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The Great Adventure Hunt Returns To NorthPark And The Great Hunters for ChildCare Group

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by Jeanne Prejean

Years ago the Great Adventure Hunt used to take over NorthPark when evening traffic in the center was not high density. Teams would scramble around trying to solve puzzles to help raise money for charity. Then it took a break for about five years and NorthPark expanded its size and traffic big time.

But good things never totally go away, so the Great Adventure Hunt returned to NorthPark on March 5 to raise funds for ChildCare Group thanks to co-chairs **Pamela Merritt** and **Kirstine Rogers** and honorary co-chairs **Tori and Joe Mannes**. However, this time NP was bulging with customers. So much so that Great Adventure Hunters found the valet parking filled to capacity upon arrival. That was okay. The hunters had their running shoes on and were rearing to go, so a little walk to home base in Maggiano's upstairs dining room was a snap.



Lyda Hil, Gladys Kolenovsky and Peggy Allison

As the 25 teams of six people compared notes, it was pretty obvious to tell the veterans from the newcomers. **Lyda Hill** and her seasoned pros (**Rena Pederson, Gladys Kolenovsky, Peggy Allison** and **Susan and Warren Foxworth**) in "Lyda orange" T-shirts hunkered down at a table in the corner comparing notes and strategy while eating. The team was legendary for taking no prisoners and capturing the top prize.

Lyda shared part of their strategy: "Hurry up and get back before anyone else for the desserts!"



Diane and Daryl Johnston

Across the way first-timers **Diane and Daryl Johnston** on Trophy Level Sponsors **Kit and Kemp Sawers'** team were studying the rules and trying to figure out what exactly

was on plan for them. Teammate Daryl Johnston admitted that his mom used to do “treasure hunts” for Daryl’s birthday, so participating was partly for old-time memory’s sake. Plus the fact that Kit and Kemp asked them.

NP General Manager **Billy Hines** looked like a proud papa overseeing a family reunion. He was so pleased to have the brainy scavenger hunt up and running again.

Just as the teams were finishing their meals and reviewing their instructions, a young woman rushed into the dining room and said, “We’re gonna win this. We are. We got it!”



Clay Huffstutter and Amy Taylor

As the aroma of garlic from the buffet filled the room, Great Adventure Hunt guru **Dave Harris** took the microphone and started explaining. There were 10 different clue sites throughout the mall where teams would have to solve puzzles. Some of the teams had actually paid for runners like **Clay Huffstutter** in track shorts with backpack. The trick was to solve all the puzzles first.



Dave Harris

Then Dave launched into some of the hints of game playing. For instance — every solution is a number solution.

Again there was a division between the two camps. Veterans recognized the genius sharing tricks and finer points of the game. Lyda commented, “He’s really brilliant. He’s giving lots of clues.”

New kids on the block just wanted to break like colts from their stalls.

At 7:36 p.m. just as the urge to break and run was swelling, the teams received their bags, discovered the first clue locations and were gone.

Pity the poor shoppers who saw the 150 contestants racing to Pinto Ranch, the Train at NorthPark, the cafe outside of Nordstrom’s, Bookmarks, the Apple Store, Puzzle Zoo, the former Starbucks location under AMC, the space next to Bebe or Williams-Sonoma. It was like a wave of Jessica Fletchers.



Anna Harris

At Williams-Sonoma, **Anna Harris**, **Kelsey Weir** and **Ty Johnson** were stationed to provide the clue and make sure no misdoings took place. It was Kelsey’s and Ty’s first hunt, but Anna was a 35-year veteran. After all, she’s Dave wife.



Ty Johnson and Kelsey Weir

Suddenly from nowhere Lyda and her team appeared on the scene for their first clue — six pieces of chocolate in a box. Each piece of chocolate contained a number. The puzzle was to make a phone number out of it.

They immediately hunkered down in front of William Sonoma and started working the puzzle.



Hunkering down

A second team looking a little bewildered arrived. Just as they received their box of chocolates, someone said, “She’s (Lyda) out there!” One of the second team commented, “She’s way out there!”

Fast forward to the finish line. Wanna know the results of the hunt? Follow the jump! And the winners were in the following categories:

Major, Underwriter and Corporate Levels -

- CIC Partners (Team 6) — Bayard Friedman, Diane Gross, AJ Tracey, John Rodakis, Carroll Merlick and Marshall Payne
- Baker Botts (Team 5)– Suzanne and Walt Humann, Jennifer and Kurt Pankratz and Elizabeth and Bart Showalter

Trophy Level

- Tonti Properties (Team 19)– Julie and Brad Broberg, Kim and David McDavid and Barbara and Mike Tonti
- Reeder (Team 15) — Dotti Reeder, Brad Matthews, Shannon Grady, Kal Grant, Susan Church and George Edwards
- Tom and Nicole Nynas (Team 18) — Melissa and Jim Bloom, Chris and Neil Conway and Nichole and Tom Nynas

Regular Level

Fish & Richardson (Team 23) — Carl Bruce, Richi Gupta, Victor Johnson, Kaaren Shalom, Christopher Smith and Jamie Youngblood

Frito Lay (Team 25) — Nichole and Stuart Beck, April and Art Brickey, Kim Paris and Cindy Armlin

While Lyda’s team didn’t win, she admitted that we “had a great time giving our brains a workout.”

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