



Wylie Aitken with Bette Aitken, Ashleigh Aitken and Michael Penn

VIRTUAL GALA FOR ALZHEIMER'S ORANGE COUNTY RAISES MORE THAN \$500,000

Photos by Alzheimer's OC

It was a beautiful afternoon when I received the call saying my meal had arrived - YES a celebratory gourmet delight prepared by The Anaheim White House with wine and dessert was coming to my home! I patiently waited when the doorbell rang as I was invited to take part in Celebrating the Future, Take 2, the 21st annual fund-raising Gala benefiting Alzheimer's Orange County.

Through ticket sales, sponsorships, live and silent auctions, the gala raised more than \$500,000, including a generous donation of \$100,000 from Ambassador George and Mrs. Julia Argyros. AlzOC is a local nonprofit organization that provides services and support to individuals living with dementia and their family and loved ones.

Pivoting was essential as the event was supposed to be held last March at the Balboa Bay Resort, but we all know what happen that week. To keep guests safely at home because of the pandemic - they went virtual.

Most if not all nonprofits who have had galas in the past are pivoting to this new way of raising money and I've written about them before in previous columns, but I have never participated in one....until now.

Let me tell you, it was the most fun and exciting event complete with LIVE auction items, a lively program and great entertainment. AND don't forget about the food! This was something that I seriously enjoyed - the AlzOC team knocked this one out of the park, so kudos to everyone involved!

While my guest and I enjoyed Roasted Beef Tenderloin, Whole Grain Mustard Aioli with Yukon Mashed Potatoes, Sautéed Kale along with a chocolate decadent dessert and a bottle of red wine, we watched the virtual event from the comfort of my home. It was cohosted from the Brite Ideas Complete Technical Solutions television studio by AlzOC CEO and President Jim McAleer and auctioneer Zack Krone, and was live-streamed on multiple platforms. The program included an acknowledgement of the gift of the Irvine Cottages residential memory care business by the Founder Dr. Jacqueline DuPont-Carlson, Gerontologist.

"In the midst of the pandemic, the need for what we do is greater than it has ever been," said McAleer. "This battle is personally painful for so many of us, but we have hope for a brighter future. We could not be more thankful to our sponsors and guests for their incredible and generous support of our services and programs that are all the more vital to our community."

An opening toast was provided by co-chairs Debi Pavlik and Alison Hoeven, who talked about their personal connections to the organization. Videotaped presentations were made to honorees: Veteran Partner Marty Burbank, JD, LL.M.; Volunteer Partner Diane Montgomery; and Legacy Partner Melvin Benner. Singer, pianist and songwriter Lola Kristine provided entertainment. Members of the 2020 Gala Committee include Analisa Albert, Lia Iacocca Assad, Leriza Bacchus, Catherine Beaumont, Emily Bennett, Maria Dumatol, Jacqueline Dupont-Carlson, Ph.D., Massy Farzine, Christina Jenkins, Diane Mondini, Cathy Frandsen Morrison, Lourdes Nark, Urvashi Patel, Wendy Peloso, Bill Peters, Mary Phillips, Cyd Swerdlow, Wendy Tenebaum, Madonna Waszak and Linda Young.

The list of sponsors includes: Premiere Sponsor - Ambassador George and Julia Argyros; Platinum Sponsors - The Ann Conway Family, Dr. Jacqueline Dupont-Carlson and Marc Carlson, Alison Hoeven, Elite OC Productions and Iacocca Family Foundation; Gold Sponsor - Debi & Tom Pavlik; Silver Sponsors - The Aitken Family, Caring Companions at Home, CareCHOICES, The Frome Foundation, Kaiser Permanente Orange County and Linda and Burton Young; and Bronze Sponsors - Angels Baseball, Erin Fukuto, Paul Hastings, LLP, Charlene and Judd Jessup, OC Elder Law and Risk Strategies, Sid Petersen, Squar Milner and Cyd and Steve Swerdlow.

Underwriting sponsors are: Bar Underwriter: Pau Maui Vodka, Silent Auction/Mobile Bidding Sponsor: Farmers and Merchants, Wine Sponsor: Brand New Day, Dinner Sponsor: Belmont Village Senior Living, Silent Auction/Mobile Bidding Sponsor: Optimal Hospice Care, Gift Sponsor: Newport Urgent Care /Analisa & Bruce Albert, Floral Sponsor: Lia and Victor Assad and Entertainment Sponsor: CommerceWest Bank. Alzheimer's Orange County provides programs and services, many free of charge, to Orange County residents with Alzheimer's and related dementia disorders, their families, caregivers, and the community. Alzheimer's Orange County began in 1982, continues to provide care, support and research in Orange County, Calif. Alzheimer's is a devastating neurodegenerative illness that weakens the memory and other cognitive and emotional functions. For more information, call the Helpline at 1-844-HELP-ALZ, or visit www.alzoc.org.



Auctioneer Zack Krone and Jim McAleer on the Virtual Stage



Beautiful table settings ready for the evening



My dinner arrives!



Gourmet Dinner Deliveries were made throughout Orange County