

Exceptional Children's Foundation Raises \$1.5M at 80th Gala as California's Only Lifespan Disability Organization

Jay Leno headlines milestone Skirball Cultural Center gala honoring Jenni Kayne and Richard Ehrlich for three generations of commitment to Los Angeles families

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Exceptional Children's Foundation (ECF) celebrated its 80th Anniversary Gala on Wednesday, June 17, 2026, at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles, raising \$1,500,000 to sustain lifespan services for nearly 4,000 children, adults, and families across Los Angeles County. The milestone evening was headlined by legendary comedian and television host Jay Leno and marked eight decades of service by the only organization in California delivering services across every stage of life for people with developmental disabilities — from birth through adulthood.

Emmy Award-winning journalist Kristine Lazar served as emcee, guiding an evening that included dinner, live and silent auctions, and program highlights reflecting ECF's eight decades of community impact. Jenni Kayne, founder of the California lifestyle brand bearing her name, and Richard Ehrlich, a leading figure in luxury real estate, were honored for carrying forward three generations of family commitment to children and adults with special needs and their longstanding support of ECF's Kayne Eras School.

The Kayne family's connection to ECF spans three generations. Jenni Kayne's parents, Ric and Suzanne Kayne, along with Fred and Lenore Kayne and her grandfather Jerry Kayne, were instrumental in launching the Kayne Eras School, which later merged with ECF to expand and



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strengthen educational resources and support services for the community. Jenni and Richard's recognition at the 80th Anniversary Gala marks the continuation of a family story that has quietly shaped one of Los Angeles' most vital educational institutions for decades.

"Tonight's generosity is a reflection of what this community understands — that the work ECF does is not optional for the families who depend on it. We are profoundly grateful, and we are more committed than ever to making certain these programs endure for the next generation and beyond."
— Veronica Arteaga, President & CEO, Exceptional Children's Foundation



Exceptional Children's Foundation celebrated their 80th Anniversary Gala at the Skirball Cultural Center raising \$1,500,000 along with the Kayne family (L-R: Tanner Ehrlich, Suzanne Kayne, Jenni Kayne, Maggie Kayne, Saree Kayne, Richard Ehrlich, Ric Kayne)

"The 80th Anniversary Gala reminds us why we began this work with Exceptional Children's Foundation in the first place. Carrying this legacy of philanthropy is something we hold close — and something we hope to pass on. We believe every child and adult deserves to be seen and

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Jenni Kayne and Richard Ehrlich, Honorees

supported for exactly who they are, regardless of how they learn, how they move through the world, or what the system says they can achieve. That hasn't changed, and neither has our gratitude for everyone who makes this work possible.”

— Jenni Kayne and Richard Ehrlich, Honorees

“I've covered a lot of Los Angeles — its struggles, its generosity, its contradictions. What ECF does, quietly and without fanfare, for children and adults who have no other

option, is one of the most important stories this city has to tell.”

— Kristine Lazar, Emcee and Emmy Award-winning journalist, CBS Los Angeles

Founded in 1946 by a group of Los Angeles parents who built the city's first daycare and training program for children with developmental disabilities — because no government program existed to do so — ECF has grown into one of Southern California's most comprehensive nonprofit providers of lifespan disability services. According to the World Health Organization, 1 in 6 people worldwide lives with significant disability. Against that global backdrop, ECF's 80-year record represents a Los Angeles-born model for what sustained disability inclusion can look like

across education, employment, independence, creativity, housing, and community life.

Funds raised through the 80th Anniversary Gala will directly sustain ECF's full spectrum of programs — from early intervention services for young children through Kayne Eras School, therapeutic and mental health services, adult employment and workforce development, independent living support, and residential services. ECF also operates four Art Centers across Los Angeles County, where artists with developmental disabilities receive professional fine arts training, mentorship, and the opportunity to exhibit and sell their work. For nearly 4,000 Angelenos, these are not supplemental programs. They are the difference between independence and institutional care.

For more information or to support ECF's ongoing programs, visit [ECF.net](https://www.ecf.net).

ABOUT EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

Founded in 1946, Exceptional Children's Foundation (ECF) is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit and the only organization of its kind in California providing a full spectrum of services for children and adults with developmental disabilities and other special needs, from birth through adulthood. Since its inception, ECF has impacted more than a quarter of a million individuals and families through programs and services that empower people of all abilities to achieve greater independence, confidence, and inclusion. Learn more at [ECF.net](https://www.ecf.net).

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Exceptional Children's Foundation celebrated their 80th Anniversary Gala with Jay Leno at the Skirball Cultural Center raising \$1,500,000 (L-R: Jay Leno and Veronica Arteaga, CEO and President of ECF)



Exceptional Children's Foundation celebrated their 80th Anniversary Gala with CBS LA consumer reporter, Kristine Lazar as their host at the Skirball Cultural Center raising \$1,500,000



ECF Board Members at the 80th Gala(L-R: Les Abell, Aaron Neubert, Gene Siciliano, Azita Fatheree, Lara Kislinger, Mary Kayne, Veronica Arteaga, Shelley I. Smith, Kim Lewis, Monty Zimmerman, Anil Ranavat, Michael Anderson, Royal Kennedy-Rogers, Steve Beltran, Fred Alavi)

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