

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. Mary Hospital Gala Celebrates the High Desert

APPLE VALLEY – July 31, 2009 – St. Mary Hospital Foundation’s annual Gala is “Celebrating the High Desert.” This year’s gala is dedicated to the many residents and businesses who have contributed to the Foundation thus improving healthcare in the region over the years. High Desert Primary Care Medical Group and Premier Healthcare are sponsoring this year’s Gala.

The Gala is focusing on extending a special thank you to the High Desert for its ongoing support, but it also includes a good time with lots of energy thanks to the band, NRG. NRG combines fusion and sophistication making it one of the finest dance bands in the country. It has opened for legendary artists such as Billy Joel, Michael Crawford and Rod Stewart.

The Foundation is proud to announce this year’s Gala co-chairs – Niki Balginy of High Desert Primary Care Medical Group and Olivia Smith of J. Michaels Salon and Day Spa.

Balginy has worked with the medical group for the past 14 years and has been an active partner with the St. Mary Hospital Foundation since 1999. Balginy and HDPC strongly believe in supporting the community and their patients.

Smith and her family have lived in the High Desert for 15 years. Smith believes in the importance of giving back to the community and is excited to be a co-chair of this year’s Gala.

The Foundation is also excited to recognize this year’s honorees.

Humanitarian of the Year:

Dr. Vodur C. Reddy founded the Physician Advisory Council, which has raised \$850,000 for the benefit of St. Mary Medical Center. For more than 10 years, he has led a support group for prostate cancer patients. He is also active with St. John of God Healthcare Services, the Art of Living Foundation and Victorville schools through health and wellness education. Dr. Reddy was instrumental in bringing robotic surgery technology to the High Desert.

Patrons of the Year:

High Desert Primary Care Medical Group: Drs. Ziad El-Hajjaoui, Zoheir El-Hajjaoui, David Gutierrez and Mehdi Izadi, and Niki Balginy, CEO actively contribute to all Foundation capital campaigns and events, bringing more advanced technology and services to the community. They have also partnered with St. Mary Medical Center on several wellness campaigns and outreach programs that benefit the residents of the High Desert.

Samaritan of the Year:

Brother Gary Hill is dedicated to patient care by uplifting the spirits of all those with whom he comes in contact. As chair of the St. Mary Medical Center Board of Trustees and a leader at St. John of God Healthcare Services in Victorville, he works in conjunction with St. Mary Medical Center, the County of San Bernardino and the United Way to provide a hospitable space for residents of the High Desert who face challenges.

Young Humanitarian:

Brooke Compton has volunteered at St. Mary since 2005 in the Emergency Department, and she was previously honored as Junior Volunteer of the Year. She has also assisted the St. Mary Medical Center Planning Department in major projects. Brooke tutors children in the community and even is a caregiver to her 92-year-old neighbor! Brooke currently attends Victor Valley College and is working toward a degree in nursing.

Honorary Chairs:

George and Mary Newton have been actively involved in the High Desert community for many years. George founded Newton's Outpost Café and Travel Stop in Oak Hills. Together, he and Mary, have developed it into a thriving travel center. George is an active member of local service clubs, and Mary works closely with animal rescue groups. The Newtons care deeply for St. Mary Medical Center and are long-time supporters of Foundation campaigns, committees and membership clubs.

The 18th annual Foundation Gala begins at 5:30 p.m. on Oct. 10 at the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds. Proceeds from the Gala will benefit the overall future expansion of St. Mary Medical Center. Tickets are \$225 a person. Tables with seating for eight people are available for \$1,800 to \$2,200, depending on table location and advertising space reserved in the Gala program. For more information, please call (760) 946-8167.

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St. Mary Hospital Foundation is a not-for-profit foundation co-ministered by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange and the Brothers of St. John of God. It exists to support the healing ministry of St. Mary Medical Center and provides philanthropic resources to improve the health and quality of life for people in the High Desert.