

Dancers put best feet forward at Cinderella Ball

Members of New York Theatre Ballet are hoping their wishes will come true after staging a special event that included a recent performance of "Cinderella" followed by The Cinderella Ball. The event was attended by a large crowd including many Gramercy Park residents.

The company is in the midst of a major fundraising campaign to fill a \$50,000 shortfall in funding this year.

The drop in funding comes as the popular dance company enjoys an increased enrollment for its LIFT study program, a program that provides dance scholarships for homeless children living in city shelters.

"The loss of the annual foundation grants, coupled with the increased enrollment, has stretched NYTB's resources to the breaking point," said Arlene Harrison, who along with Tara Rockefeller and Susan Sutherland, co-chaired the performance of Cinderella and a special Cinderella Ball fundraiser event held after the show.

During the ball,

guests were able to enjoy a truly magical event with activities including dance lessons with the Yale Ballroom Dance Club and making Cinderella tiaras and crowns. There was a chance to have photographs taken with members of the cast and a silent auction and raffle.

"Over the years, the NYTB has been a wonderful friend to the Gramercy Park community," said Harrison, who is also president of the Gramercy Park Block Association, a sponsor of the event along with Sharon Ullman and the 23rd Street Association.

"In addition to staging performances for our local children, the company has also developed its nationally recognized ballet study for homeless and at risk children.

"We hope this event will go some way to helping NYTB fill its budget shortfall."

Diana Byer, artistic director of NYTB, told guests at the event about some of the LIFT programs success stories, including 17-year-old Steven Melendez, who joined the group at the age of eight and was among just ten students from

across the country selected to be part of American Ballet Theaters new Studio Company Associate program.

"I want to give my most enthusiastic and very special thanks to the people who have helped make this occasion a success,"

added Byer whose Benefit Committee included area residents Kathleen Scupp and Gretchan Teran.

To find out more about NYTB or if you would like to make a contribution, call Jerry Mettner, Executive Director, at (212) 679-0401.



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