

Coto de Caza party helps Village of Hope

BY MARK EADES
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Guests arrived at the Coto de Caza Golf & Racquet Club ready to “Party with a Purpose” and that purpose was to raise money for the Orange County Rescue Mission’s Village of Hope, a home for the homeless.

The dinner for more than 280 people was staged by the Coto Community of Hope on Saturday night. Damp weather threatened the sold-out event, but organizers quickly moved everything under the tents one hour before the 6 p.m. start.

“We’re all friends and just know what to do,” said Toni Andrews, one of the event organizers running around barefoot in her evening dress, helping to quickly move tables and silent auction items.

The group has raised more than \$1.5 million for the Village of Hope in the last four years. Last year’s dinner raised \$270,000.

Even with the down economy, the



Melissa Luker and Daniel Granado, 6, are all smiles at the Party with a Purpose dinner. Granado lives at the Village of Hope. > MARK EADES/OCREGISTER.COM

sold-out turnout amazed Village of Hope resident Paul Granado, who spoke to the dinner guests.

“These are some very wonderful people,” said Granado, who has lived in the Village for two months with his 6-year-old son Daniel. The father and son were invited to the dinner.

“I was tired of living in the street,” Granado said to the dinner guests.

Granado said he and his son lived out of the back of his truck on the streets of the city of Orange where his son attended school until they moved into the Village.

“I would drive up to the school every

morning and drop him off,” said Granado. “He would get out of the front door like a normal kid so he wouldn’t be embarrassed.”

Granado says the Village has helped him turn his life around. He said he is taking advantage of all the training he can get while there and hopes to get re-established in ceramic construction and installation.

“I hope to get a good job and support my kid,” he said.

There were 92 silent auction items up for bid at the party. Items ranged from bottles of wine, to matching his and her Nine Beach Cruiser bicycles, to a six-day trip to Australia.

The evening was emceed by Read Clarke, who credited the fundraiser’s success to being a dinner party.

“There are so many events, tournaments and other things that last year we said we’re going to get like-minded people together in the community of Coto for a party,” said Clarke. “It was an unbelievable success.”