

# Mpls St Paul MAGAZINE

## GoodCause

### Keeping Faith

A Minneapolis couple honors the memory of their daughter by helping other families who have lost a child.

Mark and Susan Lacek with daughters Emmy, left, and Ally, on the site of the future home of Faith's Lodge near Webster, Wisconsin.

knew the foundation now had a specific purpose—to create a legacy for Faith.

The Foundation has been instrumental in securing the land for Faith's Lodge, hiring an executive director, running the general fund, and organizing this month's gala. "This is a one-time event," says Mark. "It's a capital campaign. One hundred percent of the money [from the gala] goes to build the lodge," which is planned to be completed next June.

Faith's Lodge has received a generous three-year grant from Ronald McDonald House Charities, Upper Midwest. RMHC will also be involved in guest management, therapeutic activities, and staff training. In addition, RMHC will assist in finding and referring families to Faith's Lodge from other organizations with similar child-related causes.

Working closely with architects, the Laceks have designed a retreat that is both welcoming for family weekends and couples-only sessions, when the facility can be changed to diminish reminders of children when couples are in a time of healing.

"It is our hope that Faith's Lodge will offer families a place of sanctuary," say Mark and Susan, who are themselves an example of hope: They have been blessed with two more daughters, Emilia, five, and Alexandra, three, who bring great joy and peace to their home—and who no doubt will also see that their sister's name and memory lives on. —J. H. O.

There are many incredible charitable organizations in the Twin Cities—groups with local roots. But we don't always know how they started, why they started, or who was the catalyst for the cause. This month, 800 (or more) people will attend Faith's Lodge Gala and hear the story of Faith as told by her parents, Mark and Susan Lacek.

Six years ago, the Laceks were expecting their first child. Just two weeks before their due date, they were prepared to attend a baby shower, when Susan became concerned that she wasn't feeling the baby move. They made a quick, ease-their-consciences visit to the hospital, where they received devastating news: The doctors could not detect a heartbeat. Mark and Susan would later learn that their otherwise healthy baby girl was the victim of an unexplained umbilical cord accident.

The Laceks decided that their daughter should have a special name. "We named

her Faith," says Susan, "because we knew that it would truly take deep faith to keep us going through our darkest hours."

Faith Ann Lacek came into the world on June 5, 2000. This June, the Laceks will break ground on Faith's Lodge, a unique retreat for families who currently have a critically ill child or have suffered the recent loss of a child. Located on eighty picturesque acres in Wisconsin, Faith's Lodge is designed as a temporary respite for families to gather, share time together, find comfort from others who understand what they are experiencing, and create new memories.

Mark Lacek is a successful entrepreneur who has been instrumental in building, and eventually selling, two marketing companies—The Lacek Group and Mile-Point. It had always been Mark and Susan's goal as a couple to give back to the community, so they started The Lacek Foundation. At the time of their loss, they

#### FAITH'S LODGE GALA

Saturday, June 3  
Marriott City Center,

Emcees Don Shelby  
and T. Mychael  
Rambo

Entertainment by  
Mick Sterling and  
his All-Star Band  
\$125 per person  
612-825-2073,  
faithslodge.org