For more information: Anne Swire
or Victoria Gorelits, 310-276-7111
aswire@andreriveroflife.org
victoria@andreriveroflife.org

Post-Event Press Release
December 1, 2008

Montecito Fires Don't Dampen Spirit of the Andre Sobel River of Life Foundation

Begin the Beguine Event
Moved to Beverly Hills Overnight to Raise Funds for Single Parents of Catastrophically Ill Children

The Santa Barbara fires caused an overnight change of venue from the smoke-filled seacoast town to the Peninsula Hotel Beverly Hills, but the stylish "**Begin the Beguine"** **Cole Porter-**themed show went on without a hitch, attracting the LA political and power elite and raising funds for the **Andre Sobel River of Life Foundation.**

Los Angeles **Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa** stared as the honored guest of the evening, sharing the podium with event co-chairs and power couples **Pamela and Dr. Steven Hoefflin** and **Linell and Robert Shapiro.** An intimate group of guests in black tie and couture gowns invited by the Foundation's Founder and President **Valerie Sobel** toasted the future with **Pommery Champagne** (the favorite of Mr. Porter) and sipped themed cocktails provided by **Utlimat** Vodka and **Patron** Tequila.

Highlighting the live auction's success was the sale of a three day adventure aboard the **Patron Tequlia Express,** a private 1927 railcar – with $2M in restoration and furnishings - donated by its owner **John Paul DeJoria,** Founder of **Paul Mitchell** and **Patron Tequila**. The train's historic passenger list boasts of Clark Gable, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, President Harry S Truman and Warren Buffet. The luxury excursion went to the highest bid of **Harry and Elizabeth Segerstrom** (in advance of the event), owners of

Orange County's South Coast Plaza. Other guests snapped up couture gowns donated by designer **Jane Booke** and a museum quality sculpture by New York's **Sabin Howard**; Cole Porter-era jewels for the auction were provided by **Verdura** and **Lugano.**

De-lovely internationally known cabaret singer **Karen Akers** entertained guests with a selection of Cole Porter favorites. The setting and the performance – on the moonlit hotel's terrace – evoked a charmed scene out of the Cole Porter play, not to mention the song that inspired the event's title:

> *… with you once more under the stars*
> *and down by the shore an orchestras playing*
> *and even the palms seem to be swaying*
>
> *when they **begin the beguine…***

Akers has appeared in prestigious venues worldwide including **Carnegie Hall,** the **White House, the Hollywood Bowl**, New York's Oak Room at the **Algonquin Hotel,** and London's Pizza on the Park (www.karenakers.com)

Wine for the evening was generously provided by the Malibu Family Winery.

Guests included: **Mayor Anthony Villaraigosa, Baroness Monica von Neumann, Patricia Kennedy, Anita Lorber and Dr. Marvin Rice, Arlene Montesano, Maidee and Buzz Kirkeby, Elizabeth An, Bill Shaffer, Chris Shaffer, Jane Booke, Randy and Paula Nussbaum, Jacqueline Alexander and Leodis Matthews.**

The Andre Sobel River of Life Foundation is a 501(c) 3 public charity. Its mission is *"When compassion can't wait and single parents are in despair, the Andre Sobel River of Life Foundation provides urgent financial assistance so these caregivers can remain by their children's side during catastrophic illness."*

Since 2000, the Foundation has provided over $3.7 million in program assistance to over 7,000 family members. The Andre Sobel River of Life is a California Foundation that provides major annual grants to 13 premier pediatric hospitals in six states to assist single parent families of critically ill children also facing financial crises. This is the only program and resource of its kind.

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The beguine is a dance in bolero rhythm that originated in Martinique, and would surely not have gained celebrity and popularity without Cole Porter's 1935 hit, "Begin the Beguine."

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