



# WINGS *of* CHANGE

THE SOUTH BAY'S SANDPIPERS

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY CMS-DESIGN PORTRAITURE

Immediately when you meet the women of Sandpipers you realize, they're not just volunteers who believe in giving to their community, they're good friends. Coming from a monthly board meeting, the members are all smiles and rightly so, they're accomplishments are numerous around the South Bay. But don't be fooled, these 700 current and past members are hard-working and extremely busy planning annual fundraising events, weekly meals-on-wheels deliveries, fixing-up local social services agencies, supplying children with school items, assisting families in emergency need, and building philanthropic programs. But all of this is just the tip of the iceberg for the Sandpipers.

Founded in 1931 in Hermosa Beach by seven women during the Great Depression, the initial goal was to anonymously deliver holiday gift baskets for neighbors that were in need in tough economic times. And almost 80 years later, the entirely volunteer staff is a well-known philanthropic and fundraising organization serving almost exclusively — minus the Sugarplum Tree program, which grants holiday wishes to about 1,500 children in the Los Angeles County foster care system — those living in the South Bay. And this past holiday season, 100 families received the traditional holiday basket filled with grocery scripts, toys, blankets, towels, detergent, cleaning supplies, paper goods, gift certificates for children's shoes, and bikes for some 40 kids.

What is all this time and dedication going to? The ladies spoke of the Back to School event, which matches a child with a Sandpiper to shop for an hour. Each child receives up to \$150 to buy clothing and receives a backpack full of school supplies. For this school year, Sandpipers assisted 60 kids. There is also the Done in a Day program, which allows Sandpipers to help out some of the social service agencies it works with. For example, the volunteers recently spent a day at Richstone Family Center painting one of the rooms and filling the shelves with games and books. More sporadically, Sandpipers do what they call Emergency Casework if a family's situation suddenly changes and the organization thinks they can be of assistance in hard times. Emergency assistances in the past have included, for example, a grocery script for one month, or last year the board voted to help a young girl get a program dress.

Several committees spend almost an entire year preparing for the Sandpipers' two big fundraising events: The 18th annual Fashion Show and the annual For Our Children event. This year's fashion show will feature designer Tory Burch and children's collection Bella Beach Kids of Manhattan Beach. Last year's crowd was around 350 and the group expects this or larger a turnout for a donation of \$100, or \$125 or \$150 for runway seats. The show also includes a luncheon and shopping — silent and live auctions — for vacations, social events, jewelry, beauty items and more.

In its 25th year, Honda (the largest sponsor) presents the For Our Children

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So who are the Sandpipers? Among the 150 active and 550 inactive associate members, they range from single women just out of college to retired grandmothers. And while the group used to be by invite only, and mostly for women who did not work, the membership is far more broad today and is open to anyone willing to put in the commitment of all the community service, the meetings, and work the Sandpipers' well-known holiday homes tour that happens each December.

Cindy Laikin, Sandpiper's president, became a member after learning about Sandpipers when her daughter joined Sandpiper Juniors in high school. Inspired by her daughter's commitment, Cindy said, "If she can do it, I can do it." Now a member since 2003, Cindy made an even bigger commitment by taking on the role of president, which is in total a four-year commitment when you include the president-elect training year, the presidency, the role of junior past president (in charge of cultivating the incoming leadership), and senior past president (which helps run the scholarship program). "We require a lot of our members," says Cindy. "You have to work on a committee, you have to go to meetings, but again, a lot of us have made wonderful friends with like-minded women who believe in giving back to the community."

But even members like Patti Anglin, in her third year as a Sandpiper, doesn't let a full-time job and a five-year-old daughter hinder her commitment. Patti brings her job skills to the organization's publicity and is active on the fundraising side. She joined Sandpipers after attending one of the annual fashion shows. "I had a young daughter and I wanted her to see what it's like to give back time," says Patti.

Food and Wine Festival. Sandpipers are joining forces with Providence Little Company of Mary Foundation for an afternoon of more than 80 restaurants, wineries and breweries that, for a \$150 entrance fee, will be pouring drinks and serving food for guests throughout the four hours. There will also be a silent auction, live auction and this year Honda is giving away a brand new Crosstour EX-L. All proceeds benefit Sandpipers philanthropic programs and Providence Little Company of Mary children's programs.

Beyond fundraising is also the philanthropic side of the Sandpipers. For instance, it runs the largest scholarship program in the South Bay. Students can apply right out of high school and winners are monetarily supported through all four years of college. In 2010, the 44 students in the scholarship program will share from a fund worth \$150,000.

While Sandpipers uses money raised at its events to fund most of its programs (the operations budget is separate and no one is paid for their work), a lot of its gifts and money are donated by local corporations and past members. And since Sandpipers is not a social service agency, it looks to those in the South Bay to determine which individuals and families are most in need. "We are helping people to help themselves," says Cindy. "Not a hand out, a hand up."

The Sandpiper's Fashion Show will happen March 21 at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. The For Our Children event is scheduled for April 25 at the American Honda campus in Torrance. For more information on the Sandpipers, visit [sandpipers.org](http://sandpipers.org).

To read about other philanthropic organizations in the South Bay, visit [lifeinthesouthbay.com](http://lifeinthesouthbay.com)