

Newport News

Serving Newport Beach, Balboa, Newport Coast and Corona del Mar

July 14, 2017

Society Scene
by
Kelly Bennett

Exclusively For The Newport News



MOMS ORANGE COUNTY CELEBRATES 25 YEARS AND RAISES OVER \$63,000

MOMS Orange County, a Santa Ana-based nonprofit organization dedicated to helping at-risk mothers and their families have healthy babies, hosted its annual Healthy Beginnings, Bright Futures fundraising luncheon at Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel in Anaheim. The event raised \$63,000 and celebrated the nonprofit's 25 years of service by sharing advances and opportunities to improve the health of pregnant women and babies in Orange County.

"For the past 25 years, we have walked with women and families when they are highly vulnerable," said MOMS Orange County CEO Pamela Pimentel, RN. "Because of MOMS Orange County, mothers have access to prenatal care, babies are born healthy and reach their developmental milestones on time, and fathers are prepared for a positive role in the family."

The fundraiser featured an interactive panel of renowned maternal-child health experts who unpacked the retrospective and shed light on hot topics surrounding maternal and infant health including maternal morbidity, perinatal mental health and child development.

The discussion was facilitated by Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian's Chief Quality Officer Allyson Brooks, M.D. who shared that the number of births in Orange County has declined over the last 25 years with 38,720 recorded births in 1989 and 37,621 in 2015 – despite an increase of 1 million residents over that same time period. She also highlighted improved birth outcomes including a decrease in infant mortality rates in Orange County (6.8 per 1,000 births in 1989 compared to 3.0 per 1,000 births in 2014) while shedding light on areas of concern such as babies with low birthweight (up 1.2 percent since 1989).

Panelists included Patricia De Marco Centeno, M.D., a reproductive psychiatrist and Director of Hoag Women's Mental Health Program and Consultation Liaison Service who touched on the leading obstetrical complication of pregnancy in the U.S. – maternal depression.

David C. Lagrew, Jr. M.D., OB-GYN and Executive Medical Director of Women's Services at St. Joseph Hoag Health shared notable changes in obstetrical care that have occurred in Orange County over the last 25 years including the increase in pregnancy rates among women age 30 and older, escalation in maternal morbidity, the uptick in cesareans and new challenges like birth tourism.

In addition, Sabrina E.B. Schuck, Ph.D., an expert on child development and early intervention and Executive Director of the Child Development Center at UC Irvine stressed why parents of young children need to play more with their kids and also foster conditions that lead to resilience.

In preparation for the retrospective, local perinatal experts were invited to share insights into the current perinatal environment and to identify key focus areas for MOMS Orange County for the next two to three years. Five high priority areas were identified including early prenatal care, substance-exposed infants, breastfeeding, maternal morbidity and maternal mental health.

Fullerton resident Yerika Segura was recognized as MOMS Orange County's Client Mother of the Year during the luncheon. The 27-year-old mother and her husband attended multiple classes at MOMS Orange County to prepare for the birth of their son who was born with a cleft lip. During the luncheon, Segura noted the support and guidance from MOMS Orange County staff members helped her overcome post-partum depression and thrive.

Following graduation from MOMS Orange County's Mommy and Me program, Yerika has continued to lead mommy meet-ups outside of the nonprofit to support other local at-risk mothers.

Funds raised during the event will support MOMS Orange County's efforts to provide access to prenatal care, maternal health screenings, infant health and developmental screenings, health education and referral services to more than 3,500 low-income families annually in underserved communities in Orange County.

To learn more about MOMS Orange County, visit www.momsorangecounty.org.



Sabrina Schuck PhD with Pamela Pimentel RN and Dottie Andrews



Bev Kavanagh and Annika Chase



MOMS Orange County CEO Pamela Pimentel RN and Client Mother of the Year Yerika Segura



Nate Cardenas and Natalie Ngo