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PHILANTHROPY

By Kim Stemper | philanthropy@ocbj.com



Transforming Lives through Music

► (L to R) The Drake Gives, 2025 co-chairs: James Cueva and Lourdes Nark; Alec Glasser, founder and owner of The Drake Gives and The Drake Restaurant; The Drake Gives, 2025 co-chair Linda Young, president/managing partner, Elite OC productions; Urvasi Patel, co-chair, The Drake Gives, 2025

The Drake Restaurant in Laguna Beach, owned by Alec Glasser, hosted the annual The Drake Gives funding event on April 10. The sold-out event raised \$125,000 to provide musical instruments for students in under-resourced schools. Event sponsors included the UCI Foundation, 27 Diamonds Interior Design and The Drake.

"I'm deeply grateful for the incredible support of our generous community and the unwavering commitment of our dedicated sponsors," said Glasser, founder and owner of The Drake Gives. "Together, we're driving generational change in the lives of young people through the transformative power of music. As we look ahead to the next chapter of The Drake Gives, we're inspired by the possibilities and humbled by the impact we're already seeing through our nonprofit work."

As guests arrived at The Drake Restaurant, they were surrounded by ombre floral arrangements inspired by vibrant sunset hues as they enjoyed appetizers and cocktails. The evening program began with a performance by Matt Von Roderick, renowned trumpeter and vocalist, followed by remarks from Glasser and Tonya Hylton, western regional program director of Save the Music. Frances Azze, music teacher, Bryant Elementary, and Myah Tapia student, Bryant Elementary, spoke with the crowd about the impact The Drake Gives has had on the school's music program and students' lives.

Guests were treated to a five-course gourmet dinner prepared by Chef Paul Gstrein of The Drake Restaurant, with wine pairings for each course.

The event included a live auction, followed by a show by David Aldo, singer-songwriter and dancing.

Since its inception in 2021, The Drake Gives has raised more than \$750,000, empowering approximately 17,000 Orange County students with access to music education.

The Future is Bright

► (L to R) Angie Rowe, president/CEO, Beyond Blindness; Heather Ready, senior director, global market intelligence, STAAR Surgical



The Future is Bright Beyond Blindness hosted its 8th Annual Vision Beyond Sight Gala on March 27 at the Mile Square Golf Course in Fountain Valley. The event welcomed over 200 guests and raised more than \$235,000 to support programs that empower children of all abilities from early childhood through young adulthood.

This year's theme, **Building Bright Beginnings**, highlighted the organization's mission to provide children with the tools they need to thrive.

Sponsors included STAAR Surgical, PNC Bank, The Dean Family, Enterprise Bank & Trust, the Glaukos Charitable Foundation, Eide Bailly LLP, Kaiser Permanente, LaunchLab Partners, Tarsus Pharmaceuticals and the Thompson Family Foundation. Modern Woodmen of America and the Magnon Foundation provided additional support.

Guests enjoyed a performance and heartfelt conversation from blind international opera singer and author Laurie Rubin, moderated by Dr. Ashish Mehta, pediatric ophthalmologist at Kaiser Permanente and Beyond Blindness board member.

The evening also featured a live auction, Fund-a-Need segment, and recognition of Pacific Life Foundation with the 2025 Dr. Wilhelm de Nijs Vision Award for two decades of support.

"There is still more to do," said Angie Rowe, president and CEO. "Tonight's support ensures children and families can access our wraparound services—no matter their income, background, or diagnosis."



In Support of Excellence

► (L to R) Irvine Co. executives: Emily Grant, senior director, public affairs and Peggy Cheng, director, community relations; Erin Zoumaras, director, arts education, Irvine Unified School District; Katie McEwen, president, board of education, Irvine Unified School District; Cassie Parham, interim superintendent of schools, Irvine Unified School District

Nearly 700 Irvine Unified School District (IUSD) student musicians performed in front of a packed house on April 17 during the 41st annual Donald Bren Honors Concert held at the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall.

During this annual signature event, Katie McEwen, IUSD board president, accepted a \$2 million contribution in support of the district's arts, music and science education. This financial support is part of a transformational 20-year, nearly \$50 million funding commitment made by Irvine Company and the Donald Bren Foundation to provide exceptional arts, music and science education in the District through the Excellence in Education Enrichment Fund.

"Educational opportunity and excellence have always been at the heart of our planning efforts in Irvine," said Irvine Co. Senior Vice President Jeff David. "The funding commitment made through the Excellence in Education Enrichment program has deepened our decades-long partnership with IUSD, students and families to support enrichment programs in science, art and music."

The Excellence in Education Enrichment Fund, established by Irvine Company's funding commitment, helps provide specialized art, music and science programs to every fourth through sixth grader in the district. Since 2006, this program has served nearly 200,000 elementary students.

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