

A Fashionable Benefit With Mr. Blackwell

By ELLEN APPEL

"A Wee Bit of Ireland" was not the usual lunch parade of fashions. At Wednesday's benefit for Florence Crittenton Services of Orange County, the show was by Mr. Blackwell, a fashion designer famous for his annual worst-dressed list.

"If people think they're seeing a fashion show, then I have failed," said Blackwell during the cocktail hour.

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"You must feel you're looking at art. My fashions are an expression of art."

Blackwell's fashions ranged from classic to flamboyant—simple shirtwaists to skirts with flying fringe and feather fans the size of a peacock's tail.

Lunch at the Hotel Meridien in Newport Beach was a delicate monkfish poached in white wine and, ideally suited to the St. Patrick's theme, fresh green kiwi tart.

With 420 people paying \$40 each, the event raised an estimated \$10,000 for Florence Crittenton Services, a residential care, education and rehabilitation program for troubled teen-age girls. Executive director Agnes Trincherro said that recently the agency also began caring for "neglected and abused children under 4 years of age.

Board member Betty Lou La-moureaux, presiding judge of the Orange County Juvenile Court, said existing facilities cannot fill the county's need. "We need more homes for children—babies, toddlers and teen-agers. In a population of 2 million, there are only 650 foster homes for all children. We've been overcrowded with toddlers for a long time, but now we have more need [for homes] for teen-agers—I don't know if it's more abuse at home, or more runaways, or girls running away because of abuse."

John Rau, president of the board, discussed plans for expansion to provide services to 200 to 250 teen-age girls plus infants. He said that Crittenton's success rate is well worth the cost.



DON TORMEY

Greeting fashion designer Mr. Blackwell at the Hotel Meridien in Newport Beach are Lindsey Pulver, left, and Marolyn Pierson.

tell Dora that I did a good job," he said.

Some guests left the event with

more than a feeling that they had contributed to a worthy cause.

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"People need to realize how cost effective this program is. It is so much cheaper to save those girls from jail or welfare or prostitution, and on top of that, there is the value of human life," Rau said. "We are turning those girls around all the time."

Rau attributed his zeal to the late Dora Hill, for whom Crittenton's Hill House transition center was named. "I'm not sure where I'll be going [after death], but if I'm going up, I figured I'd better be able to