

Raising funds while exploring magical gardens

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Serendipity Gardens in Lake Arrowhead was the site of the Rim of the World Special Athletes Foundation fundraiser on the afternoon of Saturday, Sept. 13. The weather was excellent for the opportunity to see the garden in its full grandeur. The beautifully landscaped Serendipity Gardens was viewed by thousands several years ago during the Lake Arrowhead Home Tour. Since that time, the Wayne and Melonie Guralnick family has been adding to its beauty in many ways, including building a new water feature, which adds a relaxing and calming attitude to the magnificent garden.

Serendipity Gardens is a hillside garden that has at least 50 metal sculptures of large and smaller dinosaurs, ceramic African animals which are mostly life size, and beautiful sculptures of Chinese goddesses and beautiful women and even some mythical dragons. It even has a spiritual English-style telephone booth which enables a person to communicate with those who have departed.

The afternoon attracted a full house of members of Rim Special Athletes (RSA), their friends and supporters. The afternoon was fun with children swinging on the swing set and playing in the tree house. The adults listened to the pleasant music, while bidding on the silent auction items and eating the wide-ranging displays of delicious taste treats, provided by Tami Pounds. There was seating for all throughout the garden under the shade of the trees.

Wonderful live music was provided by five members of the Mountain Music Makers from Leisure Shores in Crestline during the 3 to 7 p.m. event. The music drifted all over the hillside that encouraged the neighbors of the St. Bernard neighborhood in Lake Arrowhead who had been invited to attend to come over and join in the event. One neighbor loved the event, enjoyed meeting the athletes and learning about the purpose of Rim Special Athletes so much that he donated \$100 as he left.

The Rim of the World Special Athletes Foundation provides individual sporting activities for those members of the community who may have autism, Down syndrome PTSD or physical disabilities. Many of the older RSA members attend the Mountain of Promise educational program.

Assemblyman Tom Lackey had intended to attend but since the legislative session was extended, he sent his field representative Angela Allen who presented Assembly recognition certificates to the RSA members who were present and volunteers Scott Rindenow, Debbi McAdam and Heidi Staples.

The silent auction items included a Star Wars waffle iron, a wine basket with a certificate for winetasting and a tour of the local Sycamore Ranch Winery, numerous dinners at local restaurants including Stone Creek Bistro and RB's Steakhouse, a cord of firewood, autographed historic books and a week's stay in Hawaii. These silent auction bids raised a significant amount of funds for the RSA.

RSA provides sporting activities year-round. During the summer, members enjoy daytime water sports and beach fun such as kayaking, aqua biking, stand-up boarding, swimming, a lily pad, beach fun, sunbathing and making sand sculptures. During the winter there are many snow-related activities including skiing and snowboarding.

Other activities RSA has sponsored over the years include year-round bowling with pizza, yoga and golf. They depend on having properly trained volunteer instructors to make this program successful. They are grateful for those volunteers they do have, as lives are positively impacted by their actions. They are constantly



Crestline's Citizen of the Year Carrie Forbear and Candace Pearson having fun with one of the dinosaurs at the garden gala. (Photo by Rhea-Frances Tetley)

seeking additional adults to train to work with their athletes in these and new sporting areas.

To learn more about the Rim of the World Special Athletes Foundation or to make a donation, see their website, <https://RimSpecialAthletes.org>.



Angela Allen, representing Assemblyman Tom Lackey, presented certificates of recognition to the RSA athletes - including Noah Bard - who attended the garden gala. (Photo by Mary-Justine Lanyon)