

Storyteller Raises Record Amount for Homeless Children

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BY JULIA RODGERS
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Storyteller Gala co-chairs Valerie Rice, Suzanne Deardorff and Tiffany Foster worked with event planner Kyle Irwin to turn the Earl Warren Showgrounds building into a hip, '60s winter wonderland. Photos by Daniel Montoya and John Stocklin for Door 9 Studios

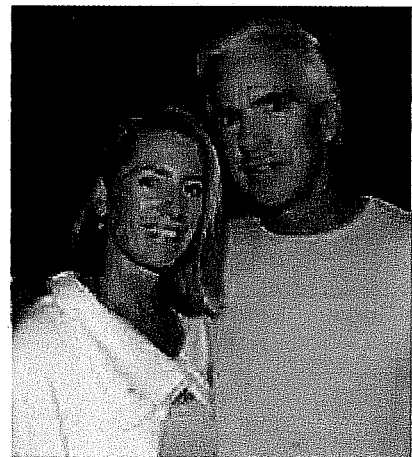
With 30 tons of snow, go-go dancers, an ice bar and dramatic white draping, Earl Warren Showgrounds was transformed into a hip 1960s winter wonderland for the Storyteller Children's Center "Snow A Go Go" gala Nov. 10. But clearly the snowy theme didn't freeze any wallets: a record-breaking \$280,000 was raised to help the homeless and at-risk children who attend Storyteller's preschool.

"Given that 60 percent of our funding comes from private donors, an event like this makes such a huge difference," said Tiffany Foster, a Storyteller board member who also helped chair the event. "We are so grateful to the community to have their support. Everyone was incredibly generous."

Storyteller provides quality, tuition-free early childhood education for homeless or at-risk children, and comprehensive support services for their families. The children, many of whom receive counseling and special services at the school, range in age from 18 months to 5 years. About 100 children attend the school in a year, but another 76 are on the waiting list right now, hoping for a spot.

Event co-chairwomen Valerie Rice, Suzanne Deardorff and Foster, along with event planner Kyle Irwin, worked tirelessly planning the event and turning Earl Warren into the festive party atmosphere that fueled the generous giving by donors.

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Storyteller Board Member Kenny Slaughter with his wife Elizabeth

"We really wanted to shake things up and raise the bar this year," said Rice. "It's such a compelling cause."

Top sponsors of the event included Deckers Outdoor Corp., Valerie and A.J. Rice, and Elizabeth and Kenny Slaughter of Investec. The 10 live-auction items raised double the amount of last year's gala, and sponsorship increased 15 percent.

"Every year our funding shifts from being a little less government to a little more private, and every year we need a great event to make things work, and every year it does," said Jon Clark, Storyteller board president. "We have an incredible group of volunteers that make it seem like magic, but so much hard work goes into making this event a success."

For more information about Storyteller Children's Center, call 805.682.9585 or visit www.storytellercenter.org.




Board Member Michele Cuttler and Robyn Bartling



Board Member Jo Saxon and husband Ken with Jessica Schaeman and board member

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