



## **“A Culinary & Musical Experience” Raises Over \$400,000 for Pediatric Cancer Research on World Cancer Day**

**IRVINE, CA (February 7, 2023)** Inspired by the loss of their friend’s infant son to pediatric cancer, *New York Yankees* pitcher [Gerrit Cole](#) and wife Amy headlined “A Culinary & Musical Experience” fundraiser on World Cancer Day (Saturday, February 4th) at *The Ranch at Laguna* resort in Laguna Beach. The intimate gathering was co-hosted by Michael & Joanna Irwin, in honor of their son Will who passed away at 8-months-old to a cancer that is still unknown today. Over \$400,000 was successfully raised for the [Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation \(PCRF\)](#) whose mission is to fund research to find treatments that currently don't exist and to reduce the percentage of children whose lives are lost to cancer until that number reaches zero.

Those in attendance enjoyed an exclusive cocktail reception, impeccable five course dinner created by Chef Kyle St. John along with wines curated by Gerrit and his father Mark that included pairings by Pahlmeyer. The program was emceed by cancer survivor/Fox LA entertainment reporter [Amanda Salas](#) and featured heartfelt speeches by the Coles, Irwins, [Dr. Ashley Plant-Fox](#) and PCRF’s Jeri Wilson. Additionally, musical entertainment was provided by artists such as [Tim Reynolds](#), [Lee Rocker from the Stray Cats](#), [Jackson Breit](#), [Carneyval](#), and [Conner Smith](#) with [Josh Jenkins](#) & [Matt Jenkins](#).

We believe every child deserves an opportunity to stay healthy, educated and safe, which is why pediatric cancer research is a cause my wife Amy and I support,” adds Gerrit Cole, who recently welcomed his second child. “As parents, the Irwin’s did everything possible to protect Will and make sure he knew he was loved, and today they are making a huge impact on the world. We were thrilled to co-host a successful evening of fundraising alongside them and will continue to share the mission of PCRF.”

The evening’s purpose was to come together as a community and raise awareness and funding for the country’s 15,000+ children diagnosed with cancer each year. Pediatric cancer research receives a minute fraction of the dollars allocated to adult cancer research. The largest single funder, the Federal Government, invests less than \$3.00 per child per year in childhood cancer research, leaving philanthropies, families and caring members of society to assume the balance.

“We are grateful to Irwins and Coles for their commitment to pediatric cancer research. Their leadership and caring is integral to advancing new science,” adds Jeri Wilson, Executive Director of PCRF. “The Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation is on an urgent mission to improve the lives of children living with cancer and we cannot do it without more funding. More children are lost to cancer than any other disease and hundreds of thousands live with the effects of drugs that are just too toxic for them. Science is poised to make the breakthroughs that will help more children beat their disease but it takes significant funding to propel these advances into cures.”

Since losing their son, the Irwins have been working on the front lines with PCRF to transform cancer care and have raised over \$1.5M on behalf of the *Will Irwin Fund* which supports top researchers and institutions. In addition, they have created “Will’s Warriors” where each year a child who is going through or has completed treatment is honored as a “Will’s Warrior.” These children exude immeasurable strength and manage a determined spirit in spite of the challenges before them...like Will. “We believe that together, we can make a powerful impact for children,” adds Joanna Irwin. My husband Michael and I feel so blessed to have had so many people make a significant impact on our lives, supporting us while we navigated through our grief and now helping us to honor our son and joining us in finding treatments and cures for all childhood cancers.”

For more information about PCRF and ways to get involved please visit [www.PCRF-kids.org](http://www.PCRF-kids.org).

Link to photos by KLIK Photography: <https://kristiklemens.smugmug.com/Non-profit/PCRF-2423/n-4Kcg6D/>

Link to 30-second video snippets by Westmade Films:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/8loc5o8gxmebl9g/AAAtwt7cLqNJtLca5oMhHSwBa?dl=0>