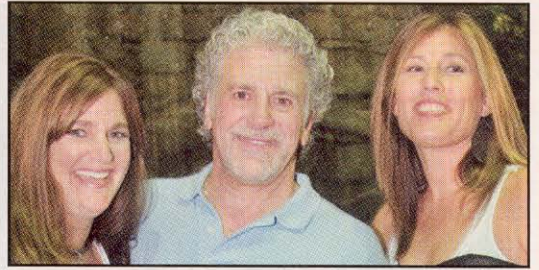




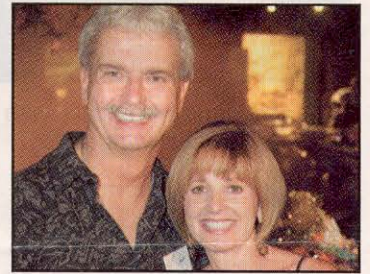
Nancy Broers, Denise Dufala and Holly Silverstein (*Rendezvous in the RainForest*)



Heather Waszak, Michael LoPresti and Cheryl Cohn (*Rendezvous in the RainForest*)



Dottie Finnegan, Devin Maloney, Dawn Smith and Donna Maloney (*Rendezvous in the RainForest*)



Blain and Mimi Markis (*Rendezvous in the RainForest*)



Meg Mason and Chris Clink (*Rendezvous in the RainForest*)



Sandy Emery holding a hedgehog, and Susan Lang (*Rendezvous in the RainForest*)

Kati's Hope Foundation "Rendezvous in the RainForest"

First-time fundraisers are tricky, but Kati's Hope Foundation had a solid success at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo's RainForest. Founded in 2002 by Kati LoPresti, the Foundation is dedicated to advocacy, education and research in Mesothelioma, an uncommon cancer affecting the lining of the lungs, heart and abdomen.

More than 200 generous supporters filled the RainForest. The space was transformed with gourmet food stations spread among the living animal exhibits. One station served pastas and garlic bread, another featured pork medallions with sautéed squash and still another offered chicken with wine sauce, wild rice and lentils.

Nancy Broers, the interim director of Kati's Hope Foundation, and a committee that included many of Kati's friends and family, assembled a first-rate collection of silent auc-

tion items. They were quickly bid to high amounts. Guests also bid on a wagon full of liquor, took chances on 50/50 and Chinese raffles and purchased a special foundation cookbook.

A steel drum player provided background music, and Denise Dufala was not just a symbolic media presence, but an enthusiastic supporter. "I was a friend of Kati's" she said in her welcoming remarks.

Before checking out, guests enjoyed Ben and Jerry's Chocolate Chunk Coffee ice cream.

"When Kati LoPresti was diagnosed with the disease, she was able to extend her life through treatments. The foundation is dedicated to helping everyone who has the illness" according to Nancy Broers. "We want their lives to be as long and as full as they can be." STORY BY ART THOMAS. PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT MULLER