

# ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

## And O.C.'s top philanthropists are ...

National Philanthropy Day of Orange County names its top honorees for 2013. The awards will be presented at a luncheon on Nov. 21.

By **ANDRE MOUCHARD**  
ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

An accounting firm, a financial planner and some Roosters are among the individuals and organizations slated to be named Outstanding Honorees at the National Philanthropy Day luncheon Nov. 21 in Irvine.

The eight people and groups were chosen for their work directly with people in need or their efforts as teachers, fundraisers and leaders furthering Orange County's multibillion-dollar nonprofit sector. A small group of philanthropists and past Outstanding Honorees of National Philanthropy Day Orange County picked this year's winners from a list of more than 150 individuals and organizations nominat-

ed by other philanthropists and members of the public.

Victoria Collins, a financial planner in Corona del Mar, is Outstanding Philanthropist for 2013 for her work helping to teach young women to become philanthropists in the future.

The Roosters Foundation of Orange County, a group of more than 100 business leaders who help economically challenged children, is the Outstanding Philanthropic Group after raising more than \$229,000 for 28 charities so far in 2013. The Roosters were started in 1977 by businessman Jerry Mendelson and restaurateur Larry Cano, among others, holding their meetings at the Chanteclair restaurant near John Wayne Airport.

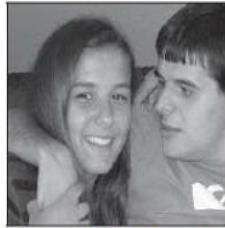


COURTESY OF NATIONAL PHILANTHROPY DAY ORANGE COUNTY

**Margie Wakeham, Outstanding Founder for 2013, continues to work as executive director of Families Forward, a group that helps families in times of financial crisis.**

The Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser for 2013 is Mary Lynn Coffee of Tustin, who helped THINK Together expand over the past decade. The group, which focuses on education, has grown from helping about 2,000 children in Orange County in 2003 to its current scope of reaching more than 100,000 children statewide.

Margie Wakeham, who in 1984 helped launch Families Forward, is Outstand-



**Natalie Cernius, 18, Outstanding Youth for 2013, is shown with her brother, Andrew, 19. Natalie Cernius founded the Friday Night Club, a group for youths with autism.**

ing Founder for 2013.

As part of its broader goal to end homelessness in Orange County, Families Forward works to help families with everything from career counseling and training to financial management and financial aid. The Irvine-based agency has grown from five to 28 dwellings, and its 2011-12 annual report says Families Forward last year helped about 8,400 people in Orange County. Wakeham

continues to work with Families Forward as the group's executive director.

Three companies - Chemers Gallery of Tustin, the Irvine-based accounting firm Haskell & White and Edwards Life-sciences in Newport Beach - are, respectively, the Outstanding Small, Mid-Sized and Large Business for 2013.

Chemers Gallery is being honored for its ongoing work in the community, regularly hosting children's art shows and an annual juried show featuring local artists. Haskell & White is honored for creating a culture that emphasizes personal philanthropy and volunteerism. Edwards Life-sciences gave more than \$4.5 million to charity last year, including \$1 million in Orange County. The company, through its "Strengthen Our Community" program, encouraged local volunteerism, with 269 of Edwards' Orange County employees volunteering

1,099 hours to a variety of causes.

Natalie Cernius, founder of the Friday Night Club in Newport Beach, is the Outstanding Youth for 2013. The group started by Cernius, who will be a senior at Newport Harbor High School, helps youth on the autism spectrum get together with other kids on the spectrum, among others. As a new wrinkle in National Philanthropy Day 2013, Cernius this year will pick a recipient for a \$2,500 charitable donation raised by the Association of Fundraising Professionals. She also will get a \$750 scholarship.

The National Philanthropy Day Awards Luncheon, presented by the Orange County Register, will be 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Nov. 21 at the Hyatt Regency Irvine. Tickets: [npdoc.org](http://npdoc.org).

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