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## **Laura's House Inaugural 'Brighter Futures' Luncheon Mobilizes Domestic Violence Advocates**

*Charity event celebrates nonprofit's vital efforts in rebuilding lives of Orange County families*

**NEWPORT BEACH, Calif., May 02, 2016** – It was a day of inspiration, appreciation and hope for the future as nearly 200 supporters of [Laura's House](#), a Southern California organization dedicated to the prevention and education of domestic violence, gathered at the Balboa Bay Resort. The first annual 'Brighter Futures' Luncheon on April 29, chaired by Laura's House advocate Donna Pickup, highlighted the critical community work of the nonprofit and honored those who have helped Laura's House advance its mission to rebuild the lives of families affected by domestic violence. Each luncheon table was hosted by a significant community leader or local designer and featured personalized décor inspired by the theme of providing brighter futures for Laura's House families.

The event featured touching moments and included inspiring remarks from domestic violence survivor and Laura's House graduate Tanya Smith\*. Smith, an Orange County resident, suffered more than 10 years of verbal, psychological, financial and physical abuse from her former husband. After filing for legal separation in 2012, Smith sought an end to the violence and enrolled in Laura's House Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing, successfully completing both programs. Smith shared her story with guests to shed light on the traumatic experiences of families affected by abuse, and how she became empowered to create a brighter future for herself and her children. She also expressed her appreciation for the generous donors and sponsors in attendance, as well as Laura's House staff for their support throughout her journey.

"We are grateful for the opportunity our inaugural Brighter Futures Luncheon presented to honor and thank our dedicated supporters because without them, rebuilding violence-free lives for families such as Tanya's would not be possible," said Margaret Bayston, Laura's House CEO and executive director. "Unfortunately, every nine seconds, a woman is beaten by her intimate partner, and more community support is needed to prevent – and end – domestic violence."

Nationally recognized healthy relationships expert, author, psychotherapist and Laura's House board member [Dr. Jill Murray](#) was the luncheon guest speaker. She discussed the importance of prevention and education, and how to stop the cycle of violence before it begins.

Laura's House also presented Brighter Futures Awards to those who have made extraordinary efforts to provide brighter futures for families served by Laura's House. Honorees included:

- **The Decorative Arts Society of Newport Beach** has been a loyal supporter of Laura's House since 2005. The membership group of community-minded women and men have donated more than \$250,000 to assist domestic violence victims.

- **Nicole Prusty** is a 12-year-old Laura's House ambassador who spreads awareness about domestic violence by educating and encouraging her peers to get involved with the nonprofit. Nicole resides in Aliso Viejo.

The event also included an opportunity drawing with gifts from Barclay Butera Interiors, SoulCycle Newport Beach, Bacara Resort & Spa and more. Luncheon guests enjoyed an artisan boutique featuring jewelry by James Kanan and hand-woven pashminas by Teji Singh, with a portion of proceeds benefiting Laura's House. Event sponsors included: Laura & Mark Feld, Laura Khouri & Mike Hayde, Pacific Hospitality Group, Donna & Dick Pickup, Cheryl Osborn and Casey Wolin. In-kind sponsors were [Urban Decay](#) and [Queen Tut Events & Design](#).

Throughout the year, Laura's House mobilizes advocates to raise awareness and educate the community about domestic violence via a host of initiatives, including the Annual HOPE Golf Tournament on Aug. 8 and the Annual Laura's House Gala on Sept. 24. Recently, the nonprofit announced the opening of its Domestic Violence Advocacy Center (DVAC) in Garden Grove. The DVAC is an expansion of the nonprofit's legal program, and widens its victim reach by addressing an unmet demand for domestic violence legal advocacy services in Orange County. The program ensures victims are prepared, and not alone, for restraining order hearings. To learn more about Laura's House community impact and for upcoming events, click [here](#).

\*Name was changed to protect identity.

### **About Laura's House**

The mission of Laura's House is to change the social beliefs, attitudes and the behaviors that perpetuate domestic violence while creating a safe space to empower individuals and families affected by abuse.

For more than 20 years, Laura's House has served those whose lives have been affected by domestic violence. Over the past two decades, Laura's House has provided shelter and support services to more than 4,000 battered women and children and counseling, life skills education and legal assistance to nearly 50,000 people. Connect with Laura's House on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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