

# Caring HEARTS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ISSUE 2, Q3 2011

## OUR MISSION:

The SEARCH Foundation supports event professionals confronted with a catastrophic occurrence and fosters, develops and promotes educational initiatives for the advancement of the industry.

## OUR HISTORY:

The SEARCH Foundation was founded in 1997, during the height of the AIDS epidemic, to help special event professionals who were faced with a life-threatening illness. Since then, it has expanded its role to include industry professionals who are facing other challenges such as fire, natural disasters, car accidents, medical situations and more. SEARCH originally stood for Special Events Assistance and Resources with a Caring Heart, although it is now commonly referred to as, simply, SEARCH.

The original founders of the SEARCH Foundation were a group of industry veterans who wanted to give back to the industry they loved. Today, their vision is carried on by a hand-picked Executive Committee and Board of Directors composed of leaders in event planning and designing, and industry suppliers. Since its formation, the SEARCH Foundation has distributed more than \$150,376 to professionals in need of help. The Foundation has also awarded more than 50 scholarships to industry conferences.

## Thank You to our Readers

We were overwhelmed by the response to our launch of Caring Hearts last quarter. Emails and phone calls poured in, thanking us for getting the word out on the great work SEARCH does every day for professionals in the special events community. "I've been getting raves from the masses," writes one of our board members.

We're delighted, and hope this issue delights as well. Find out about some of the recent progress we've made in fundraising and our marketing efforts, and get to know one of the many people who have benefitted from a SEARCH grant. Enjoy!

## SEARCH In Action Event Raises More Than \$26,500

The SEARCH Foundation raised a whopping \$26,000 at its 13th annual ISES fundraiser in St. Louis, MO, in conjunction with ISES Eventworld®. An estimated 180 guests attended the event held at Lumen Private Event Space.

In addition to the fundraising, several other important objectives were met. The Foundation was able to:

- Introduce their newly updated film, showcasing stories of some of the people who have received help from SEARCH over the past several years
- Host a live pledge drive that raised more than \$5,000 in under 10 minutes
- Host a highly successful silent auction with trips, celebrity memorabilia and jewelry

- Showcase the best vendors St. Louis has to offer featuring delicious food, beer and wine tastings and live entertainment acts
- Receive donations from local ISES chapters and supporters such as ISES Greater Triangle and AFR Event Rental

The auction's success was related directly to the use of IML Audience Response, an exciting electronic bidding technology which allows guests to bid using hand-held bidding machines from anywhere in the venue while networking, dining and dancing.

"Once again, IML's technology allowed us to track the pledges as they were being made on the screens during the event. Seeing the live visual representation was exhilarating," said SEARCH Foundation Events Chair Sasha Souza. "It definitely helped us raise more money and get the crowd involved."

Special thanks go to the St. Louis area vendors who donated their time and talents: Anheuser-Busch, Aries, Butler's Pantry, Companion Bakery, Fresh Ideas, GoodEye Photoshare, Grand Rental Station, Hollyberry Catering, IML Worldwide, ISES St. Louis, LaDeDa Entertainment, Lumen Private Event Space, MAC Meetings & Events, Millennium Productions, North American Breweries, Olde St. Louis Cigar, Pairings, Parties & Props, Patty Long Catering, Sitting Pretty, St. Louis Audio Visual, St. Louis Transportation, Traube Tent, Ultra Events and VanElla Productions.



877.777.9340 | [SEARCHFoundation.org](http://SEARCHFoundation.org)

Make a difference,  
get involved today!





## SEARCH IN ACTION:

### AFR Brings in Donations

In August, more than 500 industry professionals from the Central and West Florida event communities came together at the Orange County Regional History Center in downtown Orlando to take part in AFR's fourth annual showcase and networking event.

As they entered the venue, guests were given an artistic map of the multilevel museum directing them to the featured floors. One level of the museum is the old Orange County Courthouse (in use until 1998) which is now a city relic. The theme was the Roaring 20s/Prohibition. Guests were given a "Woodrow Wilson" cocktail served from the Judge's bench, and seating was available in the jury box or on the viewer benches. Wait staff were dressed to the theme with pearled flapper dresses and gangster get-ups. To add to the fun, guests could get their photos taken wearing vintage costumes.

The next level had an 80s theme with arcade games, a live person replica of John Lennon and a dueling piano act. The guests got interactive with the custom 12-foot high graffiti wall where they could tag their names and business as well as their love for all things 80s. Food stations were larger-than-life Rubix® cubes.

AFR also hosted a SEARCH benefit in Dallas recently. The two events raised a total of \$1,476 for SEARCH.

Thanks, AFR, for these fantastic fundraisers!

### Scholarship Recipients Thankful for Experience

SEARCH was pleased to help send 12 worthy industry professionals to this year's ISES Eventworld® in St. Louis, a valuable experience that boosted their knowledge and networking capabilities.

We asked a few of the recipients about their ISES experience.

"I was thrilled when my ISES chapter president asked me if I was interested in applying for the SEARCH Foundation scholarship to Eventworld," says Jamie Suzanne Snively, director of client relations at Associated Entertainment Consultant in San Francisco. "Not only is it an honor to be recognized by your own chapter, but by an international organization as well."

Snively had previously volunteered on the committee for a previous SEARCH event in San Francisco, but didn't think she'd be able to make the St. Louis trip due to cost. "The process of applying was very simple and took less than 15 minutes," she says.

