

Beckstrand Cancer Foundation's Moulin Rouge Party nets \$1.112 Million; OC Ronald McDonald House Honors National Founders

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Beckstrand Cancer Foundation held its eighth annual Diamond & Pearl Ball with a Parisian “An Evening at Moulin Rouge” theme Saturday night at the Balboa Bay Club & Resort in Newport Beach. The benefit drew 363 guests and netted \$1,111,865 to further the nonprofit’s work in improving and enhancing the quality of life of cancer patients and their families. Posing for a red carpet photo are Beckstrand’s Executive Director Lil Spitzer, left, and the evening’s honoree and Golden Globe and Emmy-nominated actress Fran Drescher.

JANINE SWIATKOWSKI, FOR THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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DONNA BUNCE

PEOPLE WATCH

BY DONNA BUNCE, REGISTER COLUMNIST

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What a night! After being in Africa, Cuba and the Orient in previous years, the Beckstrand Cancer Foundation's Eighth Annual Diamond & Pearl Ball chose a Parisian "An Evening at Moulin Rouge" theme Saturday night for its 363 guests at the Balboa Bay Club & Resort in Newport Beach. Add a bevy of Hollywood celebrities, including the ball's honoree, Golden Globe and Emmy-nominated actress **Fran Drescher**, and *CSI: Miami* star **Eva La Rue**, who serves as Beckstrand's national spokesperson, as well as some amazing one-of-a-kind live auction offerings, and it was night to remember!

Following a red carpet arrival and alfresco cocktail party and silent auction, the ballroom doors opened to a stunning Parisian scene, complete with a huge Moulin Rouge windmill center stage lit with red and white lights. The walls, draped in colorful floor-to-ceiling scenes from Montmartre with the Eiffel Tower in the distance, surrounded a truly beautiful collection of dinner tables draped in either red velvet, textured red metallic or red taffeta with black beading table coverings. The centerpieces, surrounded in red roses, were either a beautiful lamp with a red shade, a black feathered palm tree or a daring can-can leg covered in black fishnet stockings. Black-cushioned Chivari chairs draped in black beaded chiffon with ruffled skirts completed the setting.

Songs by French chanteuse **Edith Piaf** were heard and scenes from the French film classic *Gigi* flashed on huge screens on either side of the windmill as guests found their seats, after which six can-can girls gave their all with the help of two muscled male dancers dancing to the signature French dance hall music.

La Rue and Beckstrand's Executive Director **Lil Spitzer** welcoming everyone wearing gorgeous Oday Shakar gowns and dripping in jewelry from Presenting Sponsor Lugano Diamonds. La Rue touted Beckstrand's work with improving and enhancing the quality of life for cancer patients and their families through providing financial assistance, patient advocacy, supportive counseling, and practical help with day-to-day living and basic needs. "To help you understand," La Rue said, "Lil literally writes checks for \$30,000 each month to cancer patients."

Special thanks were given by returning ball chair **Renetta Caya** to her committee, to **Idit** and **Moti Ferder**, owners of Lugano Diamonds, for their support as Presenting Sponsor, Aston Martin Newport Beach as Vehicle Sponsor, Donati Family Vineyards as Wine Sponsor, and Fashion Island as Opportunity Prize Sponsor with its \$2,500 shopping spree. Also thanked were Blue Ice American Vodka, Classic Party Rentals, G-Force Productions and **Kimberly Dubois**, Wildflowers Linens, Instant Jungle International, and UBS Printing Group for underwriting and printing the gala book.

Drescher, who is a cancer survivor and advocate, spoke about her two-year journey through eight doctors to get a diagnosis of uterine cancer and undergoing an immediate radical hysterectomy to treat the disease. "After my national tour book tour of *Cancer Schmancer*," Drescher said, "I shifted my focus from searching for a cancer cure to improving women's healthcare by focusing on prevention and early detection of cancer."

Twenty-year-old **Nicole Schulz's** cancer story left not a dry eye in the house. The varsity cheerleader and beauty queen (she won Miss Teen California) has been battling AML leukemia since 2005 and has been in the hospital for large stretches of time. She continues to receive weekly chemotherapy treatments and takes what she calls "bags of medications." "I thank God for amazing people like those at Beckstrand Cancer Foundation who have helped me and my family when we needed it most," she said.

Auctioneer **Mark Schenfeld** fired up the live auction, which featured some amazing items. Some highlights included a stay in New York at The Peninsula to view Oday Shakar's 2012 Fall Collection, with a private consultation with the designer to design a gown of your choice along with the perfect shoes and handbag from Neiman Marcus. **Michael Kahn** bought it for his wife **Tami** for \$11,000. Renetta's husband **Blaine Caya** spent \$12,000 on a New York package with a visit to Jimmy Choo to meet the President and select a pair of shoes and handbag. **Patricia McNamara** won the Italian trip to Florence and Rome, with a private tour of the Holy City, for \$30,000, while **Dave** and **Holly Wilson** opted for the *CSI: Miami* walk-on package with Eva La Rue for \$26,000. The Behind-the-Scenes with Fran Drescher opportunity, which included a walk-on part on her *Happily Divorced* show and a dinner for four in her Malibu home, sold to **Mary Ellen Moschetti** for \$40,000, and La Rue and husband **Joe Cappuccio** paid \$70,000 for the Lugano Diamonds week's stay in Tel Aviv at a 5-star hotel, with visits to historic sites and a special visit to the renowned Diamond Bourse to select a diamond that will be sculpted and polished and sent to GIA for certification and named in their honor. After that, it will be custom set just for them.

The generosity didn't stop there. After an appeal by Beckstrand Board President **George O'Connell**, major donations were made by **Mike & Jan Salta**, **Dave and Holly Wilson**, **George and Eden O'Connell**, **Keith and Marla Murray**, **Jeff and Holly Miller**, and **William and Elisabetta Graff**. The bottom line? Net proceeds of \$1,111,865 were realized – an amazing feat in this economy!

I would be remiss if I didn't mention some of the celebs. **Regina King** of the acclaimed crime drama *Southland* (a visit to the set with lunch with King sold in the live auction for \$7,000), *CSI: Miami* cast members **Adam Rodriguez**, **Jonathan Togo** and **Omar Benson Miller**, **Gilles Marini** of *Dancing with the Stars* and *Sex and the City* fame (remember the shower scene?!), **Sean Kanan** and **Don Diamont** from *The Young and the Restless*, **Jane Graves** (*Ladybug Jane* and *The Muppet Movie*) and **Lisa Vidal** (*The Event*).

Thanks to Lugano Diamonds, ball favors were a sterling silver butterfly (the Beckstrand logo) pin for the ladies and a USB memory card imprinted with the nonprofit's logo for the men.