

# PALO ALTO DAILY NEWS

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## "BIRDS AND BLOOM" GARDEN PARTY by Janet Duca Norton/Society Columnist

A pair of gorgeous gardens and 100 custom-designed birdhouses shared the spotlight with Bay Area vintners and restaurants at the Palo Alto-based Environmental Volunteers "Birds and Blooms" benefit on June 1. Homeowners Kathy and Michael Ladra, along with Karlene and David Elder, welcomed around 300 guests to their Atherton gardens.

The afternoon garden party featured birdhouses that were sold by auction, pairings of gourmet food and fine wines, garden demonstrations, and jazz by the Millennium Trio and Kenecion.

"Birds and Blooms was a wonderful success. The event raised \$40,000 that will support our work teaching children to love natural science," said Allan Berkowitz, Environmental Volunteers executive director.

Event chairs Stephen and Susan Hansen, who presented this first-time fundraising event, had the pleasure of introducing honorary chairs Bob and Jan Fenwick before announcing it was the kickoff for an ambitious EcoCenter capital campaign.



Susan is chair of the \$4 million campaign for the transformation and renovation of the historic Sea Scout House in the Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve. The ship-shaped building designed by premier Palo Alto architect Birge Clark will not only be renovated into the new community EcoCenter, which will be the site for Environmental Volunteers' new and expanded science education programs, it will be an environmentally friendly project, employing sustainable green-building materials and practices. The project is a partnership with the city of Palo Alto, which is charging Environmental Volunteers \$1 annual rent for 40 years.

Executive director Berkowitz announced, "Fenwick Hall will honor Jan and Bob Fenwick for their decades of support and leadership. The Environmental Volunteers is an infinitely better organization because of their dedication and commitment."

Environmental Volunteers' vision is to teach children about the natural world and inspire them to become responsible stewards of the Earth. In 2007, 10,000 elementary and middle school children were taught nine natural science lessons in small group settings by the organization's well-trained volunteer docents. The hands-on classes are augmented with field trips designed to let children explore local ecosystems.

"For 36 years, Environmental Volunteers has been a series of grass-roots success stories," Berkowitz said. "We teach nature facts and we educate to the heart."

Guests included Leannah Hunt and Sally Falkenhagen, who was pleased to win the live auction prize - a consultation with garden experts from Taproot Design & Fine Gardening and a gift certificate for plants from Wegman's Nursery.