



**MENTORING YOUTH.  
CHANGING FUTURES.**

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**Big Brothers Big Sisters Raises Record-Breaking \$1.5 Million  
at 2016 Gourmet Dinner, Hosted by Actor David Arquette**

*Nonprofit's largest annual fundraiser supports one-to-one mentoring programs,  
honors Newport Beach philanthropist Rudy J. Baldoni*

**SANTA ANA, Calif. (Sept. 26, 2016)** – Breaking agency records, the **52nd Annual Gourmet Dinner** benefiting **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County and the Inland Empire** grossed approximately \$1.5 million in support of the nonprofit's one-to-one youth mentoring programs. Four hundred of Southern California's top business and community leaders attended the fundraiser, which took place Thursday, Sept. 22 at the Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach. The event was hosted by actor **David Arquette** and co-chaired by **Joseph Ueberroth** (Bellingham Marine), **W. Henry Walker** (F&M Bank) and **Pat Maciariello** (Compass Group Management).

Recognized at this year's event was Newport Beach resident **Rudy J. Baldoni**, who received the 2016 Joel K. Rubenstein Award for his decades-long support of Big Brothers Big Sisters. Presented annually at Gourmet Dinner since 1988, the award is the highest honor bestowed by the organization. Baldoni, the CEO of Newport Investment Associates, currently serves on the executive board for the local agency and became national chair of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America earlier this year.

"We are incredibly grateful for the support of everyone who attended the 52nd Annual Gourmet Dinner. While we have a national name, our mentoring program is 100 percent locally funded—every dollar invested in our agency at the event directly impacts children in Orange County and the Inland Empire," says Melissa Beck, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County and the Inland Empire. "In this record-breaking year, I can't think of a better person to honor than Rudy Baldoni. His passion, dedication and generosity over the last two decades have helped bring the agency to where we are today."

The evening's festivities kicked off with a cocktail reception, where guests enjoyed hand-rolled cigars, an ice bar and premium Scotch tastings. After being escorted into the grand ballroom, attendees rose for a presentation of colors and national anthem performed by the Sunburst Youth Academy.

Following a three-course dinner service, volunteer Daniel Khalili and his Little Brother Carlos, 18, shared how they weathered ups and downs over the past seven years to build a lifelong friendship. Carlos, who was exposed to domestic violence at an early age, credits his ability to overcome alcohol and substance abuse to Khalili, his mentor and "brother for life."

"The biggest thing that allowed me to turn my life around was that Dan never judged me and never gave up on me," Carlos said during his speech. "I'm alive and standing up here today because I had a mentor who believed in me."

A lively fund-a-need and live auction of 15 exciting items contributed to the overall fundraising total, which will help Big Brothers Big Sisters support an estimated 1,000 youth like Carlos with one-to-one mentoring relationships. An auction highlight included bidding on the **Golden Helmet**—donated by CBS President Steve Mauldin and Sports Director Jim Hill, the helmet featured signatures of more than 20 of the nation's

top sports figures including Kobe Bryant, Oscar de la Hoya, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Wayne Gretzky, Magic Johnson and Vin Scully.

The 52nd Annual Gourmet Dinner was completely underwritten by generous sponsors, including Ten-X (*presenting*); Irvine BMW, Irvine Mini and Rolls Royce Motorcars Orange County (*auto*); Incipio Group (*table gift*); Darioush, Succession Capital Alliance and Tito's Handmade Vodka (*beverage*); Bellingham Marine, Compass Group Management, F&M Bank, Newport Investment Associates, Pacific Life, Penn Mutual and Succession Capital Alliance (*gold*); the Antone, Crosson and Gehl families, Todd Anderson, Aristotle Capital Management, Balboa Bay Resort and Newport Beach Country Club, CareerArc, Peter and Suzanne Desforges, FPH Capital Partners, KDF Communities, Paul Hastings LLP, PIMCO Foundation, STA Jets and Wells Fargo (*silver*); and Avistone and New American Funding (*bronze*). Big Brothers Big Sisters also extends a special thank you to Sir Speedy Whittier.

All Gourmet Dinner proceeds benefit one of the national organization's leading agencies in the country; Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County and the Inland Empire annually provides more than 3,000 children facing adversity with professionally supported, one-to-one mentoring relationships. Ninety-nine percent of children in the program graduated high school on time, 89 percent enrolled in college, and 100 percent said their mentors were their biggest influence on pursuing a higher education. For more information, visit [ocbig.org](http://ocbig.org).

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#### **About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County and the Inland Empire**

Big Brothers Big Sisters believes that with the support of a caring mentor, every child has the ability to achieve his or her full potential. It is the nation's largest donor- and volunteer-supported mentoring organization, serving a quarter-million children annually. Based in Santa Ana, Calif., the Orange County agency was incorporated in 1958 and works as a local extension of the national effort to make professionally supported, one-to-one matches between mentors ("Bigs") and children ("Littles") facing adversity. Together with the Inland Empire agency, which opened its doors in 2013, the local organization annually serves more than 3,000 children through programs that improve the odds of youth performing better in school and avoiding violence and illegal activities. For more information, visit [ocbig.org](http://ocbig.org).