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Women Of Courage Honoree

Finding stability in society

Woman who unknowingly had brain injury from childbirth is honored for her recovery, courage.

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Some people take horrible situations and turn inward, get angry and curse the world. Others try to bring something good out of the bad.

Huntington Beach resident Sue Rueb falls in the latter category.

Rueb, 60, was recognized Oct. 21 as Surf City's Women of Courage honoree by Farmers & Merchants Bank at its second annual recognition breakfast.

The bank selected one woman from each of its 12 branches in Orange County for their courage, tenacity and innovation in business and the community.

There is not a shortage of courageous women in Huntington Beach, but Rueb was the first person who came to mind for Marty Hart-

sock, the manager of the Huntington Beach branch of Farmers & Merchants.

Hartsock has known Rueb, a client, for several years now and has seen her nonprofit Brain Rehabilitation and Injury Network, or Brain, come together.

Brain was created to help raise awareness for brain injuries, advocate for families with brain injuries and advance research and recovery methods.

"I saw what she had done, and I was just so impressed with that," Hartsock said.

Brain injuries are personal for Rueb, who dealt with brain injury in her family for more than 30 years without knowing it.

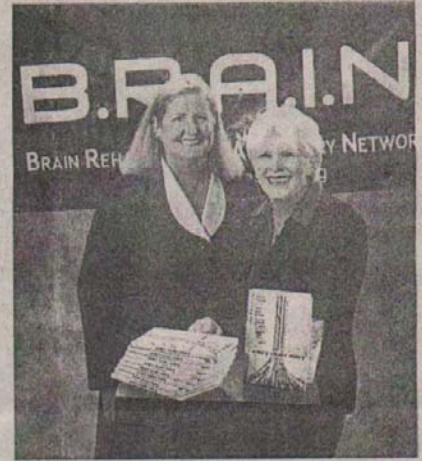
Rueb's first child, Kristin Rueb, always had a hard time in school and never really fit in. When she moved out, it only became worse.

She fell into the wrong crowd, got involved in drugs, alcohol and prostitution and came to the brink of death, Sue Rueb said.

"Society ate her up," she said.

It wasn't until 2006 that her daughter's in-

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HONOREE: Huntington Beach resident Sue Rueb (right) and Marty Hartsock.

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ability to budget her time, plan for the future or understand actions and consequences was given a name — schizophrenia — but that still wasn't the answer.

A SPECT scan, a brain scan that shows brain functionality, showed Kristin Rueb had sustained injury to her frontal lobe from using forceps at birth. The injury was mild enough that she slipped through the cracks for 31 years, Sue Rueb said.

"I was called ahead to help others and help Kristin," she said. "Kristin is the catalyst."

Kristin Rueb was incorrectly diagnosed her whole life, and Sue Rueb said she isn't the only one.

"Americans know more about erectile dysfunction than they do about brain injury, and many also don't know that brain injuries are different than mental illnesses, Sue Rueb said.

"The lack of awareness of what we're dealing with is huge," she said.

Sue Rueb is trying to change all that with Brain, and she also wants to make it easier for those injured to

Pet Of The Week



Carly is a 2-year-old white poodle Maltese mix. She is an absolute princess. She loves to cuddle and give little soft kisses. Carly walks with a little prance on the leash and she is housebroken. Carly has had a hard time adapting to shelter life, as she is not an outdoor dog and doesn't like all the cold and noise. She would rather just cuddle up on a warm

couch in a quiet home. Please consider Carly for your pet. She is available at the Orange County Humane Society, 21632 Newland St., Huntington Beach. For more information, call (714) 536-8480 or visit www.OCHumaneSociety.com.

We are still in need of wet cat food for our cats and more than 20 kittens. Please donate; receipts will be provided.

get help by creating a clinic in Orange County.

The clinic would be a kind of one-stop shop for those with brain injury and their families to diagnose

injuries and treat them. It would be a meeting place with seminars and classes.

"They are real people," she said. "They need a place to go."