

IGNITE

The Annual Can't-Miss Event at the Prep Funding Jesuit Education Since 1818



Guests at IGNITE 2022: An Evening in Spain on April 9th, 2022.

Since 2018, current and past parents, as well as alumni spanning classes from 1960 through 2015 and their guests have gathered on campus for the annual Igniting Our Mission (now IGNITE) benefit, the most prominent of Fordham Prep's annual events.

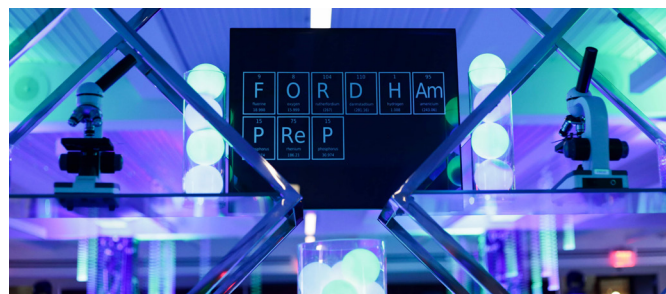
The popular party at the Prep, which has raised \$2.2 million to date, features a live auction with MC and NBC sportcaster Bruce Beck, a strolling dinner, open bars, whiskey tables sponsored by Tony Russo '57 of Aries Wine & Spirits, specialty cocktail stations, live music, and dancing. Each year, the benefit's festive atmosphere makes for an event filled with special moments for members of the Fordham Prep community and friends to enjoy.



Funds raised at the annual event help the Prep to continue providing its students with a quality Jesuit education in the Bronx in enhanced learning environments. Funds have gone to support iSTEAM and other educational programs, Global Education, IGNITE Scholarships, and capital improvements such as the East Wing Project and the Adlerman Makerspace.



"The IGNITE event at Fordham Prep is known as the best party of the year!" said Co-President of the Past Parent Association Joanne Aventura P'15 '18 '21. Her husband, Chris Aventura, agrees. "Each year the Commons is transformed into a festive party venue where more than 500 guests celebrate being part of Fordham Prep. It is a special



night where the community supports the school's Jesuit mission," she continued.

While the pandemic canceled the in-person benefit in 2021, the Virtual Igniting Our Mission celebration with viewers at home still managed to break records. The event, which traditionally attracts a crowd of over 500 people, won two CASE Circle of Excellence



Awards in the Special Events/ Online Fundraisers category and another in the 2022 Best of District II category.

In 2020, the science-themed benefit allowed guests to explore the iSTEAM program at Fordham Prep by trying their hand at the flight simulator, experimenting with the laser cutter, and speaking with student demonstrators. By popular demand, the recipe for the drink of the evening (an Electric Blue cocktail named Full Steam Ahead) was sent to guests after the event.

"The February 2020 benefit right before the world shut down was my favorite," said Dario Martinez '87 P'22, an alumnus and Prep parent who has attended every benefit since its inception.

The two-hour online event in 2021 honored Fordham Prep's faculty, past greats, and current heroes. Alumni and parent volunteers delivered gift bags and Fordham Prep Party Boxes filled with antipasti from Mike's Deli and rosé to guests in advance of the virtual event. Viewers were treated to an exciting cameo during the livestream from alumni parent Liam Neeson P'15 while he was

on the set of a film in Bulgaria. He issued a warning to viewers in the style of his character, Bryan Mills, from *Taken*, as he stated jokingly, "If you tune out before the program ends, I will look for you. I will find you."

Rebranded as IGNITE, 2022's benefit was a fiesta! The Ignatian Spain-themed event in honor of the 500th year of Ignatius' conversion featured delicious Spanish food, a wine pull, and more. FPTV premiered its short "BIG," starring now-retired Assistant Principal Dennis Ahern '63 P'01, during the event. "We learn, we share, we support, we give, and we grow. That is who we are," said trustee Rose Caiola P'22 looking back at past Prep benefits she has attended.

Fordham Prep is hard at work planning the upcoming benefit, IGNITE 2023: Under the Big Top in the Bronx. The benefit on March 4th is poised to be an extraordinary event featuring food, dancing, and surprises. Funds from IGNITE 2023 will benefit the IGNITE Scholarship Program and the new Athletic Strategic Plan, which includes the construction of the Prep's new Fitness & Wellness Center. This year, sales will be capped at 525 tickets to ensure that guests will enjoy the full experience of this year's theme and festivities. ■



To learn more about IGNITE 2023: Under the Big Top in the Bronx, visit ignite2023.givesmart.com.

