

Chicago Tribune

Face the Future Foundation gala gives craniofacial patients a reason to smile



David Goodman of Auction Results conducting the live auction that raised over \$375,000.

By **Candace Jordan** * Contact Reporter

Face the Future Foundation held its annual gala, themed "Motown Magic," on March 17 at the Four Seasons Hotel. More than 400 supporters helped make this year's event a **record-breaker, raising \$670,000** to support the University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences System (UI Health) Craniofacial Center in its care and treatment of Chicago-area children who are suffering from cleft lip, cleft palate and other craniofacial differences.

Emcee Lourdes Duarte of WGN welcomed guests and spoke about the work of the foundation, which provides funds to support the center's multidisciplinary care of more than 5,000 kids annually, regardless of financial circumstances, and free-of-charge events for Craniofacial Center patients and their families.

Face the Future Foundation President Robert Grant presented the President's Award to Mary Eliza Genet, a board member and managing director of Starshak Winzenburg, a Chicago-based investment banking firm.

"The foundation has a personal connection for my wife, Tracy, and me," said Grant. "Our daughter Zoe was born with craniofacial differences, and through our experiences with her, we know the positive impact that Face the Future can have on a child's life."

At the event, a paddle raise brought in more than \$200,000. A live auction, conducted by David Goodman, raised more than \$150,000 and included an in-home cooking class with celebrity chef Graham Elliot.

Elliot energetically worked the crowd with Goodman to sell his package and, when bidding reached the \$12,000 mark, he donated a second in-home experience. Another auction highlight included a 2018 Emmy Awards package for two, which sold for \$25,000.

An appeal video featured 13-year-old Lila, whose jawbones hadn't formed properly and caused difficulty eating. In the video, orthodontist Dr. Ketti Boller said, "These kids go through so much. They're teased at school, and they can't eat properly. Face the Future Foundation allows us to change this."