



Lance Allred, the first deaf player in the NBA, speaks at the Sound Start Babies Benefit.

Sound Start Babies Hosts Record-Breaking Benefit

Mountain Lakes Charity Raised Over \$250,000 to Support Babies with Hearing Loss

Mountain Lakes, NJ— The Sound Start Babies Foundation hosted its most successful benefit ever, raising more than \$250,000 in one night at The Mansion in Mountain Lakes. Over 350 people attended the 12th annual Sound Start Babies Benefit on May 18 where they heard an impassioned presentation by the NBA’s first deaf player, Lance Allred.

Allred, the first deaf player in the NBA, moved the crowd with his experiences as a deaf child. He spoke about the challenges he faced and how he overcame his limitations through hard work, perseverance and support from others. That support included many private donors to organizations, which in turn made it financially possible for him to receive speech therapy. Allred recounted the hugely positive impact this made on his life early on. Guests also enjoyed a special video of babies in the Sound Start program singing “You are My Sunshine.” [Click here to watch](#). Attendees were also treated to an entertaining live auction, wine pull, silent auction and cocktail reception, on top of their dinner from renowned chefs.

Sound Start Babies supports children ages 0-3 from around New Jersey who are deaf or hard of hearing. The program provides much-needed therapies to these babies and toddlers with hearing loss and guidance to their families, so they can learn to communicate as if they didn’t have a hearing

impediment. Children are accepted into the program regardless of financial status. The State of New Jersey covers approximately one-third of the program's costs, so private fundraising is imperative to continue offering the Babies the resources they need. The monies raised at this annual benefit are responsible for 58% of Sound Start's annual financial needs, meaning this year's record fundraising total will help provide additional educational tools for the teachers, therapists and babies.

The need for Sound Start's fundraising was heightened when newborn hearing screenings were mandated in 2002 and an increasing number of babies with hearing loss were identified. Research on early brain development made this care urgent, as it showed the first few years of life are critical for developing language and communication.

To learn more about the Sound Start Babies program and how you can help, visit <http://www.soundstartbabies.com/>.