

SMMEF lands \$35,000 from inaugural ball



Posing together are Sand and Sea Ball dancers (left to right) Arthur Murray Santa Monica's Gabriela Young, Santa, Monica Mayor Tony Vazquez, Kayleah Rhyme, Gregory Saccone, Eddie Guerboian, Kathryn Jeffery, David Woodbury, SMMUSD Superintendent Sandra Lyon, Joel Rieck, Lynne Thomas and Reese Elliot. Photo Submitted

The Sand and Sea Ball, a gala dinner and dance competition produced by Arthur Murray Santa Monica on May 22, raised \$35,000 for the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation.

Approximately 225 guests attended the event, held at the Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel.

The event featured six well-known locals contending for the Mirror Ball Trophy in a competition modeled after "Dancing with the Stars." The dancers were 5th Generation Readers Fine Jewelers Owner and President Eddie Guerboian, Santa Monica College

President Dr. Kathryn Jeffery, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Superintendent Sandra Lyon, Kaiser Permanente Doctor Gregory Saccone, “The Lobster” director of sales and marketing Lynne Thomas, and Santa Monica Mayor Tony Vazquez.

Each dancer was partnered with a professional from Arthur Murray Santa Monica and received 14 lessons to learn their assigned dance. The Mirror Ball was awarded to Saccone for his top-scoring fox trot.

“We are so thrilled and grateful to be the beneficiary of the spectacular Sand & Sea Ball,” said Linda Greenberg, SMMEF Executive Director. “Every aspect of the event and competition – from the costumes to the dancing to the audience’s enthusiasm – was a joyous celebration of a community coming together to support students.”

All proceeds from the Sand and Sea Ball are being donated to SMMEF, which funds arts education, instructional assistants and enrichment grants for schools in the SMMUSD. The proceeds from this event will support a ballroom dance program for fifth-graders.

Students from the program escorted guests into the Ball and started off the evening with a dance showcase.

“Arthur Murray Santa Monica is elated at the success of the first Sand & Sea Ball,” said David Woodbury, co-owner of Arthur Murray Santa Monica. “We were overjoyed to lead this event to bring this community together to celebrate dance and fund dance programs in our public schools.” In addition to producing the event and training each dancer in the competition, Arthur Murray Santa Monica also donated two private lessons for 10 people, which were auctioned off during the event.

Established in 1982 by a dedicated group of parents, community leaders, and local business owners, SMMEF raises funds to enhance and supplement the curriculum of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. SMMEF’s mission is to engage the community to invest in a vibrant educational experience for all students in the Santa Monica and Malibu public schools. SMMEF raises funds through its annual campaign, endowment earnings and special events.