



# ANNA'S ANGELS to Reach New Heights with Gala

Written By Kati Knowland



Andy Merrills,  
Andrew, Ashley,  
Anna and  
Michelle Pfeiffer  
Merrills

# W

hen Anna Michelle Merrills was born on June 13, 2001, her parents were met with both the joy of birth and the devastation of being told that their precious little girl had Down syndrome. Michelle Pfeiffer, Anna's mom, said that she and Anna's dad, Andrew Merrills, knew nothing about Down syndrome, and had to quickly learn what this diagnosis meant for their baby girl.

Eighteen months later, Anna and her parents again had to deal with a serious diagnosis, as Anna's doctors determined that she also had leukemia. Pfeiffer, who was pregnant again at the time, said that the year and a half of chemotherapy was stressful, but was also a time of learning for the family.

"I really wanted to do something for other children with Down syndrome or Down syndrome and leukemia," said Pfeiffer. "A child with Down syndrome who develops leukemia has a higher survival rate and their chemotherapy is less intense. I wanted to do something that could help figure out how to translate that to other children."

Pfeiffer said that she took her idea to Anna's doctor, Dr. Philip Rosoff, chief of pediatric hematology-oncology at Duke University Medical Center, who helped get Duke involved in the efforts, which, in 2004, culminated in the creation of the Anna's Angels Foundation.

The foundation's mission is to provide funding to promote research for Down syndrome and leukemia, and its vision is to help children with Down syndrome to reach their full potential.

In order to raise money for research grants, the foundation is involved in a number of fundraising activities throughout the year, the largest of which is its annual gala.

This year's event will be held on April 2 at Prestonwood Country Club's new grand ballroom. Pfeiffer said that Anna's Angels is excited to be one of the first organizations to hold an event in this beautiful new room.

The gala is black-tie optional, and will feature a silent auction with items from every category – sports, spas, restaurants, trips leisure – and Pfeiffer said that the foundation is still getting donations. Anna's Angels hopes to raise \$50,000 with this year's event – an increase from the \$17,000 raised at the foundation's first gala in 2004.

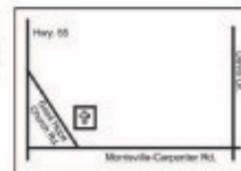
For more information on Anna's Angels Foundation, visit [www.annas-angels.org](http://www.annas-angels.org).

## with God Relationships... with one another

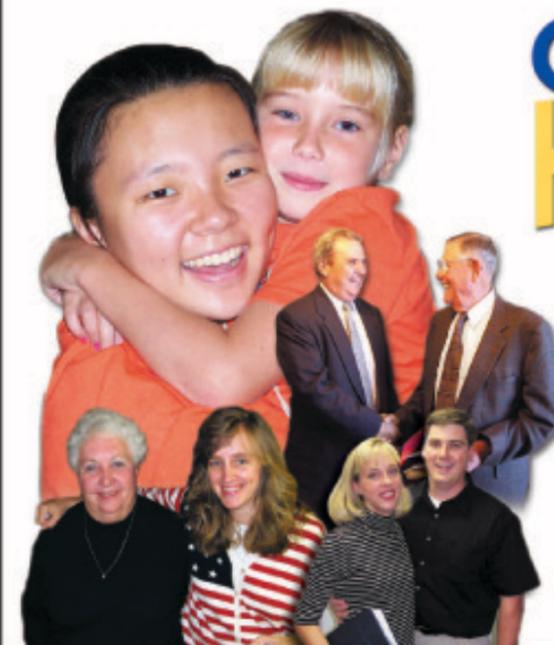
life application teaching • small groups • contemporary music • children's service • youth program

# GOOD HOPE Baptist Church

Sundays  
9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.  
Wednesdays  
6:45 p.m.



6628 Good Hope Church Rd.  
Cary  
467-8526  
[www.goodhopechurch.org](http://www.goodhopechurch.org)



## Save the Date Saturday April 2, 2005 For the 2nd Annual Anna's Angels Gala

Enjoy an Evening of Dining, Dancing and Auctioneering  
Live music provided by the Funk Daddies

At Prestonwood Country Club's New Grand Ballroom  
\$70.00 per person | Black Tie (optional)

To purchase tickets, please make check payable to Anna's Angels Foundation and send to:  
104 Vines Run Court  
Cary, N.C. 27513

All proceeds go directly to Down syndrome and leukemia research. Anna's Angels is a non-profit organization affiliated with Duke Children's Hospital.

[www.annas-angels.org](http://www.annas-angels.org)



## "Now I lay me down to sleep..."



Every year in Wake County, over 2,500 homeless youth run the risk of sleeping here.

They are sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces.

Some are as young as 10. All of them need your help.

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