



## *A Note from a Friend*

Prostate cancer – twelve years ago, my wife Kathy and I had heard of this disease, but at that time, we weren't fully aware of its strength.

That all changed when two of our closest friends, Larry Ferachi and Joel Nasca, were diagnosed with prostate cancer. Larry and Joel were next door neighbors and brilliant physicians. Surely, they had the means and knowledge to beat their diagnosis. It was then that we learned prostate cancer is more common than we thought, is terribly scary, and it doesn't care who you are. Larry and Joel fought courageously, but ultimately lost their battles.

From a very saddened time in our lives, Kathy and I knew that Larry and Joel's inspiring story should be shared. We believe that Larry and Joel's battle was a time of darkness that was meant to shine light on awareness - their way of looking after our fathers, husbands, sons, and friends.

In 2011, we founded the Blue Ribbon Soirée to honor these two incredible men. We did not know at that time just how much this endeavor would grow, year after year, and how our decision to pursue this venture would become one of the most rewarding and fulfilling parts of our lives.

Every year since, supporters have come together, just as you have tonight, sharing their stories of Larry and Joel and so many others. Over the last 11 years, with the support of the community and the hard work of so many committee members, the Blue Ribbon Soirée has raised over a million dollars for research and awareness. Never did we imagine we'd hit these heights. We often receive phone calls from men who have been diagnosed with prostate cancer and are concerned about their futures. These phone calls remind us why we started this journey and that this is so much more than just raising money. We've learned that seemingly everyone knows someone who has had prostate cancer and that the disease is much more prevalent than most people realize.

Throughout all the good this organization has done; we unfortunately continue to see men lose their battle. Sadly, we have lost some of our proud supporters who fought the disease courageously – Frank Culotta, Vince Ferachi, Rodney Coco, and Jeff Pisto. Two of Kathy's brothers have been diagnosed with the disease. This encourages us to work even harder to promote awareness, for them, and our son, and our grandsons.

We are excited to be here for the 11th Blue Ribbon Soirée. We know Larry and Joel would be proud of what has been accomplished in their name. Through the efforts of many dedicated people, we look to have another successful year. We are humbled, and so very grateful for all the support we receive, the letters, the phone calls, the committee members, the friends, the sponsors, and the attendees.

I realize that everyone's life has been affected by cancer in some way or another. Although it was my calling to raise funds for prostate cancer research, I support the fundraising efforts for ALL types of cancers. And I pray that one day through the outpouring of support of us all, there will be a cure for ALL cancers.



*Ricky Lato*  
Co-chair  
Co-founder