

Children's Museum of Pittsburgh Hosts Successful Virtual Gala with Help From Stars of Stage, Screen, and Sport

Great Night In Family Gala 2020, presented by Hefren – Tillotson, raises more than \$245,000 and counting for Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and MuseumLab

Pittsburgh, PA (June 30, 2020) -- ***Great Night In Family Gala 2020***, presented by Hefren – Tillotson, took place Sunday, June 14th at 6:30 pm. It is available to view here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8rAO6_M5Z0&t=2473s. This was the first virtual celebration hosted by a Pittsburgh traditional cultural institution during COVID-19.

The show celebrated the best of the Children's Museum's arts and joyful experiences, featuring celebrity appearances and local youth and student performers. We were thrilled to have stars of Hollywood and Broadway, prominent Pittsburgh athletes and coaches, famous children's book artists, and very talented local youth performers all contributing to the program. The show also included messages of love and kindness, with a focus on how children can process all of the recent events impacting our lives.

The Gala's online auction ran for one week after the live show, where you could bid on over 50 amazing items, including entertainment, sports, food and drink, art, and travel packages. This year's premiere auction items included tickets to *Hamilton*, personalized art from children's book author and illustrator Mo Willems, and a custom trip to the Indianapolis 500.

It isn't too late to donate and support a great cause. Thanks to a giving challenge from the Museum's Board Vice President and her family, all gifts to the Museum made through June 30 will be matched, up to \$15,000. Please consider making a gift now. For more information, click here: [Children's Museum Support Page](#).

We want to thank so many of the people who made this incredible event happen.

Thank you to the following:

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- Gala team, including the chairs, committee and host committee
- Partners and suppliers
- Everyone who provide auction items and donations
- Museum staff, volunteers and supporters

The producer of the Gala was Erich Bergen, an actor who co-starred on CBS's *Madam Secretary*, and in the feature film and Grammy- and Tony-winning musical, *Jersey Boys*.

The Gala featured prominent artists and performers with Pittsburgh connections, including:

- Host of the show:
 - **Conner John Gillooly**, a star on Broadway's *School of Rock*, where he plays Dewey Finn, a die-hard rocker posing as a substitute teacher. Connor attended Seneca Valley High School and Point Park University.
- Hollywood and Broadway Stars:
 - **Zachary Quinto**, a Pittsburgh native who graduated from Carnegie Mellon University, and has starred in film and television, including *Heroes* and *Star Trek*
 - **Billy Porter**, a Tony and Emmy-winning Broadway performer who is a Pittsburgh native who attended Alderdice High School, CAPA and Carnegie Mellon University
 - **Patina Miller**, a Carnegie Mellon University graduate who recently starred as press secretary Daisy Miller on CBS' *Madam Secretary*, won a Tony for Best Actress in a Musical for her role in *Pippin*, and has starred as Deloris Van Cartier in the West End and Broadway productions of *Sister Act*
 - **Corey Cott**, a Carnegie Mellon University graduate who made his Broadway debut as rabble-rousing newsboy Jack Kelly in Disney's *Newsies*, starred as romantic lead Gaston in the Broadway musical adaptation of *Gigi* and can be seen on FOX-TV's *Filthy Rich*
 - **Katharine McPhee**, who rose to prominence on American Idol and has an impressive singing and acting career, including starring in *Waitress* on Broadway and leading the musical series *Smash* on television
 - **Desmond Child**, a Grammy winning and Emmy nominated songwriter and producer with chart topping hits spanning five decades
 - **Jonas Rivera**, Senior Vice President of Production at Pixar who has worked on many animated children's classics, including the Academy-Award winners *Up* and *Inside Out*

