

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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LIFE A HAND FOR THE HELPERS

IN THE DETAILS

HONOREES STEP UP FOR THEIR AWARDS - HEART-SHAPED, OF COURSE.

NATIONAL PHILANTHROPY DAY HONOREES ENJOY A CHANCE TO BE SERVED RATHER THAN SERVING.

They're used to giving their all for others, so on a day when 900 top philanthropists gathered at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Irvine to honor their own at the 28th annual National Philanthropy Day Awards Luncheon, some felt uncomfortable in the spotlight. Congratulate Families Forward's Margie Wakeham for her award as outstanding founder and she's understandably choked up. Her chief development officer, Kathleen O'Neill, chimed in to give her time to recover. "Margie is the heart and soul of Families Forward. She is very modest, but this award is richly deserved."

The two have known each other for 25 years. So it's no surprise to her co-worker that Wakeham gathered her thoughts and diverted attention to her team. "It's really important to recognize the work of our board and staff. ... Now we have 80 families at a time that we help. We've grown tremendously, as has the need."

VIPs arrived at a pre-luncheon reception, taking questions from the media and posing for photos. It was a day to be pampered for a few hours, in contrast to their daily routines of serving the county's most needy. Honorees wore red ribbons on their name tags and were given orchid corsages and boutonnières.

After welcoming remarks by Tim Bauer, president of the American Fundraising Professionals, Maria Hall-Brown and Rick Reiff of PBS SoCal served as mistress and master of ceremonies. The parade of those accepting awards included the Roosters Foundation of Orange County, and Victoria Collins of Corona del Mar.

Register co-owner Eric Spitz surprised the crowd during his ac-



PHOTOS: STEVEN GEORGES, FOR THE REGISTER
Natalie Cernius of Newport Beach, named outstanding youth volunteer, was among local residents honored for community contributions Nov. 21 at the National Philanthropy Day Awards Luncheon in Irvine.



Kathleen O'Neill, left, and Margie Wakeham of Families Forward.

ceptance of the 25th anniversary sponsor award by announcing that for the second year, the paper would give away millions in advertising to philanthropic groups through its "golden envelopes" program.

With dessert and ceremonies

over, networking continued in the valet line with a lingering final image: National Philanthropy Day founder Doug Freeman giving Orange County Community Foundation President Shelley Hoss a hug goodbye.

- A.V.



Karen Raab accepts the outstanding small-business award for Chemers Gallery.



Mary Lynn Coffee receives the outstanding volunteer fundraiser award from Rick Reiff and Maria Hall-Brown.

TOP HONOREES

Outstanding philanthropist: Victoria Collins, Corona del Mar
Outstanding philanthropic group: Roosters Foundation of Orange County, Irvine
Outstanding volunteer fundraiser: Mary Lynn Coffee, Tustin
Outstanding founder: Margie Wakeham, Families Forward, Irvine
Outstanding small corporation or business: Chemers Gallery, Tustin
Outstanding midsize corporation or business: Haskell & White LLP, Irvine
Outstanding large corporation or business: Edwards Lifesciences Corp., Irvine
Outstanding youth: Natalie Cernius, Friday Night Club, Newport Beach



Victoria Collins was named outstanding philanthropist.