Society Scene
by Kelly Bennett
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DISCOVERY CUBE GALA RAISES $475K FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION

Photos by Ann Chatillon and Katera Gadahn

Nearly 350 Orange County philanthropists, business leaders, and community members gathered in support of this year’s themed gala “Superheroes & Legends” — supporting the Discovery Cube Orange County. It was definitely a successful night as $475K was raised for the nonprofit’s education and STEM programs for children at the 21st annual event.

Heidi at Discovery Cube Orange County in the Julianne Argyros Showcase Theater and Exhibition Hall, the annual benefit, was co-chaired by board members Julie and Tom McDorman and honorary gala co-chairs Janet and James “Wallie” Ray.

“Our 21st annual gala celebrates all of the generous supporters, donors, and advocates for Discovery Cube Orange County,” said Joe Adams, CEO of the Discovery Science Foundation and President of Discovery Cube Orange County. “This celebration is a testament to their passion and enthusiasm for all that Discovery Cube represents — youth education in science, healthy living, and environmental stewardship. With their help, we will continue to have a meaningful impact for thousands of children across Southern California in the field of STEM education.”

The chairs kicked off an evening of celebration that invited guests to dress up as their favorite superheroes and legends.

Attendees were welcomed with a cocktail reception, followed by dinner, a live auction, and an awards ceremony. Attendees enjoyed live music and entertainment by Electric Vinyl, the ultimate rock “legend” tribute band.

Discovery Cube Orange County presented its annual Arnold O. Beckman Award to Douglas K. Freeman, a local lawyer, businessman, and supporter of the museum who helped secure funds for Discovery Cube Ocean Quest and the Dive into Citizen Science program, in partnership with the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation. Freeman joins a long list of esteemed award winners, including last year’s honorees, Pacific Life, honorary gala co-chairs Janet and James “Wallie” Ray, and gala co-chairs Julie and Tom McDorman.

The 2019 Spirit of Discovery Award was presented to Malcolm and Pat Niles, long-time advocate of Discovery Cube and integral supporter of its expansion which helped bring the Mission Control exhibit to life. The Niles family has supported Discovery Cube since its inception at Launch Pad and are founding members of INNOVATORS. Members of the group help fund science outreach programs, professional development for teachers, and traveling exhibits for Discovery Cube — supporting nearly 350,000 children in schools across Southern California each year, in addition to nearly 50,000 full and subsidized scholarship field-trips for deserving children made possible at Discovery Cube Orange County. Malcolm Niles also is the Discovery Cube’s Smithsonian adviser, making trips to Washington D.C. to secure artifacts for display. Former Spirit of Discovery Award recipients include the Yang family, Janet Yamaguchi, and Linda White Peters.

Guests were able to bid on some amazing items at the live auction featuring one-of-a-kind experiences. Key items included an 8-day Galapagos expedition for two donated by Quasar Expeditions, a cruise around Newport Harbor on the Nordic Star donated by Janet and James “Wallie” Ray, a pear necklace donated by Winston’s Crown Jewelers, and “Music Under the Stars: A Summer Concert Series” donated by Mission San Juan Capistrano.

The fund-raising continued with the Fund-A-Need program, inviting guests to contribute to the Discovery Cube’s Outreach, After School, Future Innovators, Citizen Science, and Camp Discovery programs.

Special thanks to catering sponsors Janet and James “Wallie” Ray; Wonder Woman: Diana Prince sponsors Jim and Sheila Peterson; and Iron Man: Tony Stark sponsors Edison International, The Horowitz Group, Julie and Tom McDorman, Chico and Stan Rowe & the UCI Foundation, and SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union.

The Discovery Science Foundation serves as the educational program-development and fund-raising arm for hands-on science learning centers in Orange County, Los Angeles, and Newport Beach, California. Established in 1989, the Discovery Cube, presented by Taco Bell, continues to inspire and educate millions of young minds through engaging science-based programs and exhibits. In 2012, the Cube was named one of the 10 “Most Trusted Brands” in Orange County and in 2013 was awarded the National Medal of Service from the Institute of Museum and Library Services at The White House. In November 2014, a second nonprofit Discovery Cube offered an exhibit and program mix unique to Los Angeles, opened in the Hansen Dam Recreation Area of the San Fernando Valley. Most recently, Discovery Cube’s Ocean Quest opened in Newport Beach as a base of operations for ocean science education and programs. For more information, visit discoverycube.org.

Joe Adams, Discovery Cube CEO with Malcolm and Pat Niles, Spirit of Discovery Award Honorees

Mary Adams with Kathy Vanderziel and Mary Nord

Honorary Co-Chairs Janet and James “Walkie” Ray

Arnold O. Beckman Award honoree Douglas K. Freeman and wife Lynn with Charles Zhang