

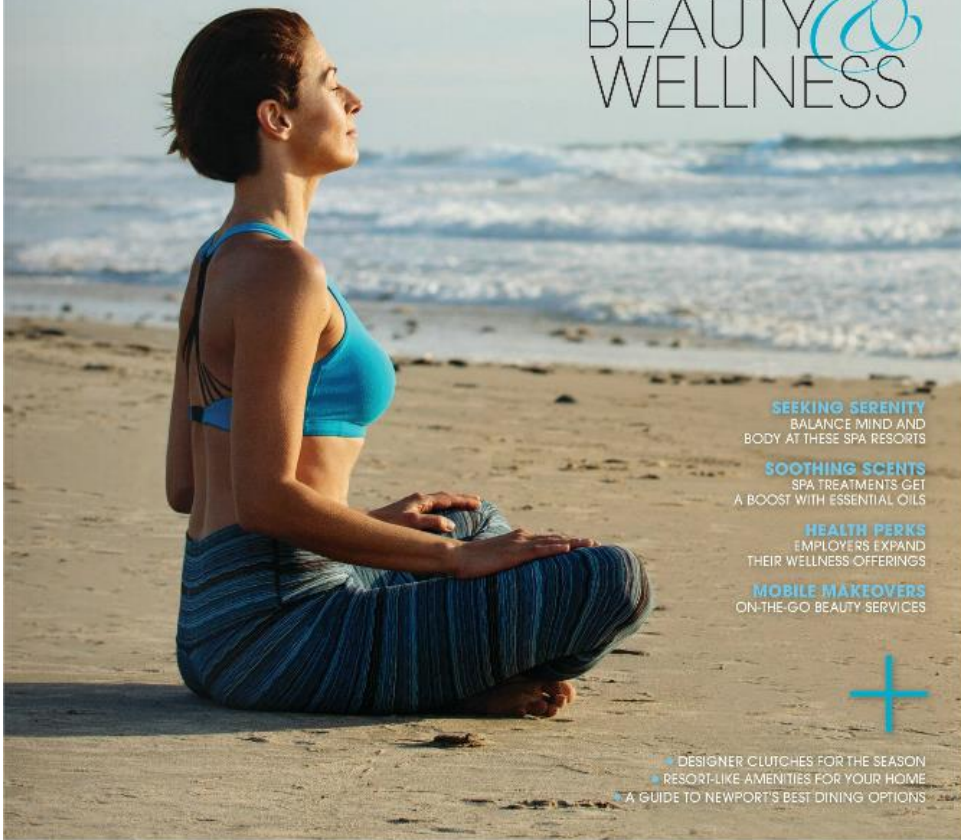
A GIVING SPIRIT: NONPROFITS ABOUND IN THIS CHARITABLE COMMUNITY

NEWPORT BEACH

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Magazine

BEAUTY & WELLNESS



SEEKING SERENITY
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We Are More held a fundraising event at Disneyland.

EMPOWERING RIDES

On Nov. 9, in partnership with Global Genes, Shira Strongin of Newport Beach, Travis Flores, Madison McLaughlin, Nicole Boice and Perla Portillo helped to raise funds for We Are More (WAM) by riding the Disneyland carousel 50 times in a row at the Festival of Children Foundation's Carousel of Possible Dreams event. WAM is a coalition of young adults, ages 13 to 25, working to raise awareness and empower those living with chronic illnesses and disabilities. Founded and chaired by 17-year-old Strongin, who is living with several rare conditions, WAM was created after the Global Genes' 2015 Rare Patient Advocacy Summit during a meeting in which young advocates came together to discuss the challenges of living with a rare disease and brainstorm new ways to help those afflicted to feel empowered. Nearly \$10,000 was raised at the Carousel of Possible Dreams event, which Strongin notes as being an ideal match for the organization's mission.

"The whole concept of 'possible dreams' ties in very well with our mission," Strongin says. "Personally, I have never let my rare diseases stop me from doing anything and hope that this event was another way to inspire others to do the same." The money raised from the event will go toward funding support groups for young people living with rare illnesses. "WAM wants to bring together groups of able-bodied/healthy and disabled/ill young adults to have discussions about ableism and media portrayal," Strongin says. "We feel that change cannot happen without the support of outside communities." (globalgenes.org) —B.V.

COURTESY OF GLOBAL GENES

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Festival of Children Foundation