

CELEBRATION OF BIRTHS

By Michele Himmelberg
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IRVINE - A miniature pumpkin, twin ballerinas, Tigger and Winnie the Pooh were among a cast of characters Sunday celebrating a variety of Reproductive Technologies. - And of course, Halloween.

Two hundred families attended a reunion at Dr. Werlin's Center, the fifth annual such event held by the doctors for the children they helped to create.

Justin Holz, one of the first In Vitro babies born in Orange County, is now 8 years old. He was there to see Dr. Lawrence Werlin, along with his 6-year old siblings: triplets Clarissa, Cameron and Nathan, also In Vitro babies.

"By the time they're grown up, they won't be so special," said their mother, Shari Holz, of Huntington Beach. "But they're a part of medical history, and that's exciting. They know that." Bronzed baby shoes sit in her curio cabinet, alongside the plastic petri dishes where her children were conceived. "I still feel an incredible connection to all these people, and to anyone who has the same desires, the same difficulties I had," said Holz, who tried eight years before conceiving.



Scott Becker, dressed as an astronaut Sunday, was conceived seven years ago this month with the help of the process called GIFT, which stands for Gamete Intrafallopian Transfer. Parents Paul and Virginia Becker also keep in contact with Werlin and his staff.



"We were so worn out after six years of trying, if that (GIFT) surgery hadn't been successful, I'm not sure what we'd have done," Paul Becker said.



"Financially and emotionally it really takes its toll," he said. "I know it really helped Virginia to have a team of people she could trust."

Werlin, minus a costume, and unmistakably recognizable with his bushy gray hair and full mustache, greeted a long line of families throughout the afternoon.

Each reunion came with a hug.