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**FAMILIES FORWARD SEPTEMBER GALA**  
**HONORS O.C. INDIVIDUALS**

*OC Organization Celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
While Serving More Families Than Ever Before...*

**IRVINE, CALIF. (AUGUST 4, 2009)** -- On September 26, 2009, Irvine-based Families Forward will celebrate 25 years of proudly serving the community at a gala event honoring those who have been strong supporters. The people and companies who will be honored at the event include Bill Campbell, Orange County Supervisor; Steve Churm, Past President, Irvine Chamber; Sukhee Kang, Mayor of Irvine; The Irvine Company and Lennar. Hugh Hewitt will serve as Master of Ceremonies.

The black-tie, annual event will be held at the Newport Beach Fairmont Hotel and the non-profit agency is hoping to raise more than \$350,000 dollars. The proceeds are needed now more than ever as programs have expanded in response to the recession and the impact it has had on families.

“In the first half of 2009, our food pantry has served more than 400 families each month,” explained Executive Director Margie Wakeham, “Unfortunately, more and more families are coming through our door, and we are trying to keep up with the demand to serve them all.”

In addition to feeding more families, the organization has created an emergency housing/rent assistance program which is currently helping more than 75 Orange County families. Families Forward also has started career workshops and other classes that have assisted 87 people so far this year.

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Families Forward serves families in cities throughout South Orange County, including: Aliso Viejo, Corona Del Mar, Coto de Caza, Dana Point, Dove Canyon, El Toro, Foothill Ranch, Irvine, Laguna Beach, Laguna Hills, Laguna Niguel, Lake Forest, Mission Viejo, Newport Beach, Rancho Santa Margarita, San Clemente, San Juan Capistrano, South Laguna, Trabuco Canyon and Tustin.

Since 1984, Families Forward has been providing low-income and homeless individuals with the resources and tools they need to get back on track. The non-profit agency assisted more than 6,000 individuals through housing, counseling, food, referrals, school supplies, career coaching, and other services in 2008. The organization relies heavily on local volunteers to help with such activities as the Back-To-School program, Thanksgiving program and the Holiday Adopt-A-Family.

Tickets for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala are now on sale. The cost for an individual ticket is \$200, with sponsorship packages available. For more information, please contact Families Forward at 949-552-2727 or visit [www.families-forward.org](http://www.families-forward.org).

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