- o **James Gilmer**, a Pittsburgh native who trained at CAPA as well as the Pittsburgh Ballet Theater School, and now lives in New York City. James is part of the famous Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.
- Prominent Pittsburgh Sports and Media:
 - o **Bob Pompeani**, KDKA-TV sports anchor, inductee into the PA Sports Hall of Fame, and longtime friend of the Children’s Museum, including previously hosting the Gala
 - o **Franco Harris**, four-time Super Bowl winning running back from the Pittsburgh Steelers
 - o **Kris Letang**, defenseman and NHL All Star for the Pittsburgh Penguins
 - o **Josh Bell**, first baseman and MLB All Star for the Pittsburgh Pirates
 - o **Don Kelly**, a Butler, PA, native and Point Park University graduate who played for multiple MLB teams and now coaches the Pittsburgh Pirates
- Performances by:
 - o **Jackie Evancho**, a Pittsburgh native who gained global recognition with her stunning debut on NBC’s *America’s Got Talent*, and continues to sing, act, and model
 - o **Montgomery Lamb**, currently stars as Katie the bass player in the Broadway musical, *School of Rock*
 - o **Elise Duckworth**, a 12 year old singer who lives just outside of Pittsburgh. She has been performing onstage since she was four years old and has been in 25 productions. Elise is a recurring star at Jeter Backyard Theater.
 - o **Jau'mair Garland**, soon-to-be CAPA graduate with plans to attend the USC School of Dance
 - o **Liam Kress**, a student at Winchester Thurston School and multi-instrumentalist artist
 - o **Jordan McNeal**, soon-to-be CAPA graduate who has been accepted to Berklee College of Music for Vocal Performance
 - o **Aria Ramanathan**, a rising senior at Mars Area High School. She is a frequent performer with Jeter Backyard Theater and has performed in Atlanta, Sacramento, New York City, and London.
 - o **Moriah Carey**, a Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School graduate, with plans to study musical theatre at Kent State University
- Children’s Book Authors and Artists:
 - o **Mo Willems**, a number one *New York Times* best-selling author and illustrator named the first-ever Education Artist-in-Residence by the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. Mo began his career as a writer and animator on *Sesame Street*, where he garnered six Emmy Awards.
 - o **Hervé Tullet**, an artist, performer and renowned children’s book author of more than 75 internationally acclaimed children’s books.

See a “making of” recap of the Great Night In Gala and program here: [Making of the Great Night Gala on YouTube.](#)

The entertainment program has had thousands of views and will remain available to the public on Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh’s website and social media pages.

Advance ticket buyers also had a special delivery for this evening of family friendly entertainment – a delicious, locally-sourced spaghetti dinner delivered to their home. Each spaghetti dinner box included:

- Boxed pasta, homemade sauce and meatballs from *Legends Eatery*
- A specialty loaf from *BreadWorks*

- A specially selected bottle of red wine from *Engine House 25 Wines*
- Custom made cookies from *Priory Fine Pastries*.

The Museum also delivered more than 300 dinner boxes to community families experiencing food insecurity on June 6, through our partners Providence Connections Family Support Center and Manchester Academic Charter School. This was made possible through the generous support of PNC.

All of the food was sourced from the Museum's neighborhood to support local businesses while they are closed or operating at reduced capacity. We thank Legends Eatery, BreadWorks, and Priory Fine Pastries for their partnership and support in providing meals to food insecure families, as well as more than 25 volunteer drivers who delivered the food.

Our focus for the event was to provide a fun, family friendly evening of food and entertainment in support of Children's Museum of Pittsburgh. However, as the latest developments around COVID-19, social issues, and race are so dramatically impacting our community and nation, we also encouraged a conversation on these pressing topics. Specifically the Gala program addressed - and enables parents and children to have heartfelt discussions about - the killing of George Floyd and resulting events impacting our city, region, nation, and beyond.

Our mission calls on us to inspire joy, creativity, and curiosity - and - to be a partner and resource for those who work with or on behalf of children, youth, and families. To better achieve that goal, we have begun to compile resources and guides for how parents can talk to their children about race and equity here: <https://pittsburghkids.org/education/talking-to-children-about-tragic-events>.

The funds we raise through this event will provide free virtual programming for low income families, build amazing exhibits, and create programs that welcome people of all ages and abilities into the Children's Museum and MuseumLab (digitally and in person).

All proceeds support the Children's Museum and MuseumLab, neighborhood businesses and many families in the North Side experiencing food insecurity.

The **Great Night In Family Gala** supports Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and MuseumLab, which are dedicated to providing innovative experiences inspiring joy, creativity and curiosity, and serving as a partner and resource for people who work with or on behalf of children, youth and families.

For more **Great Night In Family Gala** information, visit greatnightgala.org, email jmalik@pittsburghkids.org or call **412-657-7409**.

2020 Great Night In Family Gala chairs

Kim and Curt Fleming

2020 Great Night In Family Gala committee

Melissa Bizyak
Jennifer Broadhurst
Christopher Daley

Barrett Donovan
Michael Duckworth
Jennifer Kilgore

Karen Larrimer
Tracie McCormick
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Rosemary Moriarty
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Evan Rosenberg
Robert Stein
Penny Zacharias

2020 *Great Night In Family* Gala host committee

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Barrett Donovan and Nora Minahan
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Lynn Gagne and Evan Rosenberg
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