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SAN CLEMENTE SUN POST NEWS



Former NFL quarterback Jim Everett of San Clemente is helping the fight against autism when he's not coaching flag football at Mission Parish School in San Juan Capistrano. > MORE: PALMSANOCREGISTER.COM

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Ex-QB joins other San Clementeans in tackling autism

During his 12 years in the National Football League, Jim Everett played against top quarterbacks who had autistic children – Dan Marino and Doug Flutie among them.

Everett's wife, Rachel, has a godson who is autistic. Their close friends Pat and Stephanie McIlvaine have an autistic son, Dylan.

Both families live in San Clemente and have watched Dylan, who will turn 11 next month, and the Everetts' daughter, Alexandra, 11, grow up together. Alexandra is not autistic.

"We've seen the challenges that Pat and Stephanie have had to make," Jim Everett said. "We progressed through the years where there's normal development, and then there's a fork in the road. It's a very close personal experience."

Everett is hosting this year's fundraiser, "Ante Up for Autism," for Costa Mesa-based organization Talk About Curing Autism, set for Nov. 13 at the St. Regis Monarch Beach Resort & Spa in Dana Point.

"TACA is doing fabulous work," said Everett, who



Former NFL quarterback Jim Everett, shown coaching flag football at Mission Parish School in San Juan Capistrano, will host an autism fundraiser Nov. 13 at the St. Regis resort in Dana Point.

ranks 16th in all-time NFL passing yards. "They're trying to (find) a cure for autism."

Everett, 47, said he heard during his years with the Los Angeles Rams, New Orleans Saints and San Diego Chargers about quarterbacks who had autistic kids.

"At the time, being young, maybe I didn't realize the challenges that Dan (Marino) faced, not only on the field but off the field," Everett said. "Now when you are around it, like when we are with Pat and Stephanie, you appreciate

it. You can appreciate their need to find assistance in the areas of doctors, networking, schools, other families. It takes two people to have a child. It takes a community to raise them."

TACA's Nov. 13 event will feature guest celebrities, tournament poker and live and silent auctions. Stephanie McIlvaine is event coordinator. Pat McIlvaine, vice president of sunglasses maker Oakley, is on the TACA board. Oakley is an event sponsor and produces a sunglasses model from

which \$20 of every sale goes to TACA, Stephanie McIlvain said.

“So many families need help,” she said. “Pat and I are so blessed to have found TACA. It’s so close to our hearts. Ninety-eight percent of everything they fundraise goes back into families to help families who can’t afford doctors, can’t afford treatment ... they don’t charge for anything. You call them up and they say, ‘How can we help you?’ We wanted to get involved. We just had to give back.”

The McIlvains have done the fundraiser all four years, with support from Jim and Rachel Everett. “He just jumped right in,” McIlvain said.

“It’s an honor to host it,” Everett said, adding that it figures to be fun. “We’re playing Texas Hold ‘Em with a handful of professionals. It’s kind of neat if you’re a fan of Texas Hold ‘Em to get to not only rub elbows with some of the best players but to be able to play with them.”

Everett’s main sport today is golf. He also coaches flag football for Mission Parish School in San Juan Capistrano. “I don’t even have a son playing on it,” he said. “I just love coaching it.”

TACA assists more than 18,500 families across America touched by autism while seeking a cure and promoting awareness, “opening the windows so the breeze of normalcy can flow through,” as Everett put it.

“We have families who are members of TACA who have like three children who are on the (autism) spectrum,” McIlvain said. “All of a sudden the husband decides he doesn’t want to deal with it and leaves. TACA is a lifeline.”

For tickets or information about the fundraiser and its celebrity guests, visit www.anteupforautism.org, e-mail stephanie.mcilvain@tacanow.org or call 949-640-4401. –Fred Swegles