



Fund a cure: Children with diabetes make a cost-effective plea for donations to the cause (1). Former Major League baseball player Todd Zeile and wife Julianne—whose daughter Hannah, seen here beside her portrait, has juvenile diabetes—were the honorees of the evening. Honeysweet's Erick Weiss calls the family's story "inspiring and emotional" (2). Musicians Garth Brooks, Trisha Yearwood and Katharine McPhee lend their talents to "Finding a Cure: A Love Story" (3).



www.honeysweetproductions.com

important, Conroy says, as they personified the nonprofit's message.

Ticket cost: \$750 and up

Total netted: \$1.4 million

RESOURCES

Conservation International
703/341-2400
www.conservation.org

Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS
816/75-DIFFA
(or 816/753-4332)
diffa.org

E=MC2
403/770-1383
www.emc2events.com

Hala Events & Communication
416/413-1454
www.halainc.com

Hollywood Knights International
818/654-9399
hollywoodknights.com

Honeysweet Productions
323/936-7241
www.honeysweetproductions.com

Susan Gladstone Productions
954/651-8239

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Luckily for Los Angeles-based Honeysweet Productions, you can tug at heartstrings no matter the budget. The company produced the May gala "Finding a Cure: A Love Story" for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif.

"Cuts were made in every area," Honeysweet president Erick Weiss says, which reduced the budget by a total of 30 percent. Decor received the biggest cutback, forcing Honeysweet to customize a pre-fabricated set to save some dollars. The company also dramatically reduced the use of video—all told, the video and decor adjustments resulted in savings of \$25,000. Other elements that eased production costs: no gift bags and no hosted bar.

Some of the most effective elements of production cost absolutely nothing. Children with juvenile diabetes held the hands of celebrities such as boxer Sugar Ray Leonard and country music star Garth Brooks to guide them to the stage. Another touching touch: These children held up signs with numbers starting at \$50,000 as an auctioneer encouraged the audience to make cash donations. The expense of this fundraising method was little more than the cost of poster board and Magic Markers.

Ticket cost: \$500 per seat

Total netted: \$1 million