

**CALIFORNIA FIRST LADY MARIA SHRIVER HONORS RAY BAIRD'S PHILANTHROPIC EFFORTS AT THE FIRST ANNUAL SAMANTHA'S PRIDE AWARDS LUNCHEON.**

**NEWPORT BEACH, California - April 11, 2006** - NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. - April 11, 2006 - The Joyful Child Foundation held today the first annual Samantha's PRIDE Awards luncheon, featuring honored guest California First Lady Maria Shriver. Hosted by Erin Runnion and The Joyful Child Foundation, the luncheon was held at the Fairmont Hotel in Newport Beach and celebrated both private and public citizens who have worked to prevent violent crimes against children, including Ray Baird, co-founder and president of RiechesBaird and president of The Joyful Child Foundation Board of Trustees. Laura Diaz, Emmy Award-winning journalist and CBS 2 News co-anchor, served as master of ceremonies.

The Joyful Child's model for stopping crimes against children depends upon the collaboration of individuals, businesses, non-profit organizations, law makers and enforcers. In addition to the individual PRIDE Leaders, the success of Samantha's PRIDE is also due to the generosity of business and community leaders who have given so freely of their time, talents, resources and influence to bring it to life.

RiechesBaird is an award-winning business/brand consulting firm that has given of its talents to help put The Joyful Child on the map - from strategic planning to spectacular creative work including the logo, Web site, and invitations for the luncheon's event.

Ray Baird was one of its earliest and most passionate supporters, helping shape the vision of The Joyful Child Foundation at its most fledgling stages and as president of its Board of Trustees, he continues to guide its strategic growth. Tim Price, RiechesBaird's executive creative director accepted the award on behalf of Ray Baird and RiechesBaird.

"Ray was among the very first to embrace the vision I had for Samantha's PRIDE, and it is through his passion for building stronger communities and protecting children that the program has come to life," said Erin Runnion. "Ray and the talented team and RiechesBaird continue to support us through strategic direction and stunning creative work - our brand and our identity today are a direct result of their efforts and I am so grateful."

Samantha's PRIDE Community Awareness and Child Watch is the first program of The Joyful Child Foundation, founded in memory of Samantha Runnion who was abducted, assaulted and murdered by a pedophile in 2002. Today, hundreds of PRIDE Protector volunteers operate throughout Southern California, watching children as they walk to and from school, play in the neighborhood or gather in local parks. Their trademark red vests and neighborhood street signs are signals to children that safe adults are nearby, and also a warning to child predators that they do not stand a chance in these neighborhoods. A Web-based version of Samantha's PRIDE, created through a partnership with NeighborsConnecting.com, makes Samantha's PRIDE available across the nation.

Other honorees included Orange County Sheriff Michael Carona; Irene Brown, director of California community relations for BP; California Attorney General Bill Lockyer; Frank and Michele Condon, president and vice president of NeighborsConnecting.com; and Fonda McGensy, Safe Place Coordinator for Safe House.

**About The Joyful Child Foundation**

The Joyful Child Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit for public benefit organization dedicated to uniting and uplifting our nation's communities in the protection and wonderment of all children. The Joyful Child was inspired by the life of Samantha Runnion, a beautiful, bright, joyful little girl with a passion for art.

Samantha's life was cut short as the youngest victim of the summer of abductions in 2002. The Joyful Child focuses on proactive measures to deal with the difficult issue of violence against children. The Joyful Child Foundation launched Samantha's PRIDE Community Awareness and Child Watch program in 2004 to strengthen communities and protect children from predators. Today, more than 500 PRIDE Protectors participate in over 80 PRIDES throughout Southern California; effectively protecting thousands of children around their neighborhood schools and parks.

Since founding The Joyful Child Foundation in her daughter's memory, Erin Runnion works tirelessly to develop and promote programs that help prevent violent crimes against children. Erin is recognized as a leading advocate of community programs to protect children, and appears frequently on major media outlets including NBC's Today, ABC's Good Morning America, CBS's Early Show and CNN's Larry King Live to educate parents and communities about child protection issues.

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