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LIFE AND ARTS

On the Town: Bomb threat cancels fundraiser for children's hospital, but the party goes on



Having a blast at Union Station, in spite of a bomb scare, were La Providencia Guild members, from left, Ramona Higgins, Sue Meckley and Jackie Latronica. (David Laurell/Burbank Leader)

By DAVID LAURELL

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Over the past 72 years, the Burbank-based La Providencia Guild of Children's Hospital Los Hospital has staged uncountable galas to raise funds for the renowned pediatric facility.

Unlike all of those successful events, the annual end-of-year holiday season gala held this past Saturday could have easily been seen as being the first that turned out to be a "bomb."

Planned as a 1920s-themed event, the guild's "Gotta Be Gatsby" fundraiser was canceled due to a bomb scare as more than 200 members and supporters, decked out in glittering garb of the roaring 1920s era, gathered at Union Station in downtown Los Angeles.

"These things happen in today's world," said the event's chairwoman **Glenda Jones** as she stood outside the locked-down venue.

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"But we're refusing to let the day be a bomb. The musicians are here, we're all here, and so we'll just dance right outside Union Station, kind of like they did on the Titanic. They may have locked the ballroom down, but they won't keep us down, and the band will play on."

Not only did guild members join in with professional dancers from the Fifth Avenue Entertainment Co. to the music of the Gatsby Rascals outside the venue, they then all dispersed to different restaurants for lunch, from the nearby legendary Philippe's to the Smoke House back in Burbank, all decked-out in their Gatsby-inspired best.

The following day, Jones said the bomb scare that canceled the event was never a real threat but rather a situation that arose while the Los Angeles Police Department was conducting an emergency-response drill.

"While they were doing a routine drill, which would not have interrupted our event, they found two suspicious items very close to the venue and decided to lock down the facility just to be safe," she said.



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Along with **Sue Meckley**, the guild's president, the women who worked on last week's canceled event included Jones and her committee made up of **Rebecca Jones, Jackie Latronica, Sue Ann Gordon, Diana Irell, Kris Veatch, Cynde Bost, Janice Shafer, Judy Pierce, Juana Ballenger, Janice Krattiger, Shanna Warren, Jill Kessler and Aracely Jimenez**, who was producing the day's fashion show.

According to Jones, the guild will soon be making an announcement about a makeup event that will offer the 34 raffle baskets and a diamond necklace from Henderson Jewelers that were supposed to be a part of the event this past Saturday.

Chartered in 1947, the La Providencia Guild of Children's Hospital Los Angeles is a part of the 37-member, all-volunteer force of 3,000 men and women who serve as associates and affiliates committed to raising funds for capital-improvement projects, equipment and the vital services offered by the hospital.

The guild raises funds through numerous events it holds on an annual basis, and the daily offerings of gifts, furniture, household goods, clothing and other items it makes available at its thrift shop located at 3301 Burbank Blvd., which is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

For more information about the guild's work, its thrift shop, upcoming fundraising events or to become a member, visit laprovidenciaguild.org.

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