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Elizabeth & James Elder



Having two children with significant special needs can be challenging, but Bunker Hill residents, Elizabeth and James Elder, have found the silver lining... a reason to celebrate. Elizabeth and James

chaired Viva la Vida, a fundraiser for PALS (People Against Leigh Syndrome) on May 15th at Saint Arnolds Brewery. They broke the fundraising and attendance record with nearly 300 supporting family, friends and neighbors raising over \$150,000. Elizabeth and James have three children, Annabelle, Blair and Clark. Annabelle and Blair have Leigh syndrome, a genetic neurometabolic disorder that has caused global delays and the inability to walk on their own. Funds raised that evening went to support Dr. Mary

Kay Koenig and the research and patient registry she oversees at the UT Mitochondrial Center of Excellence, including a trial drug for the Elder children that is giving very promising results.

"We think of our life as a marathon. It's not easy, in fact, it's a long, hard road. Its physically exhausting and requires great determination, strength and positive thinking. However, we are fortunate to have legs that can run and so we do," said Elizabeth.

Elizabeth and James have run five marathons between the two of them and Elizabeth is currently training for a Ragnar Relay, 200 miles from San Francisco to Napa Valley, with a team of 12 "Super Steel Magnolias" to raise money for Steel Magnolia Moms, a non-profit she founded in 2016 for moms who have children with special needs. The support group started on Memorial Information Trading and now has over 500 members.

"We didn't choose this journey; I never would have had the courage to. But I can honestly say that although it's an unfamiliar rocky road, we get to enjoy the most gorgeous views and life is good, so we forget about the milestones and celebrate the inchstones!"

