

Red carpet gala to raise money for autism programs

September 2, 2009



Barry Saywitz and his 5-year-old son Ryan.

Last year's event raised more than \$200,000

More than 500 community and business leaders, celebrities, athletes and political dignitaries from all over the Southland are coming together Saturday, Sept. 12, to raise funds for autism. The tropical-themed fundraiser will begin at 6 p.m. at the Newport Beach home of Barry Saywitz, real estate entrepreneur.

The second annual event will benefit Easter Seals Southern California, Talk About Curing Autism and Autism Society of America. Proceeds from the event also will benefit Newport Mesa School District's autism programs. Last year's event raised more than \$200,000.

"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," said Saywitz (whose son was diagnosed with autism at the age of 2).

"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. I am hopeful that we will be able to raise even more money this year and am thankful to receive such tremendous support from the local community and beyond."

Special guests include Fox 11 News Anchor Christine Devine (KTTV-FOX) and Bubba Jackson, program DJ at KJAZZ (88.1 FM) who will be co-hosting the event; Jane Monreal, former reporter with KABC-TV Eyewitness News; entertainment

journalist and designer Tina Marie Tyler; scriptwriter David McKenna; singer and actress Debbie Boone; Jeff Timmons of the band 98 Degrees; Beth Krom, Irvine councilwoman and candidate for Congress; Assemblyman Van Tran; Assemblyman Chuck DeVore; state Sen. Lou Correa; and mayor of Dana Point Lisa Bartlett. Athletes include Jay Johnstone (former L.A. Dodger) and Mark Spitz (nine-time Olympic gold medalist swimmer).

The catered event will include entertainment by 98 Degrees, "Arrest My Sister" performance by Scott Siegel (an autistic savant), Storeytime a capella group, two steel drum bands, a Beatles tribute and a Rockin House Party Band.

There will be valet parking, a red carpet entrance, a martini bar, rum bar, mojito bar, wine bar, beer bar and coffee bar as well as silent and live auctions featuring gifts, trips, autographed musical instruments, sports memorabilia, yacht trips and golf experiences.

The event will offer "A Taste of Orange County," where guests will have a chance to sample appetizers from Tommy Bahama's Island Grille, Wildfish Seafood Grille, Newport Rib Company and The Beach Pit BBQ, The Cheesecake Factory, Maggiano's Little Italy, Taco's & Co., Harborside Restaurant and Newport Landing Restaurant and Oyster Bar. In addition, the drink sponsors include Tommy Bahama Rum, IS VODKA, Stone Brewery, La Paz Products, Hope Wine and Hansen's Sodas. Coffee, hot chocolate and tea will be provided by Starbucks. Desert was provided by The Cheesecake Factory, Green Cupcakes, Valentino Chocolatier and Cacao Luxe Chocolatier.

Hostesses will be provided by the Miss California Beauty Pageant, the San Diego Charger Cheerleaders and Mr. California.

The cost to attend the event is \$150 a person. For more information about the event or to purchase tickets, visit www.aneveningforautism.org or www.southerncaleasterseals.com