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Champion fundraisers hail about-to-open Mission Bay Campus

By Catherine Bigelow

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Surveying the swank 55,000-square-foot tent that enveloped the trees and low-emission electric-vehicle slots dotting the parking lot of UCSF's almost-open Mission Bay Campus, supporter **Preston Butcher** was impressed.

"For a hospital," he said, beaming, "this is a hot event."

And 1,000 UCSF devotees, doctors, support staff and stars agreed Saturday during the Champions Gala to celebrate the Feb. 1 unveiling of UCSF's new \$1.5 billion, state-of-the-art campus at Mission Bay.

But that heat quotient raised even higher when it was announced that angel investor **Ron Conway** (an EssEff native, civic leader, UCSF Foundation trustee and chairman of SF.citi, which encourages tech companies to give back to their communities) recently pledged UCSF a big \$40 million bump.

Those funds, donated in honor of his wife, **Gayle Conway**, and their sons, **Ronny, Topher** and **Danny**, will assist completion of the hospital's 207,500-square-foot outpatient facility, which will be named the **Ron Conway Family Gateway Medical Building**.

The renowned care and stellar research at UCSF has attracted a handful of high-profile donations by local philanthropists for Mission Bay's facilities: Intel founder **Gordon Moore** and his wife, **Betty Irene Moore** (\$50 million for the women's hospital), **Barbara** and **Gerson Bakar** (for whom the cancer hospital is named) and, of course, the \$200 million man-and-woman, **Lynne Benioff** and her husband, Salesforce.com founder-CEO **Marc Benioff**, whose two \$100 million donations support both the UCSF **Benioff Children's Hospital** and its affiliate, Children's Hospital & **Research Center Oakland**.

While the Benioffs were not in attendance at the gala, their breathtaking generosity was definitely duly noted.

But it seems this duo just can't stop themselves from giving — the first helipad ever allowed in the city and county of San Francisco is due to Benioff's beneficence and will provide rapid transport of critically sick children aboard BEAR (Benioff Emergency Air Rescue) Force One to the hospital.

This soiree definitely sparked — country singing sensation **Tim McGraw** and actor **Kevin Spacey** wowed the crowd with surprise stellar sets beneath swags of twinkling chandeliers crowning the supper club-style tent created by Sequoia Productions (which produces the annual post-Academy Awards Governors Ball gala) in partnership with **Tracy Radeff Design Studios**.

Stylish tabletops were graced with a delish dinner (Port-poached pear salad; filet mignon) by caterer **Paula LeDuc** and chef **Daniel Capra**, who also fed folks with pre- and post-gala gourmet goodies.

In addition to the onstage headliners, event organizers and UCSF staffers **Kathy Balestreri** and **Kelley O'Brien** offered musical stylings for every taste, provided by sets from maestro **Michael Morgan** and the **Oakland East Bay Symphony**; the Alizma Violin Trio; **Oakland School for the Arts'** Vocal Rush; **Tyia Wilson** and the Band from TV.

Among revelers: UCSF Chancellor Dr. **Sam Hawgood** and his wife, **Jane**; Rep. **Nancy Pelosi**; UCSF CEO **Mark Laret** and his wife, **Jan**; Mayor **Ed Lee**; **Jennifer** and **Joe Montana**; Sen. **Mark Leno**; **Karen** and **Ronnie Lott**; UC President **Janet Napolitano**; **Sandy** and **Jeanne Robertson**; SFPD Chief **Greg Suhr**; **Lydia** and **Doug Shorenstein**; SFFD Chief **Joanne Hayes-White** with her son, **Sean**; **Cathy** and **Mike Podell**; UCSF Foundation Board Chairman **Bill Oberndorf** and his wife, **Susan**; trustee **Nancy Bechtle** and her husband, **Joachim**; trustee **Ellen Magnin Newman**; trustee **Carmen Policy** and his wife, **Gail**; trustee **Nion McEvoy**; trustee **Brook Byers** and his wife, **Shawn**; trustee **Leigh Matthes**; trustee **Art Kern**; trustee **George Marcus** and his wife, **Judy**; philanthropist **Chuck Feeney**, who provided a \$125 million matching grant; trustee **Dede Wilsey**, who led a \$600 million capital campaign for the hospital from individual donors; and **Barbara Rosenberg** with her husband, UCSF trustee **Richard Rosenberg**, a longtime director and the former foundation board chairman who led the charge, a mere 15 years ago, that has birthed UCSF's new health care hub.

But one of the most popular people amid this crowd was 7-year-old **Rhett Krawitt**, a pint-size sensation fiddling in his tuxedo as he recalled for the crowd his experience as a UCSF patient.

“I learned that I had leukemia before I was 3 years old. For my first round of treatment, I was in the hospital for 87 days,” he said. “But the nurses played a game with me, telling me the cancer cells were ‘the bad guys.’ So before every dose of chemo, I’d say, ‘Get the bad guys out.’ And we did.”

Mark Laret reminded guests that the ground beneath Mission Bay was once the dumping ground for debris from the 1906 earthquake and later, a rail yard. Yet UCSF leaders were able to envision a new hospital there that will bring hope and health to patients from around the Bay Area and the world.

“Tonight we salute the clinical and administrative teams who planned the facility; the architects and contractors who built it; the support from our local and state political leaders; and the patient advisers who ensured that UCSF Mission Bay would meet the needs of everyone in our community,” he toasted.

Channeling his scientific bent, Chancellor Hawgood noted that just north of the hospital is the Mission Bay Research campus housing UCSF’s health science schools, which rank as the nation’s No. 1 recipients of funding from [the National Institutes of Health](#).

“Dede Wilsey likes to say that ‘at night, patients in our new hospitals will be able to look across the campus at the lights burning late in the research labs and know people are working hard to discover the next generation of cures,’” said Hawgood. “And she’s exactly right.”







<http://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/article/Champion-fundraisers-hail-about-to-open-Mission-6012686.php>