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# Daily Pilot

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Melissa Beck, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters, Sloane Keane and Sherry Bilbeisi welcomed donors to the Angelitos Card preview reception. (Photo by Doug Gifford)

By **B.W. Cook**

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**T**he fall/winter fundraising campaign produced by Angelitos de Oro, a volunteer auxiliary associated with Big Brothers Big Sisters, once again was executed in partnership with South Coast Plaza and their merchants, restaurateurs and specialty shops. The 2017 Angelitos de Oro Shopping Card attracted more than 9,000 holiday shoppers visiting more than 100 participating stores and restaurants at South Coast Plaza offering a 20% discount on behalf of Angelitos card holders.

The four-day shopping card event held in October kicked off with a “Preview Day” reception and luncheon held in South Coast Plaza’s Jewel Court. Co-chaired by Merrilee Harris and Catherine Sloan, the preview party welcomed some 300 women in support of Angelitos de Oro programs. Major backing for the event came from Debra Gunn Downing, executive director of marketing for SCP, Angelitos president Sherry Bilbeisi, and community activists, sponsors and co-chairs of the shopping card event Natalie Pickup and Georgina Jacobson. Addressing the luncheon crowd was Melissa Beck, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Beck commented: “Thanks to events like the Angelitos card week, we are opening nine new ‘High School Bigs’ sites this academic year to match teen volunteers (High School Bigs) with nearly 200 elementary school students in need of a peer mentor.”

The kick-off reception for the annual shopping card days featured a fashion trend presentation showcasing fall/winter/holiday merchandise from iconic purveyors such as Bottega Veneta, Diane von Furstenberg, Escada, Intermix, Kate Spade, M Missoni, Oscar de la Renta, Red Valentino and Stuart Weitzman. Organizers report the shopping card event was one of the most successful ever. Proceeds from the purchase of the card, set at \$60, help Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County and the Inland Empire.



Merrilee Harris, Georgina Jacobson, Natalie Pickup, Sherry Bilbeisi and Catherine Sloan at the 2017 Angelitos de Oro shopping event preview luncheon at South Coast Plaza. (Photo by Doug Gifford)

Spotted in the crowd were **Marilyn Wooten, Bonnie Halfacre, Donna Schroeder, Jackie Glass, Christine Flowers, Catherine Sloan, Kimberlee Duncan and Lisa Retzlaff.**

**B.W. COOK is editor of the Bay Window, the official publication of the Balboa Bay Club in Newport Beach.**