

OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADVOCATE
REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

K #:09-159

Date Opened: 11/18/09

Date Closed: 08/17/10

Name of investigator: Kennedy Rosario
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Allegation:

The COE received an anonymous complaint indicating that City of Homestead Councilwoman Judy Waldman (Waldman) did not disclose a two-five thousand dollar benefit she received by accepting a table for herself and her guests to attend a "Miami Cruise Industry Pineapple Ball" in November 2008.

Investigation:

The investigation revealed that the Pineapple Ball in question is actually an annual event known as the Homestead Hospital Pineapple Gala.

The Gala benefits children's services for Homestead Hospital

Homestead Hospital is a not-for-profit community hospital affiliated with the Baptist Hospital Health System.

The Cruise Industry is correctly known as the Cruise Industry Charitable Foundation (CICF), a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization.

The COE requested from both the City of Homestead Clerk Sheila Shedd and the Florida COE for any/all Statement of Financial Interests and Quarterly Gift Disclosures (Gifts over \$100.00) as it pertains to Waldman.

Waldman was interviewed and responded to the allegation thusly:

She has been a Homestead Councilwoman since 2001.

She is a charter member of the Pineapple Gala since 1998.

As a Gala member she endeavors to “sell” tables to the Gala to private and public organizations one of which is the CICF.

She has for many years attended the Gala.

The City of Homestead has in the past sponsored a table.

The Gala, as a Ball, has been held at the Homestead Speedway for the last 5/6 years.

The COE, via electronic and telephone conversations, spoke with Thomas J. Schramm, Development Officer of the Baptist Health South Florida Foundation, organizers of the Ball.

Schramm was advised of the nature on the investigation and wrote the following to the COE;

“The records of the Baptist Health Foundation show that Judy Waldman has made donations to the Homestead Hospital Pineapple Gala, though she has not purchased a seat or a table. As I understand, she has either sat at the table purchased by the City of Homestead or as a guest at a sponsor’s table”.

Schramm also advised the COE that the table prices for the years 2006 and 2009 ranged from \$1,500.00 to \$5,000.00. In 2007 and 2008 the least expensive table was priced at 1,950 instead of \$1,500.00

Each table sits 10 people and can accommodate another two additional seats pricing the additional seats at a cost of \$500.00

“Judy is usually the guest of the CICF. The past 2 or 3 years they have sponsored the reception for a gift of \$15,000.00 and receive a \$5,000.00 table.”

However, Schramm states that “the value of the goods and services each person receives at the gala is an estimate of the fair market value of a comparable experience in Homestead. We have set that estimate at \$85.00 per person. We advise each donor of this value for their tax purpose”.

CONCLUSION

The only gift disclosures noted above, February 8, 2008 and January 5, 2002, do not disclose any Pineapple Gala event; however, given Mr. Schramm's declaration as to the "fair market value" of the individual seat it would appear that there is no gift disclosure violation on the part of Homestead Councilwoman Judy Waldman.