

## **The Magic of Hope: Zak!Charity Open**

For many children across the Inland Northwest, hope is a rare treasure. For these children, the reality of the cancer they are battling, or the economic conditions they are struggling against, is so much more powerful than the promise of hope. Thanks to the Zak!Charity Open, however, hope can once again be something worth believing in for many of these children. This year's Zak!Charity Open raised more than \$435,000 to benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Spokane County and the Rypien Foundation, bringing the total amount raised in the tournament's 12-year history to more than \$3 million!

“The fact that we were able to surpass this milestone in a year where many people and businesses are still struggling to recover from the tough economic times we've faced in the past few years is a testament to the generosity and selflessness of this community,” said Irv Zakheim, founder of the Zak!Charity Open.

As one of Spokane's premier fundraising events, the 2011 event took place over July 24-25 and kicked off with the highly anticipated “Summer Celebration” Dinner & Auction at Northern Quest Resort & Casino. More than 450 guests were treated to an act that featured world-renowned magician Mathew Furman who incorporated unbelievable sleight of hand tricks, levitation and mind reading skills that left the audience in sheer amazement. Surrounded by beautiful silent and live auction items up for bid, Mark Rypien also wowed the crowd once again with a “football toss” that had everyone's heart pumping. We would also like to congratulate Denise Stanton who, on such a special night, received the 2011 Dan Fitzgerald Humanitarian Award in recognition of her dedication and on-going efforts in support of the Boys & Girls Clubs as well as all children in Spokane.

Rounding out the 2011 event, the Zak!Charity Open held two separate golf tournaments the following day – one at the Spokane Country Club and the other at Manito Golf & Country Club. Per tradition, the tournament at both courses was led off by the honorary first drive hit by kids representing both charities. Fueled by a great lunch, 55 golf teams teed off for their chance to spend time with friends and naturally vie for bragging rights. The highlight of the day came not once, but twice at the Spokane County Club, as two holes in one were made...on the same hole! As the evening wrapped up with a fabulous prime rib dinner and an awards presentation, players and sponsors ended on a high note knowing that their participation had made a difference in the lives of local youth in need.

“Sometimes, all these kids need is a little reminder of just how powerful hope can be,” Zakheim said. “When you get the opportunity to give them some of that hope, it really is magical.”