

# CRAIN'S

NEW YORK BUSINESS®



## New York, New York

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### Party Central

Invitations went out on Friday to what's shaping up as the hottest gala of the fall charity season.

In honor of Central Park's 150th anniversary, 150 residents, hotels and clubs directly overlooking the park will throw simultaneous benefit dinners on Sept. 15. Already, 120 people have signed up to host dinners in their homes, pledging \$1.2 million.

Hosts have the choice of buying a table themselves for \$10,000 and inviting their own family and friends, or asking the Central Park Conservancy to send over 10 guests, who will have each paid \$1,000. New Yorkers who have signed up to host include financier **Bruce Wasserstein** and actor **Candice Bergen**.

The 1,500 guests will be expected to arrive at their dinners at

the same time. At 7:30, a fireworks display in the park, created by artist Cai Guo-Qiang and sponsored by Häagen-Dazs, will be visible from all the venues. At 9:30 sharp, each host will read a toast to the park written by Frances FitzGerald.

Sixty celebrity chefs have agreed to donate their time to cook some of the dinners, and luxury shops like Cartier and Bernardaud will design tables.

"We wanted to combine all of these different New York institutions, the finest restaurants, the finest designers," says Eleanor Kennedy, co-chair of the evening.