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LIVING & ARTS

Events remind us AIDS is still with us

The angelic woman is upheld by four men, draped in white sheets. They are enveloped by a sea of emerald-green leaves, flanked by bursts of tiny red ribbons.



JOHNNY DIAZ

OUTLOOKS

14th annual White Party and White Party week, which kicks off tonight and peaks with a party at Vizcaya Sunday.

The green represents the lush gardens at Vizcaya.

The red silently speaks to the thousands who have died of AIDS.

And the white hues symbolize hope, the spirit of the

The images make up the four-by-four-foot oil painting by South Beach artist Noel, who donated the piece for the week's events. David Wallack, owner of Mango's Tropical Cafe, contributed \$10,000 as benefactor of the painting, which benefits Community AIDS Resource, a merger of Health Crisis Network and Community Research Initiative.

"The woman represents the organizations who are fighting to help others. The men are the supporters of the organizations," says Noel, 40, of South Beach.

Organizers hope to raise about \$500,000 from the locals and tourists who fly in from all over the world for the White Party, one of the crown jewels of international AIDS fund-raising.

Some tickets are still available for the Vizcaya party, which is restricted to 2,000 people. It begins at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, featuring DJ David Knapp.

But the event is not all about partying.

Organizers and party-goers say the White Party is a celebration of hope and a reminder to others that AIDS is still with us, even with the latest advances in treating the disease.

"AIDS is still a big part of us. It is still part of our reality," said Noel, who has lost 30 friends to AIDS.

Greater Miami has the nation's third-highest rate of AIDS cases, and Greater Fort Lauderdale has the fifth, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Florida is also home to more children with AIDS than any other state except New York.

And Florida still ranks third in the country in total cases, behind New York and California.

Said Noel, "It's something that is very far from solved. It's a constant battle. That is why we need to have events like this. It's a reminder."

Here is a listing of the White Party events. Tickets to the White Party at Vizcaya and tickets for the White Party week of events are still available. Call (305) 667-9296.

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1998

Arts



GAIL MEADOWS

PEOPLE IN THE ARTS

All the figures are draped in white. Green ribbons are woven throughout to represent the grounds of Vizcaya. Bursts of red ribbons are a memorial to those who have died from AIDS.

Noel donated the painting to the organization. David Wallack, owner of Mango's Tropical Cafe in South Beach, has already contributed \$10,000 to White Party activities and will become the owner of the work.



NURTURING SPIRIT: Noel's *Sueño Blanco* (White Dream), the White Party poster art the artist donated to Community AIDS Resource.