

## EVENTS

### Fundraiser to fight autism draws celebs, politicians

Seven bands are expected to perform at event, scheduled for this weekend at local entrepreneur's Newport Beach home.

BY TINA BORGATTA

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Community leaders, local elected officials and celebrities from beyond O.C.'s border top the guest list for the second annual "An Evening for Autism" fundraiser scheduled for this weekend at the Newport Beach home of local real estate entrepreneur Barry Saywitz.

Saywitz involved himself in efforts supporting autism research and education programs in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District after his 5-year-old son was diagnosed with the disorder three years ago. He hosted the inaugural event, which last year raised more than \$200,000. He hopes to round up even more this weekend, though he says he knows it won't be easy.

"I recognize that we all are struggling in this down economy, which is why this year's event is even more important than ever before," he says. "All of the organizations, including the school district, have had significant budget cuts, which have hindered these charities from providing services to people of all ages

who struggle with autism.”

The outdoor, tropical-themed event will feature food from restaurant sponsors Tommy Bahama’s Island Grille, Wildfish Seafood Grille, Newport Rib Co. and Maggiano’s, among many others. Entertainment will include performances by two steel drum bands and a Beatles tribute band. Pinball machines, video games, pool tables and a putting green will provide additional fun.

Among the VIPs expected to attend: Actress Debby Boone, “American History X” and “S.W.A.T.” scriptwriter David McKenna, Sen. Lou Correa (D-Santa Ana) and 70th District Assemblyman Chuck DeVore (R-Irvine). Fox 11 News anchor Christine Devine will serve as the mistress of ceremonies.

Tickets for the event are priced at \$150 per person and can be purchased by visiting [aneveningforautism.org](http://aneveningforautism.org) or [southerncal.easterseals.com](http://southerncal.easterseals.com).