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Friday, 03/31/06

## Stork joins 'quackdown' on cancer

*The Bachelor*, country music stars sign Chemo Ducks for children's hospital drive

By SUE McCLURE  
Staff Writer

**SPRING HILL** — Dr. Travis Stork — or *The Bachelor*, as most of us have come to know him — has a heart for the ladies.

After all, he wined and dined a dozen beauties in Paris while America watched him on the hit ABC television series *The Bachelor*.

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But, he also has a heart — and a big one, at that — for the children being treated at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt.

To help them, he has signed a Chemo Duck to be auctioned off at a May 12 fundraiser called The Spirit of Survivorship.

The fundraiser is being put on by Gabe's My Heart Inc., a nonprofit organization based in Spring Hill that provides the colorful Chemo Ducks to children at the hospital who are coping with cancer.



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Dr. Travis Stork of *The Bachelor* fame meets Gabe Sipos and signs a Chemo Duck to be auctioned at a May 12 fundraiser for the nonprofit organization, Gabe's My Heart Inc., which gives Chemo Ducks to children being treated for cancer. (PHOTO SUBMITTED BY LU SIPOS)

If you go



Lu Sipos came up with the idea after her infant son, Gabe, was diagnosed with cancer.

To help her son understand his treatment and make it less scary for him, she took a stuffed yellow duck and gave him an extreme makeover, dressing him in hospital pajamas and a bandana, adding a chemotherapy port on his chest and a blood pressure cuff on his arm.

Dr. Gabe could now share the procedures that were being conducted on him with Chemo Duck.

It proved so helpful to her son that she decided to make them for other children at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital.

Now, in order to raise money to buy more Chemo Ducks to give children undergoing cancer treatments, Sipos has come up with the idea for "The Spirit of Survivorship" event.

"All the proceeds will go directly to Gabe's My Heart," she said.

That fact, along with the pleasure of meeting Gabe, convinced Stork to be a part of this.

"Gabe has such a great spirit," Stork said. "His face just lights up when you meet him.

"I'm always inspired when I meet someone like Gabe and I have so much respect for his parents and all that they have done in Gabe's honor," he said.

The May 12 fundraiser, which runs from 7 to 11 p.m. at Old Natchez Country Club in Franklin, will include a silent auction, wine tasting and special guest speaker, Sipos said.

"Our keynote speaker is Ron Williams, a childhood cancer survivor who is an international cyclist," Sipos said. "He won the International Paralympics in Sydney, Australia, and he's ridden on the Tour of Hope with Lance Armstrong.

"His story is very inspiring."

The silent auction will include gift baskets, salon packages and weekend getaways, while the wine tasting will feature the products of local wineries, she said.

Tickets to "The Spirit of Survivorship," a May 12 wine tasting, silent auction and keynote speech at Old Natchez Country Club in Franklin, are \$30 a ticket. All proceeds go to the nonprofit organization Gabe's My Heart, which provides Chemo Ducks to children being treated for cancer. For more information or to purchase a ticket, contact Lu Sipos at 615-717-5696. Tickets will also be available at Perry's Home Outlet in Spring Hill during the month of April.

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And then there are the Chemo Ducks — the big yellow stars of the evening.

"We have more and more signed ducks," Sipos said. "Sen. Bill Frist, Vince (Gill) and Amy (Grant), LeAnn Rimes and the Predators have all signed ducks for us.

"So, it's going to be a fun evening."

For a very good cause.



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