

FAMILIES FORWARD

UNTIL EVERY FAMILY HAS A HOME

FAMILIES FORWARD'S "LIGHT UP THE NIGHT" GALA RAISES \$510,000 TO HELP PREVENT AND END FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN ORANGE COUNTY

Nearly 300 supporters gathered for an evening of hope while celebrating Hoag and longtime advocates, Bob Davis and Susan Hori

IRVINE, Calif. (September 30, 2026) – Families Forward, an Orange County based nonprofit committed to helping local families facing a housing crisis, is thrilled to announce that nearly 300 supporters raised \$510,000 at its recent "Light Up the Night" fundraising gala. Held at Newport Dunes, A Waterfront Resort and Marina, on Saturday, August 29, 2026, the "Hope on the Horizon" themed evening celebrated the people and partners helping Orange County families overcome housing instability. Funds raised will support Families Forward's housing, food assistance, counseling, career coaching and educational programs.

Guests gathered along the waterfront for an evening highlighting Families Forward's work to prevent and end family homelessness. The program recognized individuals and organizations whose generosity and leadership continue to strengthen Orange County. Attendees also supported the organization's mission through silent and live auctions featuring a variety of experiences and packages, including a chance to "steal third" at an upcoming Angels baseball game, a luxury Newport Beach staycation and an Anaheim Ducks suite experience.

"Hope is on the horizon for families working hard to build stability for their children, and that hope is made possible by the generosity of our community," said Christy Cornwall, CEO of Families Forward. "We are grateful to everyone who joined us for this special evening and helped ensure that more Orange County families have access to stable housing and the support they need to thrive. It was also a privilege to recognize Hoag, Bob Davis and Susan Hori for their extraordinary commitment to our mission."

The evening was made possible with the support of U.S. Bank, the presenting sponsor of the 2026 Light Up the Night Gala, along with gold sponsors, AvalonBay Communities (now known as Vivmark Residential), CLA-VAL, Meg and Brian English, and Michael Kaufman.

Honoring Partners Who Create Lasting Change

Hoag received Families Forward's 2026 Partner in Hope Award in recognition of nearly two decades of partnership. Through its longstanding support, Hoag has helped local families access critical resources, supported mental wellness and created pathways to safe, stable housing. Its leadership and commitment to community wellbeing have made a meaningful impact throughout the region.

Families Forward also presented the 2026 Margie Wakeham Legacy Award to Bob Davis and Susan Hori, longtime supporters whose involvement with the organization spans more than two decades. Their enduring commitment has helped Families Forward provide critical support to Orange County families working to overcome hardship and build more stable futures.

“We want to help make Orange County a better place to live by helping families have enough food on their table and a safe place to call home. That’s why Susan and I have been involved with Families Forward for over twenty years: because we can make a difference for children and their parents who are working to provide safety, stability, and nourishment for their families,” said Bob Davis.

Hope on the Horizon for Orange County Families

Throughout the evening, guests learned how Families Forward helps local families move from crisis toward greater stability. By pairing housing assistance with food support, counseling, career coaching and educational programs, the organization addresses families’ immediate needs while helping them build more secure futures.

Guests also heard from Yesenia, a single mother of two who shared her family’s journey from homelessness to stable housing. After leaving an unsafe situation to protect her family, Yesenia found herself unhoused and struggling to find an affordable place to live, even while working. She shared how Families Forward helped her family access housing, food, financial assistance and other resources while providing something equally important—people who listened and helped her feel like she was not navigating the crisis alone. Today, Yesenia and her sons have a safe home and the stability to enjoy everyday life together. “We’re not living in survival mode anymore,” she told guests. “We get to simply be a family.”

“Families across Orange County continue to face rising housing costs and challenges meeting their most basic needs,” Cornwall continued. “The funds raised at Light Up the Night allows us to respond to families’ immediate needs while helping parents create long term stability and greater opportunities for their children.”

About Families Forward

Since 1984, Families Forward has helped Orange County families achieve lasting housing stability through a prevention-first approach that addresses the root causes of homelessness. The nonprofit provides housing assistance, food support, counseling, career coaching, financial education and other wraparound services that empower families to build long-term stability and self-sufficiency. In 2025, Families Forward improved the lives of nearly 18,000 children and adults across Orange County. As the organization expands its impact through advocacy, community partnerships and affordable housing development, it remains committed to a future where every family has a safe place to call home and the opportunity to thrive. To learn more, visit www.families-forward.org or call 949-552-2727.

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