



Moving & Shaking: ETТА Celebrates

BY RYAN TOROK | PUBLISHED JAN 11, 2018 | MOVING & SHAKING

ETТА, an organization that provides programs and services that help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live independent lives, held its 24th annual gala on Nov. 29 at the Beverly Hilton hotel.

The event honored Jonathan and Miriam Istrin and Susie and Fred Toczek, who together announced a scholarship program – Summer@ETТА – for the ETТА summer camp. The program serves teens and adults with developmental disorders, including autism and Down syndrome.

Also feted were longtime ETТА staff members Leah Schachter, director of volunteer services and special events, and Josh Taff, director of the Isak Boruchin Adult Day Program, who received the inaugural “Ettу” award for outstanding professional achievement. Eight ETТА youth board members received the Youth Leadership Award. The Pujols Family Foundation, a nonprofit that supports families living with Down syndrome, received the Community Philanthropy Award. And the Don and Lorraine Freeberg Foundation, which recently donated a van to the organization, received the Builders of Tomorrow award.

The 700 attendees included Joc Pederson of the Los Angeles Dodgers, who turned out with his older brother, Champ, who has Down syndrome. Pederson accepted the award on behalf of the Pujols Family Foundation, which is named for Los Angeles Angels player Albert Pujols.

Dan Freeberg and James Geary accepted the award on behalf of the Don and Lorraine Freeberg Foundation. Actor Bradley Whitford (“The Post”) emceed. Actor Gary Cole (“Veep”) also attended.

Civic, political and community leaders in attendance included former Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, state Sen. Ben Allen, L.A. City Councilman Paul Krekorian, attorney and ETТА board member Sam Yebri, ETТА Board of Advisors member Davis Factor and ETТА Executive Director Michael Held.