Still certain stigmas remain, and getting help for those who have been affected is the primary concern for the Triad Health Project.

As I parked on Edgedale, I began to see many of the neighbors strolling the sidewalk to David Crompton's home. Crompton is a new resident of High Point and recently bought his home on Edgedale and is both restoring and designing renovations inside and out. It was neighbor Todd Nabors, the official host of the dinner, who persuaded the new resident to be one of the three hosts for the evening. The dinner began at Crompton's home with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres and then moved to Nabors for the entrees and more hors d'oeuvres and then desserts and coffee at the home of Sallie and Tony Bardelas.

The first neighbor I met as we approached the Crompton home was Buzz Pendry. Walking up the driveway, we were welcomed by Ken Keeton, director of Development and Community Involvement for the Triad Health Project. I asked him about this fundraiser, "Sheltering Hope." I had no idea that each year there are literally hundreds of parties around the Triad given by "hosts" who invite friends and neighbors to a fun evening. It is a great way to bring awareness by offering a wonderful dinner in exchange to a donation for the Triad Health Project. The "Dining with Friends" idea was started in 1990 by a group of concerned Guilford County residents just as the full impact of the AIDS epidemic was being felt in the area. Since that time, in Guilford County alone, the event has raised more than \$2 million.

What a wonderful idea for a fundraiser, for fun, for friendship! Sallie Bardelas first told me about it at the dinner for

NY Times best selling author Andre Dubus III when he was the guest author for the High Point Literary League. In an earlier column I told you that the movie version of his latest book, "The Garden of Last Days" was to begin shooting this summer. As it turned out, the location for the filming was here in North Carolina, more specifically headquartered in Winston-Salem and perhaps including High Point locations. The cameras were about "ready to roll" and then just like that, the "plug" was pulled on the project. I am sure that Rebecca Clark, director of the Piedmont Triad Film Commission, like many others in the film industry is very disappointed. This comes after a record year for filmmaking in the Piedmont Triad with an estimated economic impact of \$32 million.

The backyard at the Crompton home was so beautiful. The garden party atmosphere permeated throughout the evening at each home. The music of Keith Byrd played gently as a soft breeze rustled through the trees. Other neighbors and guests began to arrive including Fred & Courtney Best and daughter Mason Ward. Congratulations to Courtney who has been selected as the High Point recipient of the Julia B. Nile For Love of Family Award by Family Service of the Piedmont. The presentation will be at the annual meeting on September 23rd at the Sedgefield Country Club.

Also attending were Judge Jan and Sylvia Samet, Marshall Edwards and his wife Connie Brown, Maurice and Laura Hull and Austin and April Carty. Wonderful news for the Carty's ... they are expecting their first child, a baby girl, in November. Congratulations! Also, Austin, author of "High Points and Lows: Life, Faith, and Figuring It All Out" who was one of the contestants on the CBS television show "Survivor: Panama" (he was way too nice to "survive") is now attending divinity school.

Other neighbors included Sheila Hanson, Ginny Ratchford, Dianne Hackney, Ellen Irving and Jeanne and John Thorn. Hillcrest Drive was represented also by Steven and Pamela Goodbred and Jim and Ann Morgan. Jim and Ann are two of the most passionate supporters of anything and everything High Point. It made me laugh when a regular reader of "About Town" said to me, "I think you go to as many events as Jim Morgan!"

The weather was wonderful as we progressed from the Crompton home to the home of Todd Nabors. The tent, the decorations, the food ... all sublime thanks to Nabors and help from his friend Frank Delfino. During the festivities I sought out Keeton and asked about the severity of HIV/AIDS in High Point. He told me that the young people are the most vulnerable and considered high risk, and once infected ... unaware they have the



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David Crompton, Sallie Bardelas with Laura and Maurice Hull at the Edgedale Drive Progressive Dinner for Triad Health Project.

virus. Keeton handed out informational material to bring awareness to Triad Health Project and the work they do.

Their vision statement avers, "We will stand together for as long as it takes until HIV/AIDS is no more, working together to promote enlightenment, dignity, acceptance." In order to do this, they provide innumerable services such as referrals to medication assistance programs, food pantry and nutritional education, referrals to area Social Services organizations, housing, mental health referrals, legal services, alcohol and substance abuse resources, temporary financial assistance, transportation to medical appointments and support groups.

As the evening began to settle into night, the entire group then walked a few doors to the home of Sallie and Tony Bardelas for scrumptious desserts and coffee served with or without additional spirits. Enjoying dessert and coffee, guests relaxed on the patio of the Bardelas home.

Amidst the laughter also came the memory of those whose lives have been lost and of those who continue to struggle with HIV/AIDS in our community. For those affected with HIV/AIDS, thank goodness for the work of the Triad Health Project.

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Edgedale Drive neighbors Sheila Hanson, Ginny Ratchford, Dianne Hackney and Ellen Irving enjoy hors d'oeuvres at the "Sheltering Hope" Progressive Dinner.



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Courtney Best, her daughter Mason Ward, and Steven and Pamela Goodbred enjoy the evening.



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Austin and April Carty attended the Progressive Dinner with the wonderful news that they are expecting their first child.



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Todd Nabors organized the Edgedale Drive Progressive Dinner to benefit the Triad Health Project. He was helped by Frank Delfino.