

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: "BIG HEARTS FOR THE BIG EASY"

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**October 12, 2005 San Diego, California** – Scott Roussel is a native New Orleanian, Roussel is the co-founder of Big Hearts for The Big Easy (BHBE). In response to the devastation created by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, BHBE raises funds for nonprofit organizations in New Orleans on the ground assisting those in need. A recent BHBE event on the East Coast raised over \$100,000 for Ochsner Clinic Foundation, one of the only hospitals that remained fully staffed and open throughout the entire catastrophe.

BHBE is now organizing a "Mardi Gras Halloween Party" (costumes optional) and fundraiser auction aboard the vintage ferry The Berkeley and the HMS Surprise (from Russell Crowe's *Master & Commander*) at The San Diego Maritime Museum on Friday, October 28th from 7 PM till Midnight. BHBE is donating all proceeds (beyond minimal expenses) from the event to Children's Hospital of New Orleans, the largest pediatric healthcare center in the Gulf South.

Children's Hospital of New Orleans treated over 56,000 children last year, but was forced to close after Hurricane Katrina. The hospital is reopening, but is in dire need of financial support to get back up to speed. New Orleans Children's Hospital, a 501(C)3 not-for-profit hospital (Tax ID number 72-0467503), provides care in over 40 different specialties with a 440-member medical staff that includes more than 280 pediatric specialists. From broken bones to liver and kidney transplants and open-heart surgeries, New Orleans Children's Hospital's range of services encompasses almost every pediatric medical need. With the assistance of volunteers, all are calling upon local individuals and businesses for support of this festive, charitable event.

"Celebrity chefs" Bill Gruber of New Orleans' Famous *Liuzza's By The Track* and Miguel Martinez of *Ruth's Chris Steak House* San Diego, and Jeff Rossman of San Diego's *Terra Restaurant* will prepare their famous culinary creations from 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Dishes include: barbeque shrimp, crawfish bisque, jambalaya, red beans & rice, shrimp creole, crawfish etouffe, trout almondine, creole gumbo, bread pudding, beignets, and more local cuisine. Live entertainment will feature New Orleans performers: Charmaine Neville, Reggie Houston, the Pfister Sisters with San Diego performers the Bill MaGee Blues Band, and CEO.

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BHBE's Mardi Gras Halloween Party Tickets include authentic New Orleans cuisine and three drink tickets. Individual tickets are \$75 if purchased by October 21<sup>st</sup> and \$95 after October 21<sup>st</sup>. Walk-up ticket purchase is available. Reserved Tables of 10 are \$750; Gold Tables of 10 are \$1000. To donate auction items, volunteer, or purchase tickets, e-mail: [Donations@BigHeartsForTheBigEasy.org](mailto:Donations@BigHeartsForTheBigEasy.org) or call (619) 501-6612 for more information.

### **About Big Hearts for the Big Easy:**

(BHBE) was created when the family of native New Orleanian restaurateur Marsha Brown (Ruth's Chris Steak House, Marsha Brown Creole Kitchen & Lounge) and her entrepreneur son Scott Roussel's family were directly affected and displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. With a team of caring and motivated volunteers and friends, along with the generous support of people throughout the United States from all walks of life, Big Hearts is helping New Orleans come back stronger and better than ever by helping its people help themselves. For more information visit [www.bigheartsforthebigeasy.org](http://www.bigheartsforthebigeasy.org)

### **About New Orleans Entertainers:**

**Charmaine Neville:** She says firmly, "I try to cover the whole spectrum and do just everything". I don't want to be stagnated and stuck in a rut....People ask, 'Oh,what category would you put your music in?' and I say, 'Good!'" Born into the third generation of the New Orleans legendary musical family, Charmaine has nonetheless worked hard to get where she is and make her music known as her own. The work has paid off - as one reviewer recently wrote, "Charmaine Neville is beginning to rival her father and uncles in terms of popularity in New Orleans." She started out backing up the Neville Brothers and went on to perform with the survivors, a band whose alumni list includes Harry Connick Jr. and Bobby McFerrin. It was here that she first started working with saxophonist Reggie Houston.

**The Pfister Sisters:** The Pfister Sisters have delighted audiences with their sweet hot jazz harmonies since 1979. They were singled out in 1981 by Variety as one of the best new acts of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, and 20 years later, their 2001 Jazz Fest performance was described in newspaper and online media as "sublime" and "sparkling."

**Bill McGee Blues Band:** Born in Collins, the back woods of Mississippi in 1943, Willie (Bill) Magee grew up loving music, listening to Muddy Waters, Elmore James, and B.B. King on his Father's small radio. Life was difficult and Willie experienced many hard knocks. His mother died when he was four years old and his father followed when he was just thirteen. Taken from his parentless home, his older brother Deloy moved him to his tiny one room flat in Ithaca, New York. Determined to finish high school, Willie concentrated on his studies while Deloy worked hard to support him.

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**About "Celebrity Chefs":**

Billy Gruber of New Orleans' Famous *Liuzza's By The Track*, Miguel Martinez of Ruth's Chris Steak House and Jeff Rossman of San Diego's *Terra Restaurant* will prepare their famous creations with the generous participation and contributions of: *Continental Catering, Ruth's Chris Steak House, House of Blues, Bud's Food Shoppe, San Diego Wine & Culinary Center, Spectacular Catering & Events, Chateau Orleans* and more.

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