

Alan and Mary Kay Villaverde Orlando's Caring Couple Advocates for Young and Elderly

Recently, Alan C. Villaverde, executive vice president, Peabody Hotels, and general manager of The Peabody Orlando, and his wife and soul-mate of 30 years, Mary Kay, were named Orlando's "Most Caring Couple," by the Visiting Nurses of Central Florida/Community Care for the Elderly organization.

"Mary Kay has been utterly devoted to our organization for quite some time, said Jan Ingrando, director of community relations for the VNACF/Community Care for the Elderly. "She holds a Masters Degree in Gerontology, and has a sincere sense of duty to, and yes, love of, our community's elders. She has tirelessly raised funds for the organization which enables elderly members of our community to remain in their own homes as long as possible, with dignity and respect, and with a little help from members of our organization. Mary Kay has made a huge difference to our fund-raising efforts through the beautiful Sunday Afternoon Tea parties she has organized at The Peabody."

The VNA/Community Care organization is not Mary Kay's first and only foray into local charities. For many years, she has tirelessly championed the Lisa Merlin House, a shelter for homeless girls and women, and those trying to overcome the disease of addiction, physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect.,

Currently, Alan is one of the busiest men-about-town. He wears a yellow construction hat most days because he's spearheading the \$450-million expansion of The Peabody. "This is an amazing construction project," he reveals. "We're adding a tower with 750 guestrooms, a parking garage for 2,100 cars, a recreational, novelty pool, overlooked by a new Napa Valley Wine-themed restaurant and a state-of-the-art spa. We are also adding 150,000 square feet of flexible function space. This will give us a total of 1,641 guestrooms and some 210,000 square feet of flexible function space. "The existing hotel will be totally refurbished in all aspects, including soft furnishings, furniture, equipment, décor, to exactly match the new expansion space. The Peabody is well-known in business and tourism promotion circles in The City Beautiful. The projected completion date is October, 2010.

Villaverde was born, raised and educated in New York City and grew up in a home where his dad, Charles Villaverde, was a general manager of a major New York City hotel. "I grew up in a family where the hotel industry was front and center," grins Villaverde. "Of course, I never thought I'd end up in the hotel business myself. I was something of a "hippie" who studied art at the School of Visual Arts in New York. I took home a Fine Arts degree, but didn't bargain for the harsh reality of earning a living as an

artist in America's center of the arts and culture. So, I opted into the hotel business, as I thought, just for a while until I find myself!"

Some 38 years ago, Villaverde began his career with Hilton Hotel Corporation at Rye Town Hilton Hotel, New York, and then joined Stouffer's corporate office in Cleveland, Ohio where he had responsibility for 35 properties throughout the United States and the Caribbean. Throughout his early career in Maryland, New York and Ohio, he was involved in local community charities, including the Sheppard Pratt Hospital Advisory Board for Adolescent Development. He chaired the first three fund-raising campaigns for the "Food for All" project of the Maryland Food Bank Committees, raising \$900,000 for food for those in need. He won the Governor's Citation for Exemplary Efforts in Caring and Community Outreach, and also was named Maryland's Hotelier of the Year.

Since joining The Peabody Orlando in 1993, Villaverde has continued the same personal commitment to local charities, most especially Give Kids The World. "For the past 20 years, Marty and Julie Belz, Mary Kay and I, have hosted this wonderful charity's annual Black & White Gala at The Peabody, and we are committed to continuing this most worthy effort for years to come." A passionate patron of the arts, Villaverde's commitment to the Orlando/Peabody Alliance for the Arts & Culture, was covered in a two-page spread in the business section of the *New York Times*. Currently, he is an avid supporter of the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra. "This orchestra is the bedrock of our city's arts and culture, and reflects our community's dedication to, and love of, great music."

In recognition of his contribution to the elevation of the hotel/hospitality business in Florida, he was named Central Florida's Outstanding General Manager of the Year, followed by the State of Florida's General Manager of the Year Award. The American Hotel & Lodging Association bestowed its top honor on Villaverde, naming him the nation's Outstanding General Manager. Since then, he was named among Central Florida's 100 Most Influential People by *The Orlando Business Journal*, and in 2007, "Most Influential Executive" by *Orlando Magazine*.

Alan and Mary Kay Villaverde are an exemplary Orlando couple who take the time and effort to look beyond their own sphere of influence and responsibility to help members of the local community who are less fortunate than they. "We are delighted to be able to contribute to the good of our community," said Mary Kay. "It's not a burden, or an imposition, it's what Alan and I choose to do, because it's the right thing to do."

While the Peabody Ducks are an important part of this couple's life, they are utterly devoted to, and enormously proud of, their daughter Kathryn, who is a student at NYU, reading for a degree in psychology. "She is the bright light of both our lives," smiles Mary Kay with that smile that only a loving mother can muster.

Here's to the Villaverde family, a credit to Orlando, the City Beautiful.