

# Anna's Angels Gala & Tennis Tournament

Raises \$80,000 for Down syndrome research

*Written By Jennifer Gilmore  
Photography By Kristen Brown*



1



2

**T**he Third Annual Anna's Angels Gala, held on April 29 at Prestonwood Country Club, was its usual success — drawing 250 party-goers for a fun night of dinner, dancing and a silent and live auction. This year, however, the generous crowd, donors and the addition of a tennis tournament earlier in the day helped the organization raise \$80,000 for Down syndrome and leukemia research — double what was raised last year.

Anna's Angels was founded in November 2003 by Michelle Pfeiffer and Andrew Merrills in honor of their middle child, Anna, who has Down syndrome. Anna, who is 5 years old, was also stricken with leukemia at 18 months.

Since its inception, Anna's Angels has raised \$180,000 and is currently funding four grants. One focuses on cardiac issues that, according to Pfeiffer, will hopefully benefit individuals with Down syndrome, but also will lead to treatments to prevent congenital heart disease in the greater population. Another is enabling Duke to create a national Down syndrome registry database so that doctors and researchers can better share data.

A third grant is funding a program at Duke that has resulted in a new iron deficiency test critical to ensuring Down syndrome children are properly treated, as iron is critical to brain development. The fourth is an investigation into a drug treatment commonly used for Alzheimer's patients that could be beneficial to people with Down syndrome.

Pfeiffer, Merrills and their friends are already planning their next fundraiser — The Anna's Angels 10-Miler, scheduled for October 8. They are also selling a limited-edition Anna Bracelet.

Go to [www.annas-angels.org](http://www.annas-angels.org) for more information on Anna's Angels.



3

1) Anna's Angels Foundation Public Relations Volunteer Aimee McIntyre, Foundation Cofounder and Director Michelle Pfeiffer and Event Coordinator Michelle Shauf.  
2) WTVD Anchor Steve Daniels (right) emceed the event as well as the live auction.  
3) Michelle Pfeiffer, Gretchen Cooling, Laura Kay, Barbara Taylor and Lissa Peterson.  
4) Kristen and Steve Daniels.  
5) Amanda Schilling with Michelle Pfeiffer and Andy Merrills.



4



5