



Immediate Release
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**New Beginnings Counseling Center Honors
2016 Community Champions, Gary and Mary Becker**

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – New Beginnings Counseling Center will honor Gary and Mary Becker with the 2016 Community Champions award at their annual Changing Lives Gala at on Thursday, September 29, 2016 at the El Encanto Hotel in Santa Barbara, California.

New Beginnings' Executive Director Kristine Schwarz said, "Gary invested in our Safe Parking Program several years ago when the program's funding was uncertain, working with us to build awareness and improve external communications through online and public relations media; and Mary has helped to build community with our female Safe Parkers through her outreach with the Catholic Church of the Beatitudes. They have both been incredibly supportive and invaluable to the agency in so many ways."

Gary Becker, a graduate of Indiana University Law School, practiced law for over 40 years and founded the Becker Law Office in 1984, where he served as president and managing partner until his retirement. Over the years, Gary developed an interest in spirituality and served on the boards of JustFaith, Fonkoze, and Stillpoint. Mary Becker received a B.A. from Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana and a B.S. from Brescia College in Owensboro, Kentucky. Mary worked as a financial planner and investment advisor for 15 years in affiliation with First Affirmative Financial Network, where her focus was the development and implementation of socially responsible investment portfolios for individuals and organizations. She produced a documentary film entitled, *Original Child Bomb*, and is a spiritual director and practitioner of contemplative dialogue.

Both Gary and Mary joined the Immaculate Heart Community and became strong supporters of La Casa de Maria Retreat and Conference Center. As well, the couple has been active in projects through Social Venture Partners of Santa Barbara, where Gary served as the lead partner of the Good Cookie Project and Mary served as past president, and is involved with SVP's homelessness and education affinity groups. Their affiliation with SVP is how they became aware of New Beginnings.

Tickets for the event can be purchased for \$150 by calling (805) 963-7777 x112 or by going online to www.sbnbcc.org/events/. Sponsorship opportunities are available and more information can be obtained by contacting Gabriella Forrester at (805) 963-7777 x112.

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New Beginnings Counseling Center provides quality, affordable counseling, shelter, case management and education that strengthens our community and provides our clients with the ability to lead healthy and productive lives. New Beginnings Counseling Center, located at 324 East Carrillo Street, Suite C, Santa Barbara, CA 93101, (805) 963-7777, is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. For more information or to make a donation, visit www.sbnbcc.org.