

Genki Gives supports charities, attracts sophisticated low-key crowd

January 18, 4:53 PM - Atlanta Fashion Examiner - Patrice Worthy



Saffold Barksdale, Stephanie Davis and Michael Jordan at Genki Gives

Phillip Shone

High profile bartenders and a celebrity guests helped raise awareness and money for Autism Speaks Georgia Chapter & Steps to Grow On - a CHOA initiative to help fight childhood obesity. Genki Gives, which took place at Genki Noodles and Sushi in the Prado, included sample specialty items and a for course prix fixe dinner for \$75. The menu was created by Chef Kevin Walker of Cherokee Town and Country Club.

Chef Walker's expertise was specifically requested for the event because of his involvement with Autism Speaks. Walker and his crew tapped into their creativity preparing dishes that

complimented the Genki Sushi and Noodles menu.

"What we wanted to do is play off the menu items," Walker said. "We have a deconstructed Himalayan sushi roll, lemon grass shrimp and crab salad," Walker explained. "We also had Japanese napolean for dessert which included caramelized nori paper and yuzu cream."

Saffold Baksdale, marketing and events for Genki Noodles and Sushi, said the food was an important part of the evening.

"We want to get the word out that we have healthy food for children," Barksdale says. "We have a kids' meal that includes grilled chicken skewers and sushi for kids, an alternative to pizza and macaroni & cheese. It is good to start kids early eating healthy."

Tristan Wilcox, son of former tight end/utility for the Baltimore Ravens Daniel Wilcox, sat with his father and mother eating the Japanese napolean dessert. Wilcox, who co-founded the Baltimore Bee and hosts free football clinics in Baltimore and Atlanta, donated his time and signed autographs to be used in a silent auction during an upcoming fundraiser for Autism Gives.

"I'm crazy about kids I have my own private foundation for kids. If you call Wilcox about kids I'm there," he said. "I think they did a really great job with the event, it was classy and had a cozy ambiance. These are the kind of events I like to attend. I have never had food so expressive."

Wilcox wasn't the only local celebrity who enjoyed the affair while contributing to a great cause. Sully from Dave FM, Stephanie Davis, *Skirt.com* Atlanta editor and National web editor, and Michael Jordan, Editor of *Thrillist*, wet their feet bartending for the evening.

"I learned how to pour beer properly without a lot of head," Davis said. "It was funny. We were slinging drinks. I have a new appreciation for bartenders."

Both Davis and Jordan were happy to give their time to a cause that according to Davis is huge in Georgia. Jordan who has a personal connection to autism made a few Maker's and Cokes, Long Islands and Mojitos to support the cause.

"I have cousins with autism and its great to bring awareness because its not completely understood," Jordan said. "I'm personally always looking for a cause and not just doing something financially, but also giving my time."

Chef Walker who greeted guests and explained menu items to enthused diners said the event went off well.

"It turned out wonderful," he said. "These are two great organizations."

All proceeds from Genki Gives bar and food sales were donated to Autism Gives & Steps to Grow On.