

# citylife

## DOWN EAST & UPGRADE

House parties for a Maritime fundraiser and a manifesto for better living



AMORYN ENGEL

To know PR maven **Ann Layton** is to love her, so when she asks for your support on something, you reply with a resounding yes! Recently, she and our own **Shinan Govani** brought some down-home Cape Breton hospitality to the heart of Lawrence Park. **Pat Brigham**, the founder of Sunquest, and partner **Deb Fisher** opened the doors to their beautiful home for a night of fiddling and fundraising in the spirit of a Maritime Ceilidh to benefit the Inverness Community Leadership Centre in Cape Breton.

"We wanted to create a big-city version of the old-fashioned bake sale," commented Layton. "Everything for the event was donated and came from the heart. We are overwhelmed by the generosity of everyone who attended and contributed. And 100% of every penny raised will go directly to helping Canadian kids, and contribute to research that will lead to better policies about the lives of our children, here and around the world."

The intimate group noshed on delicious bites by the Food Dudes and had the opportunity to bid on some fantastic auction prizes like a week in a luxurious private condo in Rio during the 2014 World Cup, donated by **Peter Sharpe** and **Lidia Sharpe** of Cadillac Fairview, a trip to the new Gansevoort Las Vegas, a trip to London including

business class flights with Air Canada and a stay at The Fairmont Savoy, and a magnificent Maldives getaway to the One & Only Reethi Rah. A huge shout out to **Jeanne Beker**, looking very pretty in pink, who got those hands in the air! An incredible \$70,000 was raised for this very grassroots effort. Cead mile fálte roinnt!

When it was time for **Rana Florida** to launch her book, *Upgrade, Taking Your Work and Life From Ordinary to Extraordinary*, **Suzanne Cohon** jumped at the opportunity to host the party at her fabulous Rosedale home. "When Rana shared the exciting news that she had penned her first book, Mark and I wanted to do anything we could to support and celebrate our dear friend's amazing achievement!" said the hostess. "Hosting the launch of *Upgrade* was the perfect opportunity to bring our friends, family and colleagues together to raise a glass and toast Rana's success and foray into the literary community."

It was a jumping party and I would guess everyone invited must have accepted, as well-dressed guests spilled out into the glorious garden. Supportive hubby, progressive thinker and urban theorist **Richard Florida** was front and centre along with **Alex Weston** and **Frank Toscan**. Stunner **Sacha Grierson**, who attended with daughter Lola, created the most inspired cupcakes, courtesy of Eat My Words. Books were bought and signed, and Rana, who has legs for days and days and days, said, "I learned a ton from my interview subjects and from my diverse clients. And it's their collective insights boiled down in seven simple principles that I found we could all use to upgrade our lives. I am feeling upgraded already!"

Weekend Post  
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Ceilidh at left,  
Upgrade at right

PHOTOS BY GEORGE FEMINELL PHOTOGRAPHY



Nina Hill, Beth Checkley and Eva Mustard.

Ann Layton, Jim Mustard and Cindy O'Neill.

Moirá Wright and Sarah Bresler.

Larry and Marla Wasser.

Andy Redmond and David Beato.

Patrick Brigham and wife Deborah Fisher.

Michael and Aneta Friisdahl.

Anne Mroczkowski and Toufik Sarwa.

Jeanne Beker.

Byron and Danielle Messier.

Joseph Wilson and Gareth Setzer.

Dee Gibson and Rajiv Malkhuri.



Brooks Thomas, Frank Toskan and Mark Cohon.

Paul Venoit.

Emily Ridout and Arielle Eby.

Victoria Jackman and Jen Lee Koss.

Sandy Skotnicki and Alex Kotyck.

Rana Florida and Suzanne Cohon.

Stephen Wong and Kirk Pickersgill.

Victoria Webster and Sarah Macdonald.

Jane Apor and Lisa Tait.

Theresa Track.

Kirstine Stewart.

Leslie Fullerton and Niall Finnegan.