

Philanthropy

BY KIM STEMPER

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Brandon Hale, executive general manager, Audi Fletcher Jones, and Annemarie Jones, philanthropist

Best Friends

Friends of CASA, the membership auxiliary of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Orange County, hosted its annual Holiday Luncheon on Dec. 5 at the Waldorf Astoria Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point. The event raised more than \$670,000 to support CASA’s mission of providing a voice and meaningful connection for children who have experienced abuse, neglect or abandonment.

More than 430 guests attended the celebration, which opened with a reception featuring champagne and 154 curated auction packages. The Starfish Wish Trees, sponsored by Barclay Butera Interior Design, were a standout feature of the reception and allowed attendees to fulfill holiday wishes for 220 children in foster care. Participants received commemorative ornaments designed by local artist Timree Gold.

During the luncheon program, Regan Dean Phillips, CEO of CASA, highlighted milestones, noting that in 2025 CASA served more than 1,000 youth and that 218 new volunteers joined CASA’s efforts. A \$35,000 matching gift from The Harry Bronson and Edith Knapp

Foundation helped build philanthropic momentum and inspired guests to give even more to support children in foster care.

Holiday Luncheon sponsors included The Jacqueline Glass Family, South Coast Plaza, Watson Family Foundation, Lugano, Coldwell Banker Global Luxury, The Rand Group, Amazon and Fletcher Jones Motorcars | Audi Fletcher Jones.

Building the Future

Bank of America announced in December that it has named Families Forward and Project Hope Alliance as its 2025 Neighborhood Builders in Orange County, recognizing their work supporting families and youth experiencing homelessness.

“Nonprofits such as Families Forward and Project Hope Alliance deliver effective solutions to help people overcome obstacles to personal and financial stability,” said Allen Staff, president of Bank of America Orange County. “By providing flexible funding and leadership training, the Neighborhood Builders program can help these organizations scale their impact.”

Each organization will receive a \$200,000 grant over a two-year period, along with leadership training and access to a national peer network, as part of Bank of America’s signature philanthropic program.

“The housing affordability crisis in Orange County continues to put tremendous pressure on families who are doing everything they can to make ends meet,” said Madelynn Hirneise, CEO of Families Forward.

“Bank of America’s Neighborhood Builders grant will allow us to strengthen our housing program, expand critical supports for local families and equip our leaders with the tools they need to drive meaningful, lasting change.”

“The Neighborhood Builder grant helps us meet the needs of more youth and invest in the leadership that moves our mission forward every day,” said Jennifer Friend, CEO of Project Hope Alliance.

No Lunch, Full Hearts

Nearly 400 guests were welcomed with live music from the Arts & Learning Conservatory at Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County’s 42nd annual “No Lunch” Lunch on Nov. 20.

The event, which was held at the nonprofit’s distribution center, brought together donors, volunteers, board members, partners and community leaders, raising more than \$300,000 to support Second Harvest’s work providing consistent access to nutritious food for those facing hunger in Orange County.

“In a country as vibrant and diverse as ours, it can be easy to overlook how many of our neighbors are struggling,” said Claudia Bonilla Keller, CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank.

“No family should have to choose between paying rent and buying groceries.”

Guests enjoyed soup and bread from Antonello Ristorante and salad from Bracken’s Kitchen. Sponsors included The Boeing Company, City National Bank, Hilton, Surf City Nissan, IFF, Newport Restaurant Group, Plante Moran, PIMCO Foundation, Toyota, Union Bank, Wells Fargo and West Coast Advisors.

Bits & Pieces

The Southern California Hospice Foundation in Orange County announced that it has received \$200,000 in grants from the Foster family and Samueli Foundation, with Foster funding 24/7 care, housing and resident support at the nonprofit’s The Heavenly Home residential hospice care facility and Samueli underwriting essential administrative costs, allowing staff to focus on patient care and ensuring the nonprofit’s long-term stability ... Cox Communications sponsored Operation Holiday Homework on Dec. 16 at Aliso Viejo Ranch, a special holiday shopping and rewards event for more than 130 members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Capistrano Valley, where youth earned the opportunity through their participation in the Club’s Power Hour program to select gifts for their family members, with support from nearly 50 Cox employee volunteers ...

On Dec. 4, The Wooden Floor partnered with Anaheim Ducks players and their families for the nonprofit’s 18th annual Anaheim Ducks Shopping Spree at Target in Irvine Spectrum, an event made possible through the continued support of the community and corporate partners including the Anaheim Ducks, Anaheim Ducks Foundation, Target and the Samueli Foundation, giving students from families with limited resources the opportunity to shop for holiday gifts alongside players who served as personal guides, creating a joyful community experience.