

A Letter of Gratitude from Our Starfish Fundraiser

Dear friends,

We're still carrying the joy of our 2nd Annual Starfish Fundraiser. Looking around the room that evening, we saw friends and neighbors laughing together, cheering each other on, and giving so freely of themselves. It was everything we hoped our Starfish evening could be.

To our guests, family, and friends: thank you for coming and sharing at the celebration. To everyone who arrived early to set up or stayed late to put things away, we saw those helping hands. We're deeply grateful for them.

We want to thank the FIA volunteers who gave their time and heart to this event: Jim Brothers, Bobbi Ashurst, Felicia DePew, Suzanne Valencia, Lucycela Mae Martin, Kathy Faber, Chris Stanley, Diana Wee, Devon Smith, Lenore Gamez, and Carol Allbaugh. Each of you helped make the evening possible, and we're grateful to be part of a team that shows up for one another and for our community.

One of the most meaningful parts of the evening was seeing new people become part of that team. For Shawn Summerville, Michael Blair, Ryan Hussey, Debra Christine Campbell, Jacob Hussey, and Connie Mendoza, the Starfish Fundraiser, was their first time volunteering with FIA. They stepped right in alongside familiar faces, sharing their time and talents as though they had always been there. Ryan helped bring our Price Is Right wheel to life, and Connie made the bows for all fifty-five baskets. We're grateful for the care each of you brought to the event, and we hope this is just the beginning of your time with FIA.

Dan Hazeltine also volunteered with FIA for the first time as our emcee, guiding us through the evening with warmth and humor. Our Price Is Right team included Cliff Lewis, Bob Allbaugh, Kathy Conway, Vince Conway, and Mary Reynolds. They made the games such a delight. It was also Kathy, Vince's, and Mary's first-time volunteering with FIA. Thank you to every one of you for the laughter you brought into the room.

A special thank-you to our photographer, Raul Martinez, for capturing the moments we'll want to remember, and to Samuel Guerrero for managing the audiovisual presentation that brought the program together.

We're grateful to the sponsors whose generosity helped make this evening possible. Thank you to our Diamond Sponsors, **Valencia Trucking School, IEHP, and JR Grease Trap, Inc.**; our Platinum Sponsors, **Molina Healthcare, Mint Health Insurance Agency, Kiss and Glow Esthetics, and Legacy Excavating, Inc.**; and our Gold Sponsor, **Our Savior's Lutheran Church**. Thank you also to our Silver Sponsors, **Michelle Deras, HCN Bank, and The Grease Company**, and our Bronze Sponsors, **Ross, and Dana Tesser, ArkCha' Giving Hope, Marsha Rudak, SGP Rotary, Michael Walsh, Mary Samson, and Johnny Russo's Italian Restaurant**. Each of you chose to stand with Faith in Action and the neighbors we serve. That means so much.

We are thankful, too, for the gifts and support shared by The Fourteen “K” Jeweler, Starbucks, Costco, Home Depot, Casino Morongo, Kiss and Glow Esthetics, Smart & Final, TRAVISMATHEW, and Sonagi Electronics. To every person who donated an item, prepared a basket, helped behind the scenes, or offered encouragement along the way: you helped shape this evening.

In the Starfish Story, one person’s compassion inspires others to join her. That is what we saw at our fundraiser. People who had volunteered with FIA for years worked beside people who had joined us for the very first time. One person helped, then another, until the room was full of people making a difference together.

Thank you for being part of our Starfish story. We feel honored to be part of this community and grateful to every one of you.

With love and gratitude,

Ann Blair and Betty Brothers
Starfish Fundraiser Co-Chairs