Sharon Barwick from Simply Elegant in Calgary participated in the SEARCH event at EventWorld, and says, "Corinne Dudine, Sasha Souza and the rest of the committee were a delight to work with and it was a fabulous work experience for me as I had never participated in a silent auction before. And, the quality of the education was outstanding. I am keen to be bringing back the highest level of professionalism and information to our company and the Calgary event industry."

Holly Chudzy, also from Calgary, welcomed the opportunity to contribute to SEARCH. "In an industry where a traumatic event in one's personal life can devastate their professional career, having a foundation where event professionals give back to one another is so inspiring. As a recipient of a SEARCH scholarship, I can speak firsthand of the importance of the foundation."

### Updated Video Released

Making its debut at the SEARCH Foundation's fundraiser in August, the updated four-minute SEARCH video features several new touching stories of event professionals who have benefitted from SEARCH awards.

One of the stories is about a young woman who was in a devastating road accident, and who ended up losing one leg and spending three months in intensive care with multiple other injuries. Her road to recovery was smoothed a bit with a gift from SEARCH.

Another story features a events-related business owner whose property was destroyed by flooding. He lost more than \$20,000 of inventory and did not know how he was going to feed his family. A SEARCH grant helped him to get back on his feet and start rebuilding.

You can see this inspiring video at [www.SEARCHFoundation.org](http://www.SEARCHFoundation.org).



Many thanks to Jerry Hellmann (second from right, wearing his SEARCH Heart pin) for his tremendous support of SEARCH at the AFR event.



A fantastic venue!

## If You Need Help

Professionals in the events industry are eligible for up to \$5,000 per calendar year.

### HERE IS HOW TO APPLY:

1. Download the Crisis Relief Application, which can be found on [www.searchfoundation.org](http://www.searchfoundation.org).
2. Fill out all sections of the application, sign it and have it notarized. A complete application includes the following:
  - A cover letter that summarizes the circumstances leading to your request for funds.
  - A description of your involvement in the special events industry.
  - Two letters from events industry professionals confirming your involvement in the events industry.
  - A document that states the amount of funds requested along with an explanation of how the funds will be used.
  - Detail any related medical expenses or personal expenses and submit documentation for those expenses. The more information provided, the easier it is for the committee to understand and judge each case.
3. At the end of the documentation, indicate if you're willing to be contacted for future marketing purposes by the SEARCH Foundation. (This does not affect eligibility.)
4. Email all the documentation to: [Corinne@SearchFoundation.org](mailto:Corinne@SearchFoundation.org). You will be notified of the request's status within 30 business days after your application has been reviewed.



### HAVE A HEART

Wearing our Caring Heart at industry events shows your support of the SEARCH cause. For a \$50 donation, you can own one of these lovely pieces. Get your Caring Heart today!



## Speakers: Consider SEARCH

Are you an industry expert who speaks to groups across the country? Think about contributing a portion of your speaker's fee to SEARCH. Several well-known and respected professionals are doing just that. It's a way to not only share your knowledge, but also give back to the events community.

"My industry education seminars are my way of giving back to the industry that I know and love so much," says David Merrill, founder of AOO Events. "Being able to donate a portion of my speaker fees to SEARCH, which is the backbone of this industry, just seems right. I'm proud to be able to give back in whatever way I can!"

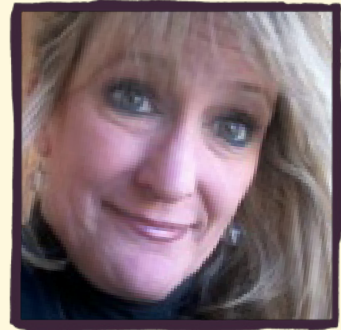
Hillary Harris of Warner Bros. Special Events agrees. "Being a part of the SEARCH Foundation is such a moving experience for me. I am inspired by what the foundation does and feel so blessed to know that there are such strong-willed and brave people in our industry. The SEARCH Foundation is something I feel so passionate about and will continue to do whatever I can to support their cause."

To learn more about donating, visit [www.SEARCHFoundation.org](http://www.SEARCHFoundation.org).



## Recipient Profile:

# SHERRIE CHISHOLM



## Search Helps in Tough Times

The past 10 years have not been kind to executive event specialist Sherrie Chisholm. Thrust from a "cozy home life" into running her husband's greenhouse/nursery business when he fell seriously ill several years ago, she's been through personal illness, career changes and financial distress.

The icing on the cake was almost losing her business when a severe ice storm destroyed her business's greenhouses, including an expensive new PVC system she had just had installed. It also devastated her foliage inventory, which was a cornerstone of her special events business in Atlanta.

"I felt like any chance of surviving was gone," she says.

A friend suggested that she contact SEARCH. "I had heard about SEARCH, but wasn't sure what it really was. I contacted them, and they were very kind, and very patient," she said.

A SEARCH grant helped her stay afloat, she says. "What a kind, wonderful gift," she says. "It's a wonderful organization."

Things are looking up for Sherrie these days, although she's recovering from a ruptured appendix that occurred as we were writing this story. Her business has been acquired by one of her best customers, Sedgefield Interior Landscapes. She's now working for them planning and designing special events such as weddings, conventions and corporate events.

"I'm looking at the next ten years as a new decade," says the mother of two. "There's so much good happening right now. My ISES peeps and other friends have kept me going."

So has SEARCH.

## WHO TO CONTACT

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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