



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 23, 2009

CONTACT: Barbara Kimler 949.215.0417  
bkimler@cox.net

## **“SHEAnanigans: A Night of Horseplay and Magic” Raises \$200,000 for Shea Riding Center**

**Laguna Beach, Calif.** – Almost 400 guests attended The J.F. Shea Therapeutic Riding Center's annual black tie gala on Saturday, June 20 at the Montage Laguna Beach. Estimated net proceeds of \$250,000 will benefit The Shea Center's therapeutic horse-related programs for persons with disabilities.

An evening highlight was the Michael Lewis Friends of the Disabled Award presented to longtime supporters Dave and Renee Ritchie and Richard Markell, DVM. The award is given each year in the name of the organization's first rider - Michael Lewis - to individuals who set an outstanding example of community support, volunteerism and philanthropy.

Event co-chair Debbie Martin said, "I'm just so pleased with how gracious people were in supporting The Shea Center in these difficult financial times." Martin, along with co-chair Toni Christiansen oversaw the event festivities that included unique roving performers and living statues on the picturesque Pacific Lawn during the cocktail hour and expansive silent auction. Once inside the ballroom, the entertainment continued with live vignettes of magic, comedy and horse-play inspired performances throughout an elegant gourmet dinner. Dinner was followed by a moving presentation by rider parent's Ann Marie and Jeff Jennison of Ladera Ranch. The couple's five-year-old son Charlie rides at The Shea Center and made a special appearance at the event to the delight of attendees.

Top fundraising items during the live auction included a one-week rental of an exclusive Mammoth Lakes home, gourmet dinner for ten presented by Shea Center staff and the finest table at the 2010 Gala that each raised \$10,000. Other top live auction items included a private concert for 35 guests with professional opera singer, Michaela Martens that raised \$8000 and a Las Vegas Getaway complete with transportation via private jet that brought in \$5000. The Fosheim Fund-a-Dream, named in honor in of 20-year supporters Jon and Penny Fosheim, raised another \$35,000 to provide direct support to The Shea Center's program priorities and client scholarships.

An opportunity drawing featuring a custom diamond necklace with more than 7 carats of diamonds and appraised at \$13,410 was provided by Nuggets and Carats. The necklace was won by The Shea Center's Construction Chair Kevin Walker and his wife Tina.

Major sponsors for the event were Jenny and Bill Klein, Dave and Renee Ritchie, Linda Irvine Smith and Jon and Penny Fosheim.

Dinner included classic spinach salad with warm bacon vinaigrette dressing, prime rib eye medallion and grilled prawns and dark chocolate cream with fresh raspberries for dessert. The evening was capped off with open dancing.

One of the largest therapeutic riding centers in the country, the J.F. Shea Therapeutic Riding Center is dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs. The privately funded Shea Center was founded by social worker Fran Joswick in 1978 and currently serves over 500 clients annually with over 70 varying disabilities.

For more information about The Shea Center, call 949.240.8441, ext. 101 or visit [www.sheacenter.org](http://www.sheacenter.org).

###