

In the spirit of giving

Charity nod goes to Washingtons

By MARK PFEIFFER

After years of involvement with the entertainment industry, Denzel and Pauletta Washington, along with their four children, are no strangers to formal events. However, the gathering they hosted on May 5 was not your typical Hollywood soiree.

Suffice to say, though, the Washingtons aren't your typical family. Held at their home in Los Angeles, the event raised more than \$1.5 million to benefit the Maxine Dunitz Neurosurgical Institute at Cedars-Sinai Hospital. Not bad for a night's work.

The institute, helmed by scientist and neurosurgeon Dr. Keith Black, is a proving ground for cutting-edge research focusing on neurological disorders such as Parkinson's disease, epilepsy, brain tumors and stroke-related impairments.

Having first heard Black speak several years ago, the Washingtons became members of the institute's volunteer and advisory committees after Pauletta's mother suffered a fatal stroke in 1998.

"I wonder, if such medical resources and expertise had been available then, would things have been different?" Pauletta says. "It's a question without a definite answer, but my involvement with Dr. Black has helped me find closure."



HUMANITARIANS: Denzel Washington and wife Pauletta view their fundraising and public service work as character-building experiences.

Although everything the couple does is a family affair, Denzel and Pauletta have their individual causes. Denzel, for example has been national spokesman for the Boys & Girls Club of America since 1993. During his youth in Mount Vernon, N.Y., he spent much of his free time immersed in Boys Club activities.

Pay-back

Washington sees his ongoing personal appearances at clubs and fundraisers, along with his numerous public service announcements, as a kind of pay-back for the guidance he received early on.

"At the time, it was fun," says the Oscar-winning actor. "In retrospect, it was a character-building life experience."

Pauletta is heavily involved in Project 730, a privately funded program that provides support to single mothers and their children in making the transition from welfare to work. Referred to as their "mentor supreme" by participants, Pauletta likened being an honored guest at the group's graduation ceremony in March to winning her own Oscar.

It's difficult to compile an entire list of the Washingtons' in-

volvement with charities. They have donated \$1 million to Nelson Mandela's Children Fund, \$2.5 million to the West Los Angeles Church of God and have raised money for the Gathering Place, a center for HIV-positive people in South Central L.A.

The Washingtons strive to integrate the experiences gained through charity work into their tightly knit family.

"Certainly our children gain from our involvement," Pauletta says. "At a young age, it shows them a way of treating others that won't be difficult to continue as they mature. Above all else, our success has afforded us the ability to give. If you don't have anything, you can't give anything."

It's in recognition of this prolific and ongoing dedication to philanthropic causes that Women in Film honors the Washingtons with this year's Norma Zarky Humanitarian Award.

The humanitarian award, established in 1979, is named for a founding member of Women in Film and the first woman president of the Beverly Hills Bar Assn. Past recipients include Ted Turner, Danny Glover, Billy Crystal, Lilly Tartikoff and Whoopi Goldberg.

Rinzler's d. takes in wic

By STEVE CHAGOLLAN

Everything about Lisa Rinzler's career suggests a wide range of experience. Her palette as a feature film d.p. is similarly wide, from the contemporary urban noir of the Hughes brothers' "Menace II Society" and "Dead Presidents" to the working-class "Trees Lounge" to the impressionistic poetry of "Three Seasons."

"I'm sure that if you dissect things I've shot, the same eye is always behind it," says Rinzler, who as this year's recipient of Women in Film's Kodak Vision Award follows in the footsteps of past winners Nancy Schreiber, Sandi Sissel, Ellen Kuras and Roxanne DiSanto. "But I really feel excited by the opportunity to not always have the same look on each film but to try to be driven by the story that is being told in the script."

Well versed in all forms of the film medium — documentaries, experimental films, pop videos, narrative features — she approaches every project with the utmost attention to its inherent drama and psychology of character.

Her just-completed work on "Pollack," about abstract expressionist Jackson Pollack, veers away from the kind of lighting schemes and visual designs that aped the painting styles of van Gogh and Toulouse-Lautrec in "Lust for Life" and "Moulin Rouge," respectively. Instead, Rinzler was attracted to Pollack's energy and intensity. "He really was about energy,"