

STYLE+SOCIALITY

**SUN
DAY**


Brian and Gwynn Thomas (she's event co-chair), Doreen and Dr. Myron Schonbrun (she's event co-chair), Susie Sides and Jim Avery (PATH Award honorees), Dr. Moisés Barón (SDCC president/CEO)



Mayor Kevin Faulconer with gala co-chairs Katherine Faulconer, Reena and Sam Horowitz, Hélène and George Gould, Stephanie Brown, Jim Bartell, and Jeanne Jones and Don Breitenberg.

S•D SCENE

Song & celebrating service

STORY & PHOTOS BY VINCENT ANDRUNAS • SPECIAL TO THE U-T

CENTER FOR CHILDREN GALA

The San Diego Center for Children celebrated its 129th anniversary last week at downtown's US Grant Hotel. Doreen Schonbrun and Gwynn Thomas chaired the gala, titled "Blues Thursday" in honor of a weekly SDCC therapeutic music program providing children the opportunity to explore their creative talents on an open mic stage. There, surrounded by their peers, they sing, dance, play an instrument or read a poem, filling the Center with laughter, hand-clapping and profound energy.

Daily, SDCC touches the lives of more than 1,000 children and family members struggling with behavioral, emotional and mental health challenges. Its noble mission is to protect the joy of childhood, prevent emotional suffering, and incite positive change. SDCC does it exceptionally well and has earned a very high level of accreditation.

The event's 300 guests socialized with cocktails and a silent auction just off the Grant's elegant Palm Court before ascending to the ballroom. There, after taking seats for the evening's program, they were welcomed by emcee Bridget Naso and the event chairpersons. In keeping with the musical theme, table centerpieces were

musical instruments, painted and decorated. Dinner's entrée was a very flavorful braised short rib.

And what a program it was, evoking "Blues Thursday" itself. Strikingly adept presentations by eight solo performers preceded numbers by SDCC's choir — later joined by San Diego Youth Symphony's string quartet. A standing ovation ensued.

A seven-item live auction raised \$33,600. A short video introduced SDCC graduate Karalina Brunetto. Now furthering her education, she'll return to give back to the institution that has helped her so much. Her on-stage appearance met with a touching surprise when her teacher and mentor, Tom Montes, suddenly appeared. That set the stage for paddle-raise donations bringing in \$106,350, raising the event's net to \$250,000.

SDCC's 2016 Partner in Achieving Transformation and Hope (PATH) award was conferred upon devoted longtime supporters Susie Sides and Jim Avery. City Councilmember Lori Zapf presented a proclamation declaring the date Susie Sides and Jim Avery Day in the city of San Diego, and the evening closed with improvisations by SDCC's Blues Thursday band.



Howard and Sally Oxley, Lauren Todd, Vince Heald, Lynne and Dr. Steve Wheeler



Myrna Rivera, Larry and Marla Black, Lidia Martinez and Ted Martinez Jr., Bernice Zamaro



Sandra Dedic, Jonathan and Miriam Woldemariam, Sal Carrillo, Mari Perez, Kandace and Stanley McCrae

USO ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

As noted by Mayor Kevin Faulconer at the USO San Diego's 75th Anniversary "Stars and Stripes" gala last weekend, San Diego is home to the largest concentration of military service men and women in the U.S. Shortly thereafter, he presented a proclamation declaring the date USO Day in our city.

Held at the Hotel del Coronado, it was a big event. First lady Katherine Faulconer co-chaired, along with Reena and Sam Horowitz, Hélène and George Gould, Jeanne Jones and Don Breitenberg, Stephanie Brown and Jim Bartell. San Diego's Neil Ash USO Airport Center received top honors among 120 stateside centers, and local support helped the gala sell out.

The 590 guests filled the Del's courtyard for a festive reception before moving to the ballroom for the evening's program. Returning emcee Mark Larson welcomed them, noting that two Medal of Honor recipients were present: Robert Modrzejewski and Jay R. Vargas — both retired USMC colonels.

Marine Band San Diego entered, giving a rousing concert leading into the presentation of the colors. USO-SD CEO Arne Nelson spoke, noting that "The role of the USO is to mobilize the caring power of our civilian

community to make a difference in the lives of our active duty military personnel and their families."

A moist and flavorful Chilean Sea Bass entrée preceded Baked Alaska by culinary master Jeanne Jones. A six-item live auction followed, raising nearly \$100,000.

USO-SD's newly inaugurated Patriot Award went to Papa Doug Manchester. He and wife Geniya were the event's Presenting Title Sponsors but were unavoidably unable to attend. Hélène and George Gould, the event's Presenting Premiere Sponsors, announced the award. Stephanie Brown accepted for the Manchesters.

Guest speaker Clint Bruce — Naval Academy grad, former NFL player, and retired Navy SEAL — gave an entertaining and inspiring talk on commitment and the superiority of conviction over opinion. The USO, he noted, has endured in its mission because it has conviction. Ensuing paddle-raise donations approached \$110,000.

Walter Reed Medical Center's MusiCorps rehabilitation program helps severely wounded warriors play music and recover their lives. The seven-member MusiCorps Wounded Warrior Band performed an uplifting concert to end the evening.



Frank and Lee Goldberg, Neil and June Ash, Joye Blount and Jessie Knight Jr. (honorary committee co-chairs)



Jonathon Chillias, Holly Rippey, Bob Modrzejewski (Col., USMC, Ret., Medal of Honor recipient), Duane Pillsbury and Joan Embery



Brad Benter, Judy White, Sgt. Maj. Michael and Denise Walton, Phyllis and John Parrish