

# Fit 4 The Cause: Leading A Health Revolution

by Lauren Rytterager-Nickel

**F**it 4 The Cause (F4TC) in Thousand Oaks, was established in 2014 by PR guru Cindy Rakowitz who recognized that Conejo Valley is saturated with fitness instructors along with a motivated, diverse, and fitness oriented community that could help individuals and groups with health related challenges. Cindy gathered a community of passionate fitness enthusiasts, service professionals and formed the 501(c)(3) organization to bring alive her dream of creating an active lifestyle accessible to anyone.

F4TC focuses on providing fitness training for special populations who cannot afford or attend traditional gyms under normal circumstances and makes an incredible impact bringing Zumba®, Strength-Training, Tai-Chi, Yoga, Kickboxing and other free community classes and programs into the lives of people who previously had little or no physical activity.

The organization maintains a strong relationship with Many Mansions, providing health education to its low income housing residents and also provides group exercise classes for the Break-Through Student Assistance program offered by the Conejo Valley Unified School District.



**Cindy Rakowitz, Founder of Fit 4 The Cause,  
providing personal training for qualified individuals.**

In addition to providing positive, constructive and affordable spaces for beneficiaries to explore exercise, F4TC uniquely produces fee-based fitness events to raise much-needed funds for health-related organizations such as Life After Brain Injury, Cancer Support Community, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Make-A-Wish Tri-Counties and UCLA Health for Geriatric Medicine.

The group raises funds through flash mob feel events, popping up at surprise venues providing heart thumping live DJs with party lights and fast paced movement. F4TC raised nearly \$5,000 in one hour for the local chapter of Cancer Support Community thanks to a corporate match from host WellPoint Anthem Blue Cross and raised nearly \$1,000 for a local Thousand Oaks man, Rick Maina, who suffered complications from Type II Diabetes. Eighteen months after almost losing his foot, Rick was able to participate with the F4TC team at the World Famous Mud Run.

In September, 2015, the organization held their first Miracle of Movement Gala at the Sheraton Agoura Hills Hotel. The evening featured a silent auction, cocktail reception, special performances and honored several inspirational community residents who have overcome their own obstacles with a portion of the proceeds directly benefiting Ballet For All Kids.



**Fit 4 The Cause's Volunteers at the first Miracle of Movement Gala  
held in September 2015 at the Sheraton Agoura Hills Hotel.**

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Due to the success of the first Miracle of Movement Gala, F4TC's credentialed Board of Directors, staff and volunteers are planning to host their next gala on January 21, 2017, at the North Ranch Country Club.

Similar to last year's event, the gala will spend the evening honoring individuals in the local community. One of these honorees has an especially powerful story and connection with F4TC. Newbury Park resident, Lesli Moore Dahlke, is an author, photographer and survivor. In 1970, Lesli volunteered for the USO Handshaking Christmas Tour in war-torn Vietnam and suffered exposure to dioxin, highly toxic chemicals and herbicides that were being used to defoliate the dense jungles of Vietnam. Like many military personnel returning from Vietnam, Lesli has struggles with the lasting effects of war and lives daily with two equally rare cancers derived from her exposure: a Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and leukemia. Despite facing unthinkable barriers and challenges, Lesli has written a book about her story, "The Best is Yet to Come", and is seeing an improvement in her vitals and overall well-being from participating in consistent training programs with F4TC.

F4TC is also excited to be organizing the Summer Splash Swim Relay at the Miller Family YMCA on August 20 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The relay features eight teams of five participants racing in a 5,000 yard swim with the end goal of raising \$30,000 through donations and swimmer sponsorships. You can also expect to see the F4TC team return to World Famous Mud Run where in 2015 they raised over \$7,200 for U.S. Marines.



For more information on Fit 4 The Cause,  
visit [www.fit4thecause.org](http://www.fit4thecause.org) or call (818) 783-3307.