



Special dance is music to their years

Dads, daughters make memories at annual ball

By Jane Clifford
STAFF WRITER

Dads did the Twist while their daughters twirled, and it was hard to tell who was having more fun under the disco ball and strobe lights in the gym at Toby Wells YMCA last night.

Despite the rain and accident-clogged freeways, more than 160 people danced the night away. The girls arrived in puffy pink taffeta, floor-length burgundy and more, carefully coiffed, some with added glitter, all in dress-up shoes. Dads wore dress uniforms, suits and ties; there was even a tux or two.

It seemed there was no place these men would rather be — even if they had taken grief from their peers.

“Oh, the coaches were giving me a hard time about not being available to them tonight,” said John O’Beirne, assistant principal at St. Augustine High School, enjoying his first Father & Daughter Sweetheart Dance with Jenna, 4. He saw it as a great way to deepen their bond.

That’s exactly why Member Service Director Twyla Hegner organized the annual dances eight years ago at the Clairemont facility for dads and their daughters, ages 2 to 12.

Barry Kenny was back for a third year with daughters Alyssa,



Barry Kenny peeked in on his two girls, Bre’Ann (left) and Alyssa, as their mother, Roxanne Kenny styled their hair before the dinner and the Father & Daughter Sweetheart Dance yesterday at the Toby Wells YMCA. *Nelvin C. Cepeda / Union-Tribune photos*

8, and Bre’Ann 12.

“I don’t how many more father-daughter dances there will be,” he said, “and I want there always to be memories of their dad, that I tried to be with them as much as possible.”

Bre’Ann was equally philosophical.

“I am getting older, and I want to stay in touch with him since I will move away eventually,” she said, sitting on the couch in their Clairemont living room before they left for the dance.

“It’s a sweet time, where he can focus on the other two girls in his life,” said mom Roxanne Kenny. “It’s right around Valentine’s Day, and the girls are his sweethearts, too.”

Which is why they indulge him.

In line for photos after dinner in the gym, Bre’Ann rolled her eyes as her dad tapped his toes and snapped his fingers.

in three directions to the music, which made them all giggle. But the moves were perfect as he twirled them at the same time.

One dad at the dance with four daughters tried giving each solo time, but he, too, gave up, and they formed a circle of five. Other dads raised their daughters’ arms — or their whole bodies in the case of the really little ones — to the lyrics of the Isley Brothers’ “Shout.”

“I think we’re going to have to move to the Mission Valley facility next year; the gym is bigger,” said Hegner, who made all the food for the party, including 200 cupcakes.

“That’s the way it is with him,”



Barry Kenny took turns twirling Bre’Ann and Alyssa at last night’s dance. More than 160 people turned out for the event.

she said, admitting that his habit of dancing whenever he hears music — including at their local sandwich shop — can be embarrassing.

Still, she and Alyssa bravely took to the dance floor as DJ Larry Barajas started Van Morrison’s “Brown Eyed Girl.” Kenny and his girls often moved

Recalling times spent with her own father, Hegner was not happy to turn away 40-plus couples, knowing how much this evening means.

“These years are passing by,” Barry Kenny said, softly. “We’re never going to get these chances again. It’s important to put that effort out now so we can look back on the memories later.”