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dynamic duos



It Takes Two

Three couples show sometimes it takes a pair to create a memorable social event.

Photography By **JASON NUTTLE**

Lifelong philanthropist, Guardian Angel and entrepreneur Paul Martinelli sits overlooking the rolling waves of the ocean with a look that exudes achievement. Recently married in August, Paul and his wife Kelly have created a home that is bright, airy and relaxed. Spending his time speaking at events, seminars and counseling life success programs, Paul will co-chair The Able Trust's 11th Annual Gala on March 21, along with Kelly. The couple's involvement in Able Trust grows deep and their main draw is that it directly helps the disabled by putting them in jobs and making them a part of the community.

"What really drew us to Able Trust is their commitment to allowing people to reach their potential by a process of inclusion, not exclusion," says Paul from his Jupiter Island home.

A Pittsburgh native, Paul knows all too well what having a disability can do to one's self-image and educational success. He grew up with a speech impediment and failed out of high school at an early age.

"I never realized how it framed my life," he says. "Around 1971 a speech disability was considered a learning disability and basically the school told my mother not to expect too much from me. It's those kinds of attitudes that can easily be planted in a parent's and child's belief system, stopping them from their true abilities."

Having independently overcome his speech impediment, Paul's fate changed.

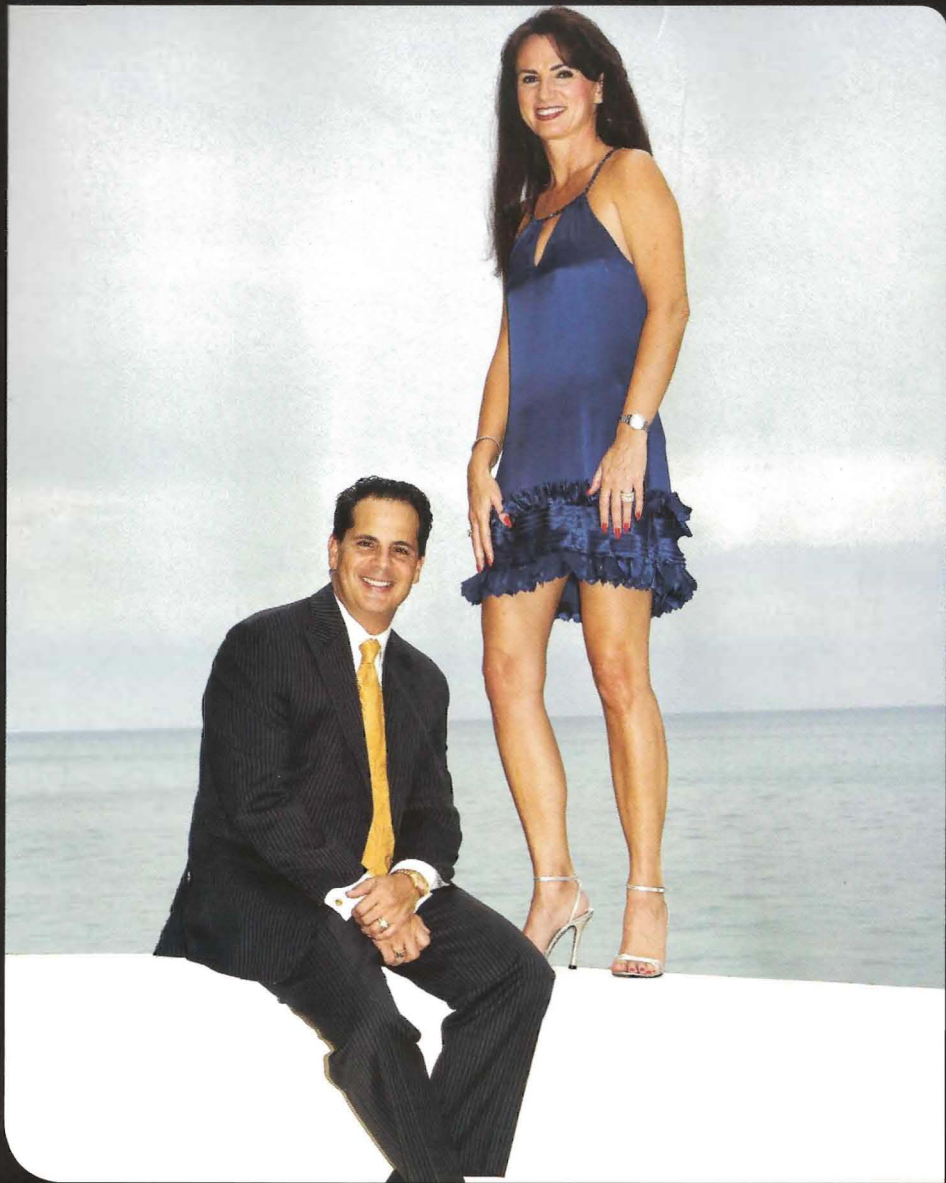
"What I did is also what Able Trust does," he says. "They come from the belief that everyone has infinite potential. Some of us have a disability that may stand in the way, but given enough love, caring and resources it can be done."

With newfound confidence, Martinelli soon became East Coast regional director of the Guardian Angels and oversaw 30 chapters before coming to West Palm Beach in 1985.

"A group of businessmen got together and contacted our office in New York City when a 7-year-old girl was killed by a stray bullet from drug dealers," Paul says. "I was sent here to help clean up dangerous streets in downtown West Palm Beach, where CityPlace now sits. At that time there wasn't a Williams-Sonoma in site."

He opened sites in Delray, Lake Worth, Tampa and Miami, then decided to hang up his beret and become an entrepreneur. He sold his commercial cleaning business that he started for a mere \$200 for an impressive amount and went on to start another business called Life Success in 2006.

Combining forces with Bob Proctor, his mentor and celebrity of the ground-breaking documentary, "The Secret," Paul is now doing what he loves to do – speaking internationally and motivating people.



The Anointed Ones

Paul & Kelly Martinelli

Kelly is also involved in Life Success and finds being able to motivate people to reach their goals is inspiring. "We get to work with people and help them reach their potential or goals, whatever that may be," she says.

Originally from Philadelphia, Kelly grew up with her four sisters and parents in Delray. As a board director, donor and volunteer for the Susan G. Komen for the Cure, she's helped raise money for breast cancer and has given to cancer research. She has a niece who suffers with autism and says any organization that touches a lot of people's lives and lends a helping hand is one she wants to help. However, she and Paul decided they wanted to put their time into Able Trust.

The trust, established by the Florida Legislature in 1990, made it its mission to provide Floridians with disabilities employ-

ment through fundraising, grant programs, public awareness and education.

It has since given more than \$22 million to individuals with disabilities, helped 2,000 people yearly return to the work force, and provides career development programs for more than 2,000 disabled students annually, in-turn, reducing the dropout rate.

The Martinellis say they are now very focused on bringing in the dollars for the gala, but in the future they want to get involved on the ground floor and spend time with the people Able Trust helps.

"Right now we're focusing on one thing, and we want to do it right. It means so much for someone to have a role in society," Kelly says. "Some people are told their whole life that they can't... we are saying 'yes, they can.'" – Michelle Gentile