

Coronado Couple Selected To Chair Major Fundraiser

Coronado residents Ellen and David Dolgen like to “go big or go home.” When Ellen, founder of Menopause Mondays at EllenDolgen.com and a nationally recognized advocate for women’s health, was invited to speak at Naval Base San Diego, she decided to donate copies of her book on menopause “Shmirshky: the pursuit of hormone happiness” to military servicemen and women and their spouses, she delivered and autographed several thousand. When David saw that his children had interest in writing and the performing arts, he became a founding board member of a performing arts high school, which eventually lead him to become Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the La Jolla Playhouse. Everything they do in the community, they do 1000%.

So it’s no wonder that when the Dolgens were selected to co-chair Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest’s 51st Anniversary Dinner on May 8, they suggested changing the traditional format and going for something bold, engaging and

innovative.

The chairs are taking a new approach, one that is high-tech and at the same time brings people closer to the mission. “This year’s theme is ‘The Main Event.’ We are asking folks to join the fight to help preserve women’s rights and access to good health care,” Ellen says. “We’re encouraging guests to join the fight and be a champion.”

David is quick to add, “We’re not talking about fist fights or shouting matches. We’re talking about empowering women and men, and celebrating the good work Planned Parenthood does in our community.”

Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest is the second largest affiliate in the nation, providing more than 300,000 patient visits each year. Ninety-five percent of its services are preventive care, like cervical cancer screening, breast exams, testicular cancer screenings, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and contraception. “No one does more to prevent unwanted pregnan-

cies than Planned Parenthood,” Ellen says. Nationally Planned Parenthood prevents 486,000 unintended pregnancies each year through its no-to-low-cost contraception. Additionally, the agency is a trusted source of health care for military personnel because of its reputation for highly confidential services in reproductive health.

“Planned Parenthood didn’t pick this fight, but we must defend reproductive rights and provide education and information,” David says. “We must also move beyond defending rights and introduce proactive legislation that expands access to care.” The couple says California is a national leader with State Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins introducing measures that increase access to preventive care like the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, which reduces a woman’s risk of cervical cancer. “But it would be very naïve to think that we’re safe in California,” Ellen says. “Those who oppose access to women’s health care are working vigilantly to roll back the clock on access to birth control and sex education.”

Though the Dolgens are driven to support Planned Parenthood by a commitment to social justice, they say fiscal conservatives can also embrace the mission of the organization. “For every dollar invested in contraception, \$5.83 public dollars are saved in future welfare and social service costs,” says Ellen. Her husband laughs and adds, “I wish we could find returns like that.”

The Dolgens balance their



passion for philanthropy with business savvy. Both serve on numerous boards of nonprofit organizations and managing multiple businesses, including Dolgen Ventures. “We call this ‘doing well by doing good,’” David says. Ellen adds that the couple is inspired by the Nelson Mandela quote, “Where you stand determines where you sit.” The Coronado power couple seems undaunted by the enormous task of chairing Planned Parenthood’s main fundraiser of the year, which is expected to reach an attendance of 1,800 and raise more than \$1 million. “We’re excited and on track to have a wonderful event,” Ellen says. “Guests will leave engaged and excited. The evening will be a knockout.”

The Main Event:

Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest 51st Anniversary Dinner on Thursday, May 8 at 5:30 p.m. at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront, www.planned.org/dinner.