



Rocky Mountain News (CO)  
October 12, 2004 Lifestyle Section  
**SOY sails along for 10 years**



**Dahlia  
Weinstein**

It was all hands on deck for more than 550 guests who set sail on the ship USS Save Our Youth to celebrate the organization's 10 years of service to Colorado's at-risk young people.

SOY steered toward continued success at its recent Cruisin' to New Horizons fund-raising dinner at the Adam's Mark Hotel.

Honorary chairwoman Lt. Gov. Jane Norton introduced the evening's video presentation, *Save Our Youth Milestones*, which covered the 10-year span of SOY's success.

SOY was founded in 1994, following what was called the Summer of Violence in 1993, after which Denver's inner-city churches grew more concerned about the increase in gang activity and violence in their communities.

The organization's one-on-one mentoring program began in 1995, offering adult-to-child mentor relationships that promote spiritual, educational and emotional development.

"Through mentoring, everyone wins," said SOY Executive Director Luis Villarreal, who attended with his wife, Nancy, a member of the ship's steering committee. "The Old Testament proverb teaches 'As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.' Mentoring is actually an ancient biblical model for growing kids through unconditional love, care and direction," he said.

Villarreal oversees mentor recruiting and training and program development, and he builds relationships with community agencies, churches and benefactors who volunteer their time and offer generous financial contributions to SOY.

Among the many SOY supporters were retired board president and former board member of the JP Edwards Foundation Idella Kercher, who co-chaired the cruise with Colleen Lorenz; sponsors such as board member Andy Graham and his wife, Connie; board member Alicia Ibarra and her husband, Tony; Julie and Bill White; and Captain-level sponsors Carole and Ed McVaney, who donated to SOY at the \$10,000 level along with Coors Brewing Co., FirstBank of Colorado, the Gooding Family Foundation and Mellon.

Carole McVaney is a member of the SOY board along with board vice president Brian Watson, who attended with his wife, Patricia; Scott Flores, and his wife, Marlys; Steve Barnett, and his wife, Ginny; Walter Berger, and his wife, Gloria; Lisa Fellows, and her husband, John; Leslie Ferguson, and her husband, Jack; and former board president Jim Winston, and his wife, Judy, to name just a few.

Additional charitable cruisers in the crowd included Joanie and Dick Saunders, whose Saunders Construction Co. was a \$5,000 First Mate sponsor; former Sen. Hank Brown and his wife, Nan; Jim Moore and Eledra Roulier; Lisa and Bruce Alexander; Cindy and Mel Medema; Loretta and Jack Rule; and Barbara and Dennis Baldwin.

For more information about Save Our Youth, call 303- 455-1126.