



LABioMed

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For Immediate Release

LA BioMed's Discovery Gala is a Big Success

County Supervisor Don Knabe and Investigator Emil D. Kakkis, MD, PhD, Honored

LOS ANGELES (Nov. 12, 2009) – The 2009 Discovery Gala was a big success, attracting a near sell-out crowd to honor Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe and Emil D. Kakkis, MD, PhD, founder and president of Kakkis EveryLife Foundation, as its “Spirit of Excellence” award winners Nov. 6 at the Terranea Resort in Rancho Palos Verdes.

The Discovery Gala is an annual event to support Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center ([LA BioMed](#)). At this year's gala, Dr. Kakkis was introduced by Adam Jonas, MD, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics and a member of the LA BioMed Board of Directors.

He also was introduced by Tami Slawson, the mother of two grown children who have benefitted from Aldurazyme[®], the breakthrough treatment Dr. Kakkis and a team of scientists first developed at LA BioMed for a life-threatening inherited disorder known as MPS I or Hurler-Scheie disease.

“When my son was diagnosed in 2001, there were no medicines for him,” said Mrs. Slawson, the La Verne mother of two children living with the disorder. “Jacob was in so much pain – between body aches and headaches – that he struggled to make it to the next day.”

Aldurazyme[®] provides a manufactured form of the enzyme MPS I patients are missing as a result of their disorder. Mrs. Slawson said she feared her children might not live long enough to see Aldurazyme[®] approved for widespread use. But both children survived, and 22-year-old Jacob and his 18-year-old sister, Samantha, are benefitting from the medication today.

“My children have thrived,” Mrs. Slawson said. “We appreciate Dr. Kakkis and all who work for life-saving cures. We thank you. Your research has truly made a difference.”

Steven A. Nissen, Esq., a member of the LA BioMed Board of Directors and chair of its Development Committee, introduced Supervisor Knabe as the recipient of the Spirit of Excellence Award for Public Service. Nissen praised Supervisor Knabe's service to the county and his past support for LA BioMed.

Supervisor Knabe was first elected to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in November of 1996 and was overwhelmingly re-elected in 2000, 2004 and 2008. Supervisor Knabe represents the Fourth District, which is a uniquely diverse area that is home to more than 2 million residents. He has been a tremendous advocate for LA BioMed and Harbor-UCLA Medical Center.

Nearly 500 guests attended the gala where they dined on fine cuisine, enjoyed dancing to the lively sounds of the John Brown Band and participated in a live and a silent auction that featured fine wines, dining opportunities, a Caribbean sailing adventure and more. The event also featured Discovery Showcases, which provided a sampling of the innovative research underway at the Institute.

“All of us at LA BioMed are grateful to the Discovery Gala’s co-chairs, Jennifer Laity and Scott Donnelly, for making this one of the most successful events ever in support of the Institute,” said LA BioMed President and CEO David I. Meyer, PhD. “It was a memorable evening, and I wish to personally thank LA BioMed’s Institutional Advancement staff for its hard work and dedication in producing the 2009 Discovery Gala.”

About LA BioMed

Founded in 1952, LA BioMed at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center is one of the country’s largest nonprofit independent biomedical research institutes. It conducts biomedical research, trains young scientists and provides community services, including childhood immunization and nutrition assistance. The institute’s researchers conduct studies in such areas as cardiovascular disease, emerging infections, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, dermatology, reproductive health, vaccine development, respiratory disorders, inherited illnesses and neonatology. LA BioMed is academically affiliated with the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. For more information, please visit our website at www.LABioMed.org

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