



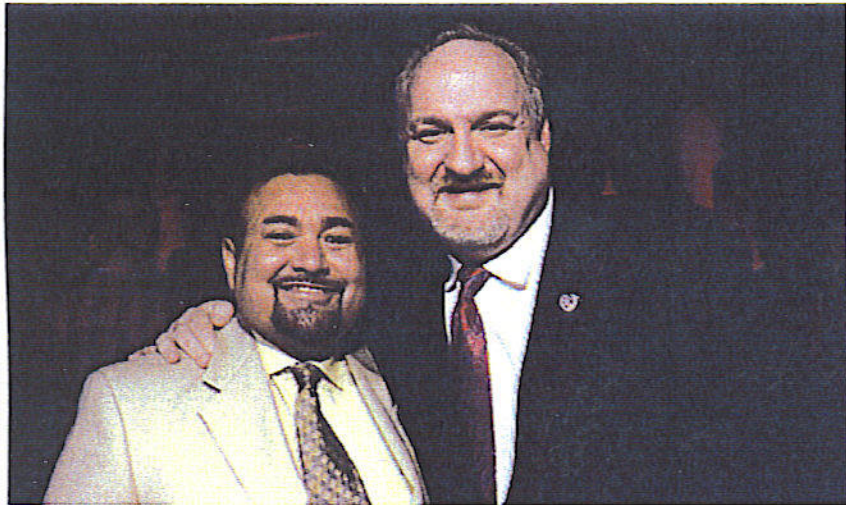
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Common Threads World Festival

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Jesus Salguero and Art Smith hosted their biggest World Festival party yet.

Photos by Erik Unger



MARY CAMERON FREY

(Crain's) — Common Threads founders Art Smith and his partner, artist Jesus Salguero, hosted their third fundraising spectacular at the Museum of Contemporary Art on March 17, and this World Festival put just about every other party in town to shame.

With more than 600 lively guests circulating around the MCA, a passel of big-name chefs dispensing delicious food at every turn, and an appearance by Grammy winner John Legend at the after-party, the evening entertained lavishly while raising more than \$377,000 for programs that teach children the importance of health and good nutrition.

Co-chaired by MCA Deputy Director Greg Cameron and Experiential Agency Executive Vice-president Amanda Puck, the party welcomed "hottie" chefs Rocco DiSpirito, David Burke of Primehouse and John Besh of Restaurant August, along with "Top Chef" stars Padma Lakshmi and Tom Colicchio.

[Read Crain's interview with Greg Cameron.](#)

"Art and (Common Threads Executive Director) Linda Novick have done a phenomenal job of bringing this party from infancy to this in three years—it's like going from zero to 60 in just three seconds," Mr. DiSpirito said.

Mr. Colicchio, Ms. Lakshmi and Gail Simmons of Food & Wine magazine conducted a live auction of 14 items that fetched \$112,000.

Guests enjoyed generous helpings of such treats as caviar, Wolfgang Puck's Wienerschnitzel with warm potato salad and Mr. Burke's short rib dumplings. Kevin Hickey of the Four Seasons served Cork oysters and Irish salmon — it was St. Patrick's Day, after all — and Shelley Young of the Chopping Block offered molé-braised pork tamales with kumquats and poblano aioli.

Mr. Smith seemed overwhelmed at the sheer numbers of guests and the quality of food served. "Jesus and I are so grateful for the way people here in Chicago and across the country have embraced this idea and helped make it grow," he said.

How hot was the party? Unexpected guest Billy Dec arrived at the VIP reception with a cameraman in tow to film the club boy's every move.

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