

STYLE + SOCIETY SUN DAY



Steven Dinkin (NCRC president), **Dr. Jeffrey and Carol Chang** (honorary chairs), **Linda and Mel Katz** (honorees), **Tom Turner** (NCRC board chair)



David and Jean Laing (event co-chairs), **Richard and Jeri Rovsek** (event chairs), **Heidi and Dave Hodges** (event co-chairs)

S•D SCENE

Peace & performing arts

STORY & PHOTOS BY VINCENT ANDRUNAS • SPECIAL TO THE U-T

PEACEMAKER AWARDS DINNER

In our modern world, conflict is on the rise, and civility seems in increasingly short supply. But the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC), based right here in San Diego, provides the resources, training and expertise to help people, organizations and communities around the globe solve conflicts with civility. In fact, the NCRC's mission is to resolve issues with the highest possible degree of civility and equitability to all parties involved.

Held recently at the Hyatt Regency La Jolla, the organization's 28th annual Peacemaker Awards Dinner drew a record 580 supporters, including numerous philanthropists, civic figures and government officials. After a social reception, guests were seated for dinner and the program and welcomed by emcee Marty Levine. Board chair Tom Turner's opening remarks reflected the NCRC's commitment to building a more civil and peaceful society — and world — through training and the use of effective non-confrontational, empathetic communication skills.

An excellent dinner of short ribs and salmon was served as honorary chairs Carol and Dr. Jeffrey Chang were introduced. As the program continued, Linda and Mel Katz (most recently noted for making San Diego's new Central Library a reality) received the Philanthropy in Peacemaking

Award for making San Diego a better place to live through their leadership and advocacy.

The NCRC's innovative "Avoiding the Pipeline to Prison" initiative was described. Symbolized by "universal handcuff keys" given to each guest, this program seeks to give youths a second chance, breaking the cycle of incarceration and teaching responsibility for one's actions. Paddle-raise donations brought in \$142,000 for this restorative justice effort.

The 2016 San Diego Honoree was the group of artists from disenfranchised neighborhoods who produced the "Reclaiming the Community" music album, embracing love, rejecting violence and empowering local residents to be catalysts for positive local change.

Academy Award-winning actor Richard Dreyfuss received this year's National Peacemaker Award. Driven by passion for intellectual growth, he founded the Dreyfuss Civics Initiative, which teaches youths the importance of civil discussion and critical thinking. His stirring keynote address touched on the initiative's efforts to create future leaders capable of solving important and difficult problems with civility and clarity of thought.

Overall, the highly successful event netted \$420,000 for the NCRC's work.

NORTH COAST REP 'SPOTLIGHT' GALA

Many consider the North Coast Repertory Theatre the region's best little theater company. Artistic director David Ellenstein's exceptional productions create major impact in its intimate (200-seat) Solana Beach theater.

NCRT celebrated its 35th season with the annual "Spotlight" gala, held last Sunday at the Del Mar Country Club. Jeri and Richard Rovsek chaired the event for the second consecutive year, joined by co-chairs Jean and David Laing (also repeating) and new co-chairs Heidi and David Hodges. Dr. Cynthia and Martin Davis served as honorary chairs. The 200 guests began the evening with cocktails, conversation, tasty tray-passed treats and a silent auction.

As guests took their seats, director Ellenstein, doubling as emcee, announced the creation of NCRT's "San Diego's Champion for the Arts" award (brainchild of Richard Rovsek), to be awarded annually to an individual who has given extraordinary time, talent and treasure to benefit the visual and performing arts in the greater San Diego region. The inaugural recipient, Jessie Knight Jr., received the award, presented by Rovsek and county Supervisor Dave Roberts (himself known for helping NCRT get county grants for many theater upgrades). Not one to miss a chance for hu-

mor, Rovsek produced a box of Wheaties ("Breakfast of Champions") emblazoned with Knight's likeness. Humbly accepting the honor, Knight credited wife Joye Blount for making it possible. The couple are setting up a family foundation to continue their work with the arts.

An inspiration to this theater as both director and actor, the affable and energetic Ellenstein's next production (Henrik Ibsen's "Hedda Gabler") will be his 100th for NCRT. He announced that dedicated supporter and board member Hannah Step, underwriter of three previous seasons, will also donate \$100,000 to underwrite the coming new season.

After enjoying a fine dinner featuring beef filet with a red wine reduction sauce, guests bid a total of \$27,400 on five interesting live auction items. Subsequent paddle-raise pledges totaled a whopping \$267,000, bringing the event's total net to \$360,000.

The evening's entertainment featured Oscar, Emmy and Grammy-winning singer, dancer and actress Shirley Jones teamed with son Patrick Cassidy, known for his roles in musical theater, television and movies. Their 45-minute performance featured classic show tunes and tantalizing snippets from Jones' six-decade career.



Ed Gillenwaters, Aniko Pajtas, Michael Cunningham, Roberta and Malin Burnham



Marty Burnett (NCRT technical director), **Denise Young and David Ellenstein** (he's NCRT artistic director), **Sharon Stein** (NCRT board president), **Rosina and Rojo Reynolds** (she's a famed actress and director)



David and Ellen Dolgen, Margret and Nevins McBride, Jeanne Jones and Don Breitenberg



Dr. Allen and Judy Moffson, Joye Blount and Jessie Knight Jr. (he's inaugural recipient of San Diego's Champion for the Arts Award), **Patty Moises, Bill Kirlin** (NCRT managing director)



David and Camille Saltman, David and Lisa Casey, Abby and Ray Weiss



Jay and Julie Sarno (he's NCRT board vice president; she's development director), **Jonathan McMurtry** (famed actor), **Hannah Step** (NCRT board vice president), **Debra and Jim Lampley**