



VILLA ESPERANZA SERVICES

*Where Hope is Hard at Work for Individuals
with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VILLA ESPERANZA SERVICES ANNUAL GALA WILDLY SUCCESSFUL

SUPPORTING CHILDREN, ADULTS, AND SENIORS WITH INTELLECTUAL/DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA – *May 13, 2024* – Villa Esperanza Services held its 16th annual fundraising gala on Saturday, April 27, 2024. This year's theme was "Wild About Villa," celebrating Villa's passionate commitment to providing love, care, and hope for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD). Over 240 guests gathered at the Langham Huntington Hotel for the event where they enjoyed a cocktail hour and silent auction featuring artworks done by Villa students and adults, followed by a dinner program and robust live auction. The gala grossed over \$310,000 – all proceeds of which will directly support Villa's mission of providing love, care, and hope for individuals with I/DD and their families.

As part of the evening's festivities, Villa honored Richard Mooney of Kensington Caterers with the 24th annual Guardian Angel Award. Richard has been a steadfast supporter of Villa's mission for nearly 20 years – generously donating to Villa's capital campaign and program support. "Richard has always been there for the Villa family when they've needed help. Richard stands as an example for all of us, for who we should be as people. He is loving, concerned, generous, kind, selfless," shared award presenter and San Marino resident, Dr. Jack Seto. "Richard is truly a man who is deserving of this award."

Many gala attendees were Villa Capital Campaign donors – those who have supported Villa's hope moves forward Capital Campaign. Construction of Phase 2A of the campaign is underway, with an occupational therapy clinic, which will include early intervention services, a therapeutic and physical education center, and 3 new classrooms scheduled to be completed in late fall. The dinner program included a video featuring testimonials, recorded on the construction site, from Villa's Director of Occupational Therapy, Rebekka Manzella, and participants in the Community Integration Program. The testimonials highlighted the significance of the project and the excitement for the new buildings.

Villa would like to thank and acknowledge its event sponsors: Tracy and Dick Hirrel, Lisa and Tim Sloan; Richard Mooney, Chris Benter, Ricki and Joel Robinson, Debby and Juan Casillas, Chang and Lee, GGA+, Rose Ann Hall, Penny and Steve Ledbetter, Margaret Morris Norton and Richard Norton, and Jeri and Tim Wright. Gala committee members include: Taylor Casillas, Kathy Cunningham, Katie Hamrick, Susan Jackson, Penny Ledbetter, Lia Peterson Miller, Maryann Seduski, Liz Seitz, Sarah Soifer, Casey Solomon, and Melissa Wu.

ABOUT VILLA ESPERANZA SERVICES

Villa Esperanza Services, established in 1961, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing love, care, and hope for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families. We create a transformative environment to empower neurodivergent children, adults, and seniors to reach their fullest potential and lead fulfilling lives.

For children, our services include Villa School, Hjelte-Phillips Speech and Language Center, Occupational Therapy Clinic, and Behavioral Therapy. For adults, we provide “Person-Centered” services, including Adult Day Programs, Community Integration Program, Employment Services, and Residential Program, which includes group homes and Independent Living Skills Program.

At Villa, we are passionate advocates working to forge pathways to a lifetime of independence and hope for people with special needs. To learn more about Villa, visit www.VillaES.org.

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