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Tampa Returns to Wonderland on April 29

Barkin HeARTs gives guests a chance to eat, drink, dress up and be entertained to benefit the SPCA

Tampa Bay

By [Deborah Bostock-Kelley](#) | [Email the author](#) | April 11, 2011



The end of April is going to the dogs, and Johnna Guzman and Hendrickje Ewen, Barkin HeARTs' founders could not be more thrilled.

After a successful Alice in Wonderland-themed fundraising event in 2010, Johnna and Carrollwood resident Hendrickje are venturing into Wonderland once last time on April 29 to raise money for [SPCA Tampa Bay](#) before retiring the theme.

Just 33 days from inception to completion, 2010 Wonderland, anticipating only 250 visitors, brought over 500 guests and raised approximately \$5,000 for Dogma Pet Rescue.

With more time for planning, this year's Return to Wonderland promises to "put last year to shame," says Guzman.

"We didn't listen to people saying 'it's impossible to do this in this short of time.' We just did it, and I think we proved that we broke the mold of what could be accomplished in a month and three days."

The inspiration for [Barkin HeARTS](#) came from the 2007 passing of Razzie, a four-legged friend Johnna rescued from a puppy mill that had a heart defect. To test Tampa's creative receptiveness, in 2010, Johnna placed an ad for event volunteers on Craigslist, and was thrilled to be completely inundated with positive responses.

"Our name, Barkin HeARTs, is derived from combining dogs barking with my love of dogs and all things creative," Guzman explains, "It started out as a party to end my quarter life, crisis and it took on a life of its own and escalated into this huge event to raise money for a pet rescue. Hendrickje and I received amazing support, and now this year, it's even bigger than we could have ever imagined."

The [Barkin HeARTs Facebook page](#) describes Barkin HeARTs' Return to Wonderland as "a playfully eccentric, but (a) professionally produced, Alice in Wonderland-themed fundraiser for SPCA Tampa Bay."

For the 21 and over crowd, Return to Wonderland boasts incredible food, alcoholic beverages, a jello shot and candy bar, music, interactive exhibits, elaborate and outrageous costumes and a costume contest.

There will also be entertainment that includes fitness pole dancers, Hoola Monsters hula hoopers, stilt walkers, body painters, chalk artists, acrobats, Enigma hip hop dance crew, fire dancers, the local artist community of sketch artists, painters, sculptures, photographers and a Wonderland-themed fashion show.

Guzman was thankful for the sponsors of the event, which include: [Puff-n-Stuff Catering](#), Miller Light, Visual Delights, Roosevelt 2.0 and [Bay Stage Lighting](#).

"The team at [Roosevelt 2.0](#) in Ybor is collaborating to make this event green," she said. "Even Clear Channel has donated old billboards to be recycled for our artists to use."

Said Ewen: "This is *the* social extravaganza. The costumes our guests create are spectacular, and new sponsors, artists and entertainers are joining the roster every day."

To be held at the waterside location of [the Height Tampa](#), 1910 N. Ola Avenue, Barkin Hearts' Return to Wonderland runs from 8pm through 2:30am and costs a \$25 ticket donation online, or \$30 at the door.

Guzman and Ewen have just one wish for Barkin HeARTs' Return to Wonderland: Help SPCA Tampa Bay.

"We're bringing the best of Tampa Bay together again for a really good cause," Guzman said. "They (SPCA) don't have government funding. Every drink or food you buy or art you purchase at Return to Wonderland brings us this much closer to helping them save a *Barkin HeART*."

Visit www.barkinhearts.com for more event details. Tickets are available at <http://wonderland2011.eventbrite.com>.

