

# Charity Spotlight

## 'Keep the Promise' Wine Tasting Benefit

Seven is a lucky number--at least that's what Orange County's innovative art-based youth development organization, The Wooden Floor, is hoping.

Their seventh annual "Keep the Promise" Wine Tasting Benefit will be held in Newport Beach on Thursday, September 26. It's an opportunity for wine lovers to taste rare wines from all over the world and at the same time support a wonderful organization.

This year, more than 300 people are expected to attend the event and sample 14 wines rated 94 points and above by Wine Advocate and Wine Spectator from Argentina, Australia, Chile, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain.

The wines have been generously donated by Newport Beach residents Janice and John Markley, who started the annual event seven years ago as a way to bring wine aficionados and community supporters together to directly support the organization and its

year-round dance, academic and family service programs offered at no cost to 375 low-income youth annually.

The blending of wine and the arts seems like a perfect match. In less than a decade, Markley has helped The Wooden Floor take the once low-key event that brought in \$35,000 its first year to one that has managed to collectively raise over \$600,000 for the organization (last year's event alone netted \$200,000).

"In the beginning, I picked out my favorite wines that I like to drink. I didn't look too hard at the ratings or anything else," recalled Markley. "But as we moved along, I started keeping track of the points, and then finally I tried to do everything over 90 points. Most of the time I can find the 95 point wines."

Markley said he works with Master Sommelier Steven Poe of Big Canyon Country Club, who will be at the event to guide patrons through the wines.

"We will start out with blind tastings



Sommelier Steven Poe educates attendees at the wine tasting benefit

PHOTOS BY NICK MOON

then take the paper off," explained Markley. "When you have the paper on the bottle, there's no label to get you excited, it's just pure taste. No biases."

If Markley's biased at all, it's about helping The Wooden Floor, which has served 75,000 low-income youth since

its inception 30 years ago.

Tickets to the event are \$350 per person and includes wine, appetizers, silent auctions, drawings, and more.

Visit [TheWoodenFloor.org](http://TheWoodenFloor.org) or call 714-541-8314. But do it soon--the event sells out every year.

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who: **JONATHAN KIRSCH**  
Biblical scholar, bestselling author and *Los Angeles Times* columnist will speak about his latest book, *The Short, Strange Life of Herschel Grynszpan*.

when: **Thursday, September 19 @ 7:00pm**  
Doors open at 6:30pm  
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where: Newport Beach Central Library  
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