

Gala Event supports the Citrus Counseling Services

By SIW HEEDE

FOR THE

REDLANDS COMMUNITY NEWS

Citrus Counseling Services (CCS) in Redlands hosted its first fundraising gala on Saturday, Aug. 27, at the Burrage Mansion. CCS was celebrating its counseling services to clients and the community. About 40 people attended.

County Supervisor Dawn Rowe, Inland Empire Health Plan, Emerson Fine Jewelry and CCS Board President Bev Ching sponsored the event. Pianist Jazz Fuller entertained the guests during a silent auction and a social hour.

After dinner, two former clients told their stories about how they and their family members have learned to overcome traumatic events through services received at CCS. One speaker is the mother of a student who survived school shooting.

"I was watching the news and they said a fourth-grader, 9 years old, was shot. I immediately jumped up. I felt it was him," she said (the victim asked to stay anonymous, name known by CCS). "The police officers told me what had happened, and they rushed me to the hospital. At that point, I did not know if my son was going to survive. I didn't even know if he was alive.

"I found out he had survived, and at that point, nothing else mattered," she continued. "All of the anguish and anxiety, and desperation and fear. All of that came afterward. Going to therapy helped him learn some resources."

They both received counseling.

"I have to show my son you survived for a reason. Get the help you need. I have to say the counseling at Citrus is excellent counseling and it has helped us," she said. Her final advice was. "I would say for anyone, if you are having difficulty, reach out to somebody, because in the end it will definitely help."

The other speaker at the event was abducted, carjacked,



REDLANDS COMMUNITY NEWS PHOTO BY SIW HEEDE

Citrus Counseling Services CEO Roger Uminski II, county Supervisor Dawn Rowe and her fiancé Peter Baumgarten at the gala on Aug. 27 at the Burrage Mansion.

About Citrus Counseling Services

CCS is a nonprofit clinic that serves families and individuals in the Inland Empire through professional, compassionate and evidence-based mental health services, which are rooted in community and faith since 1974. Specialized services are offered for newborn to 8 years old and trauma victims. They take most major insurance. Services are available on-site and through tele-mental health.

■ **Trauma center:** CCS opened the first and only Trauma Recovery Center in San Bernardino County in 2020 funded by the California Victim Compensation Board.

■ **To schedule an appointment or learn more:** Visit ccs-cares.org or call (909) 793-1078 to schedule an appointment.

sexually assaulted and then had to face her attacker in court.

"I was able to find safety by the grace of God, and the suspect was arrested a week later. I knew I had to get myself back into therapy. I knew that court was coming up, and that I couldn't do this alone," she said in her speech (the victim asked to remain anonymous).

"But from that very first phone call I made, to the very first hour of meeting my therapist, I was welcomed with open arms and kind people. I knew that every week for an hour, I had a safe space to come to and not be judged," the victim described of the telehealth services she received at CCS.

"The most important thing that I learned, was that if I wanted to make headway in my healing, I had to do the work," she said. "I didn't think I could

do it. I didn't think I was strong enough. But because of the work I put in and the guidance of therapy, I was able to heal and continue to heal every day and became strong enough to face my attacker in court who is now serving a life sentence.

"The tools that I've gained, the journaling, the inner work, those scary and painful hours that grew into hope and joy couldn't have been fully possible without Citrus Counseling Services," she said.

The gala raised about \$7,000, which CEO at CCS Roger Uminski II considers a success. According to Uminski, the money raised will be used to provide immediate access to services for people who cannot find a therapist with an opening in their health plan network and who do not qualify for publicly funded programs.

CCS grant to help veterans and grow local workforce

By SIW HEEDE

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The Inland Empire Community Foundation (IECF) awarded Citrus Counseling Services (CCS) of Redlands a \$10,000 Rohn Rookstool Veterans Fund grant.

This grant will partially fund the Gain Access Promptly for Immediate and Longterm Resilience (GAP FILR) project.

