

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT



Children's Brain
Tumor Project
powered by families



Weill Cornell
Medicine

Cristian Rivera Foundation Breaks Another Record with \$350K Donation to DIPG Research at Weill Cornell Medicine

13th Annual Cristian Rivera Foundation Celebrity Gala is a Tremendous Success



Darlene Rodriguez, Cristian Rivera Foundation Board of Director and anchor on NBC's *Today in New York*, paid a special visit to Weill Cornell Medicine on Tuesday, November 29th. In an apt celebration of "Giving Tuesday," she presented Dr. Mark Souweidane with an overwhelming gift: a check for \$350,000. The donation will support Dr. Souweidane's innovative research into the deadly pediatric brain tumor called diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG).

The donation was largely enabled by the tremendous success of the 13th Annual Cristian Rivera Foundation Celebrity Gala, held last month at NYC's Capitale and attended by more than 500 guests. This gift was a huge milestone for the nonprofit, breaking its own record as the largest

single donation made by the organization. It was also the largest single donation ever made to the lab's DIPG research fund, from any source.

Music producer and promoter John Rivera has been raising money to find a cure for DIPG ever since he lost his son Cristian to the rare and uniformly fatal brain stem tumor in 2009. Cristian was only 6 years old. Driven to support the work of Dr. Souweidane, who had treated his son, John Rivera created the Cristian Rivera Foundation and in 2011 became the very first donor to Dr. Souweidane's dedicated DIPG research fund.

DIPG is rare, affecting fewer than 300 kids a year, but the prognosis is extremely grim—survival time is measured in months, and there has been no significant decrease in the mortality rate in more than 30 years. Rivera knew he could make a difference and help change these statistics by leveraging his experience in the entertainment industry. He hosts an annual star-studded gala in New York City that has outgrown several venues through the years as support for it expands. Attendance and fundraising hit another recordbreaking high at the 13th Annual CRF Celebrity Gala, which was held on November 16th.

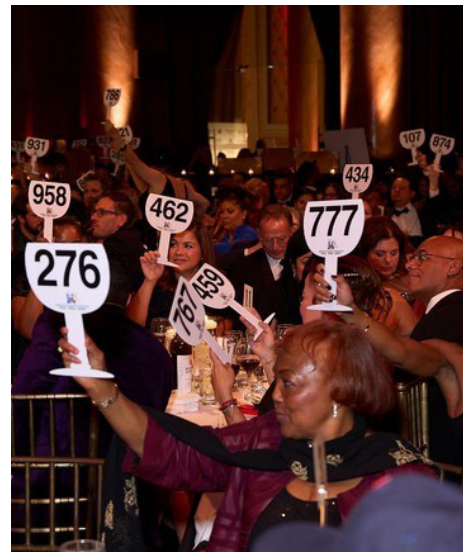
"Thankfully, I am not alone on this journey," Rivera said recently. "I have a tremendous board and event committee, including **Melinda Cox, Darlene Rodriguez, Rena Kliot, Jarrad Seufferling, Rafael Toro, Luis Guzman, and Kenan Thompson**, who always show up for this cause because they know how important it is. If it weren't for this foundation, the work simply wouldn't get funded, and that keeps us going."

Dr. Souweidane is profoundly grateful to have the support of the Cristian Rivera Foundation (CRF), which helps him continue his extremely personal mission. "Very early in my career, I met a young boy with DIPG and there was nothing I could do at the time to help. No surgical options," said Souweidane. "I knew then and there that I would make it my life's work to find alternative ways to cure this tumor through groundbreaking surgical approaches, and I promise you that we are making inroads thanks to people like John and his team."

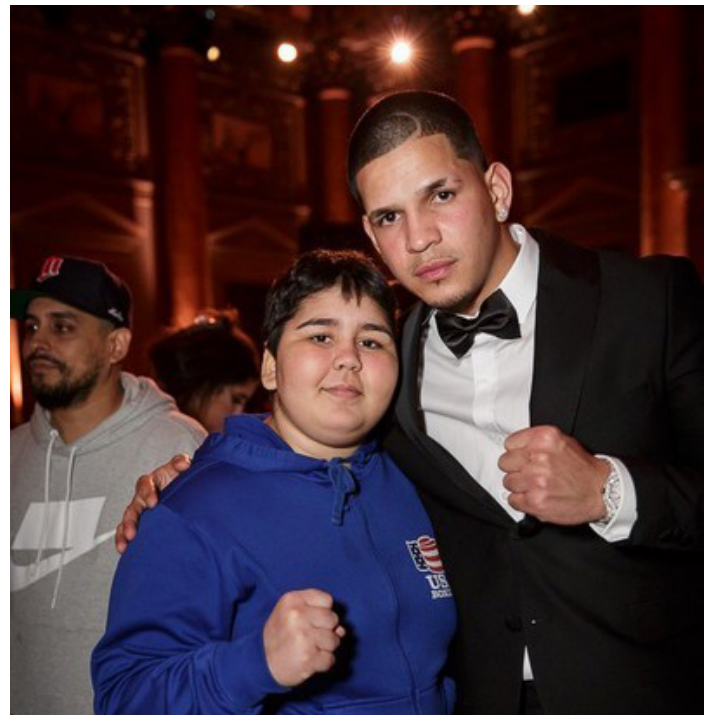
The Cristian Rivera Foundation has already donated close to \$2 million to Dr. Souweidane over the years. Please consider donating to the Cristian Rivera Foundation, and be sure to save the date for the 14th annual CRF gala planned for November 15th, 2023, at Capitale. The event is sure to be bigger and better than ever, thanks to John and his dedicated board and committee. Visit cristianriverafoundation.org or www.facebook.com/cristianriverafoundation.



From Left: (1) Jose Aguilar with his son, Emiliano, who is currently battling DIPG (2) Actor and comedian Kenan Thompson, CRF committee member (3) Actor/Producer Chazz Palminteri, CRF 2022 Heroes Award Recipient



From Left: (1) John Rivera, CRF founder, with his daughter, Sophia (2) Darlene Rodriguez, CRF Board Director, and actor Malik Yoba, on stage with Dr. Mark Souweidane (3) Generous bidding underway during the auction and call for donations.



From Left: (1) Melinda Cox, CRF Board Chair, with her award for Outstanding Service and Dedication (2) DIPG warrior Jesselyn Silva poses with boxer, Edgar Berlanga