

MAGAZINE

# KEY BISCAYNE<sup>®</sup>

ISLAND LIVING AT ITS FINEST



*The Most Beautiful People*

# Charity's *Star*



By enhancing the civic and social fabric of this global city, Estrellita Sibila is enriching Miami one cause at a time by virtue of her charity organization aptly named PhilanthroFest.

TEXT BY FRANCESCA CRUZ

**E**stellita Sibila's hero doesn't wear a fancy cape or have a cool superpower...he or she is a simple mortal who opens their heart to help others. This is a gal with a no-nonsense disposition, disarming smile and a twinkle in her eye that does her name great justice; fitting attributes for the Executive Director of PhilanthroFest.

An attorney by trade who specializes in sustainable building and real estate development, the idea of PhilanthroFest was hatched almost 2 years ago with James Echols and a handful of friends over some mojitos and ahi tuna bites. By April 2012, the first event took place in Midtown Miami where 90 organizations and community agencies came together to create a platform for people, passion and philanthropy to engage. "Our yearly event helps individuals identify organizations that are a synchronous fit with their enthusiasm for charitable service," she says. "It plays the role of catalyst by bringing causes together with individuals."

For Sibila, the two significant individuals she credits for instilling the importance of giving back and a love for

charitable endeavors are her parents. "They were always quick to remind me that circumstances change, and one day I may be in need of someone's help," she says. "They taught me that in the meantime, you help whenever and however you can – whether it's via time, talent or treasure."

But she doesn't stop there. One of Sibila's most endearing qualities is that she's content to give credit where credit is due and happily passes along the word of the charitable work others are doing. "Charity is about community and coming together for a greater cause," she says.

When it comes to advice on following in the footsteps of a hero, she's got lots of thoughts on the subject. "Everyone has a passion – whether it's fishing, sports, education, art or children, you're guaranteed to find an organization that works in that space," she says. "It's important to find your match and reach out to them. It's a great way to meet other people who share your passion. If we want to emerge as a thriving, diversified economy, we need to focus on our human capital and ways to build an engaged and accessible community – and teamwork makes the dream work!" **KB**