The GAP FILR project provides the community better access to care and increases the mental health therapist workforce size and diversity.

"People want to reduce their anxiety, manage stress, improve relationships, handle grief, and deal with trauma.

Most have a health insurance plan that covers mental health. Health plans may only place licensed therapists in their networks," said Roger Uminski II, CEO of CCS.

"This is a medically underserved area. So, people with health insurance are not able to find available therapists in their health plan's network.

The GAP FILR-project provides immediate access to care with pre-licensed therapists under an experienced clinician's supervision.

These pre-licensed therapists gain the experience needed to become licensed and join health plan networks."

Managed by IECF, the Veterans Fund will increase service access to veterans in San Bernardino County and provide these veterans legal aid services, housing, physical and mental health services.

The latter is what CCS can help with.

"Rohn Rookstool was a special person with strong faith who walked a humble path while on this earth," said Bill Lehman, the attorney for Rookstool's estate.

"He believed in using money,

CCS' Trauma Recovery Center

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About Inland Empire Community Foundation

Founded in 1941, the Inland Empire Community Foundation is the oldest and largest community foundation in Inland Southern California. They partner with individuals, families and corporations to build a culture of philanthropy. Since its inception, they have given out over \$127 million in grants and scholarships.

■ **Website:** iegives.org

carefully saved over a lifetime, for donations to worthy organizations and causes he felt aligned with his values.

He was honored to leave funds from his estate to assist our veterans who sacrifice so much for our nation."

This grant will be used to provide services to veterans who reside in San Bernardino County.

CCS provides services for five identified veterans.

With this grant they now can increase that number. CCS also uses funds from other grants, contracts and donations to serve other GAP FILR project populations.

CCS has relationships with the VA, SB County Veteran's Service Office and Veteran's Centers such as those that serve students in the San Bernardino County Community College District (Valley College and Crafton Hills College).

Newkirk

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to the stage. Krista Newkirk, president of the University of Redlands, and Danny Anderson, recently retired from academia, spoke to about 200 people about the "Future of Higher Education and the University of Redlands." The forum was offered both in person and online.

Blending personal stories, stories about U of R stories and facts, Newkirk spoke about the future of education and the connections between the U of R and Redlands. After working as a lawyer for years, she moved to academia, where she served

as president of Converse College in South Carolina. A bit of nudging had her investigating the possibilities of moving to Redlands.

She discussed the University of Redlands, and its ties to the Redlands community along with the direction higher education will go in the future. A sharp decline of 18 year-olds following the 2008 recession will force universities and colleges to compete for more students among the shrinking population.

California in particular, especially the larger and more expensive cities, faces a shift as

more people leave those areas. San Bernardino and Riverside counties lost many of their residents, but families further west moved inland, balancing out the Inland Empire.

Even with those woes facing higher education, Newkirk spoke optimistically about the University of Redlands and what it brings to the table, not just in terms of education but also in the community.

The train "is a game changer" she said, noting that the train will allow for more commuters and more opportunity to be in the community, allowing for more connections. The main reason students drop out of

school is they don't have the family or community support.

She also touched on the University Village, which will include student housing, a boutique hotel and local businesses at the train station. A local contractor will oversee that project.

Other projects in the work are the tennis complex, which will allow the U of R to host national championships, with more games being played simultaneously.

Newkirk also discussed the Redlands promise, granting students in the Redlands area with specific grade-point average and family income to attend tu-

ition free, and families above that financial threshold to not pay over \$23,000 a year. Transfer students from San Bernardino Valley College and Crafton Hills are also guaranteed admission.

Tuesday night's event fulfilled the original goal of the Town and Gown committee of bringing the community together, learning about what is going on in Redlands, and doing interesting things.

The forum runs from Sept. to June, with one to two events a month. The next speaker will be Garner Holt of Garner Holt Productions based in Redlands on Sept. 14.