

FAMILIES FORWARD

DIGNITY • EMPOWERMENT • HOPE

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Families Forward's 31st Annual Gala raises more than \$400,000 to help local families in crisis find safety and stability

*Families Forward honors Marx|Okubo and AvalonBay Communities
for their outstanding contributions to reduce homelessness in Orange County*

IRVINE, CALIF. (September 28, 2015) –

On Saturday, September 19, 2015, Families Forward attracted more than 400 guests to the Fairmont Hotel in Newport Beach to celebrate 31 years of service to local families in crisis. Guests were visibly moved, and responded very generously, as they heard one of Families Forward's former families share their very personal story about the realities of starting over as a homeless veteran with a wife and two young children to support. The parents described the support and services they received that helped them move into permanent housing and start the process to build a brighter future. This wonderful evening raised more than \$400,000 to support local families in crisis as they work to gain independence and more stability for their children.

Chaired by Tracie McCloskey, the 2015 Gala, "*The Art of Giving*," highlighted the importance of strong industry partnerships to provide affordable places to live as a critical success factor to reduce homelessness in Orange County. The evening featured two extraordinary honorees committed to this goal, Marx|Okubo and AvalonBay Communities.

Families Forward presented the **Partner in Hope Award** to Marx|Okubo for helping to expand our capacity with their generous expertise in all facets of the purchase, design and construction of real properties. With Marx|Okubo's guidance and services, Families Forward expanded its Program Center and established new units in affordable housing to serve even more families. Accepting the award, Gary Cohn, Executive Vice President, remarked, "When we see the challenges facing families in Orange County, it is clear that the solution requires a major joint effort by industry, government and nonprofit all working together to change the housing landscape. We'd love to see more organizations join us in creating an environment where a family can find a place they can afford to live and raise their children."

Families Forward presented the **Spirit of Community Award** to AvalonBay Communities for their focus on improving access to affordable housing in their apartment communities. By partnering with Families Forward at each of their locations, they have dramatically increased the geographic reach and number of rental units where families can start a new life. Accepting the award, Danyell Elders, Vice President, Property Operations, shared, "I can't imagine a better partner, one who knows how to work with families so that they can succeed in our communities. With hard work and dedication, each family can find a place to live and enjoy a fresh start. I have been able to see many of these journeys firsthand, and it has been inspiring to see the extraordinary paths these families have taken to regain their independence."

In closing the evening, Margie Wakeham, Executive Director, Families Forward stated, “Because of these remarkable partnerships with industry leaders, we had an incredible year of growth, serving 30% more families in cities across Orange County. As we look to the future, we must continue to expand the availability of realistic housing choices to create a vibrant community that welcomes all families.”

About Families Forward

Since 1984, Families Forward has worked with families to help them achieve self-sufficiency through housing, food, counseling, career coaching, education, and other support services. Operating with a guiding principal of support with accountability, last year Families Forward improved the lives of nearly 8,000 children and adults by providing safety-net services through the framework of our values: Dignity, Empowerment, Accountability, Community Spirit and Hope. For more information about Families Forward please contact us at 949-716-5858 or visit www.families-forward.org.

About Marx | Okubo

Marx|Okubo began in 1982 with a simple mission: Use pragmatic construction expertise to solve problems in a complex and challenging real estate market. What started as an inspired two-person operation has transformed into a company of nine offices nationwide—with more than 100 team members, each one bringing greater energy and depth to Marx|Okubo. To learn more, visit www.marxokubo.com.

About AvalonBay Communities, Inc.

As of December 31, 2014, the Company owned or held a direct or indirect ownership interest in 277 apartment communities containing 82,487 apartment homes in eleven states and the District of Columbia, of which 26 communities were under construction and eight communities were under reconstruction. The Company is an equity REIT in the business of developing, redeveloping, acquiring and managing apartment communities in the leading metropolitan areas in New England, the New York/New Jersey Metro area, the Mid-Atlantic, the Pacific Northwest, and the Northern and Southern California regions of the United States. More information may be found on the Company’s website at www.avalonbay.com.



Gary Cohn, Executive VP Marx|Okubo, and the Marx|Okubo Team



Danyell Alders, VP Property Operations, AvalonBay Communities with Families Forward Board President Ryan Warne-McGraw and spouses



Advocate of Hope Sponsor, KIA Motors America team with Artyn and Max Gardner, President and CEO, Orange County United Way



Tracie McCloskey, Gala Chair displaying the night's fun & artsy dress!



Executive Director, Margie Wakeham with Kristi Willette also enjoying the fun & artsy dress!



Janice and Martin Pickett, President and CEO Griswold Industries,
an Advocate of Hope sponsor.