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Philanthropists give \$1.8 million for Miracles for Kids' mission



The 2019 board of directors for Miracles for Kids (Photo by Lisa Renee).

By [COAST MAGAZINE](#) |
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Some 500 of Southern California's most influential business leaders and philanthropists came together on Oct. 12 to raise \$1.8 million for the nonprofit Miracles for Kids. The amount for a record for the organization's signature Annual Night of Miracles Gala, held at Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point.

The organization says 100 percent of the proceeds raised during the evening will go toward its mission to improve the lives of critically-ill children and their families in need. Miracles for Kids serves more than 250 families with children battling 140-plus unique illnesses across four affiliate hospitals from Orange County to the Bay Area. Themed "Rock the Miracle," the 2019 gala was presented by Xponential Fitness and featured entertainment provided by Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter and actress, Michelle Williams.



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Anthony and Lindsay Geisler at 2019 Miracles for Kids gala (Tony Lattimore Photography).



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Bill and Vicki Booth of the Ueberroth Family Foundation attended the 14th Annual Night of Miracles Gala.



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Miracles for Kids 2019 board members Ken Cruse, Norm Christensen and Troy Medley.





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Camille Strier with canine friend



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Jason and Juliana Pendergist with Tania Reyes and Brandon Barajas at Monarch Beach in Dana Point.



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Manna Kadar and Sohrab Tavakoli_(Tony Lattimore Photography)





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Rasheed and Regina Muhammad (Lisa Renee Photography)



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The silent auction at the 14th Annual Night of Miracles Gala held Oct. 12 at Monarch Beach, Dana Point. (Photo by Ann Chatillon)



Each year at the gala Miracles for Kids recognizes an outstanding supporter who has made a significant impact in the lives of Miracles for Kids' families. The 2019 Miracle Maker Honoree was Tim Smith, founder and principal of The Smith Group – Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage. For nearly a decade, Smith has dedicated time, energy and resources to serve Miracles for Kids' children and families.

"Miracles for Kids children are facing unimaginable obstacles and it means the world to be able to make even the smallest difference in the lives of these families – this is why I first became involved with Miracles for Kids and why I continue to work hard in support of the organization," Smith said.

Josh Harper of Waves of Impact was named the inaugural Champion of Children honoree. A longtime volunteer at the organization, Harper has helped build the Miracles for Kids Surf & Paddle Summer Camps into the wellness programs they are today, where ill children and their families can enjoy a day at the beach away from the doctors and hospitals.

Further highlighting how Miracles for Kids helps was the annual patient-family video premiere – this year featuring The Hunter Family Story, produced by TRAFFIK. The short video showcased the family's decade-long journey and how Miracles for Kids provided a much-needed safety net to a single mother while her critically-ill child, Zoe Hunter, was fighting for her life.

Hunter was diagnosed with a rare form of acute lymphoblastic leukemia at age 4 and endured rounds of chemotherapy, weekly lab visits, monthly infusions, and extended hospital stays. Miracles for Kids provided the Hunter Family with monthly aid that helped with the family's car and rent payments and also provided quarterly deliveries of fresh food, home goods, and other basic needs. Now 15 years old and a JV cheerleader for her high school, Hunter has been in remission since 2015. She is able to live a "normal" teenage girl's life at a school where few are aware of her story.

Last year's patient-family video premiere told the story of Moises Alvarez, who was diagnosed with Osteosarcoma in 2015 during his junior year of high school and underwent over six surgeries to remove 100+ tumors. Alvarez died recently; Smith used his time at the podium as the Miracle Maker honoree to celebrate Alvarez's life.