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## **Children's Museum of Pittsburgh to Host Star-Studded Virtual Gala This Sunday**

***Great Night In Family Gala 2020, presented by Hefren – Tillotson, will feature celebrities, performers, athletes, artists and more to celebrate the arts***

Pittsburgh, PA (June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020) -- **Great Night In Family Gala 2020**, presented by Hefren – Tillotson, will take place Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. The program will stream live at [greatnightgala.org](http://greatnightgala.org) and on Children's Museum of Pittsburgh's YouTube channel. Viewers can watch the live stream show on demand immediately following the premiere. This is the first virtual celebration hosted by a Pittsburgh traditional cultural institution during COVID-19.

Gala guests and all members of the public can enjoy an online streaming / virtual entertainment program celebrating the best of the museum's arts and joyful experiences, featuring celebrity appearances and local youth and student performers. We are thrilled to have stars of Hollywood and Broadway, prominent Pittsburgh athletes and coaches, famous children's artists, and very talented local youth performers all contributing to the program. The show also includes messages of love and kindness, with a focus on how children can process all of the recent events impacting our lives.

"I'm excited that we can provide an evening of entertainment, while also giving families a chance to connect with each other and talk about important issues," said Jane Werner, Executive Director of Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and MuseumLab. "There are so many talented artists with Pittsburgh roots and Pittsburgh connections. This event highlights how the arts can provide joy, creativity, and curiosity for children and families."

The producer of the Gala is Erich Bergen, a television, film and stage actor. He co-starred on CBS's *Madam Secretary* and previously starred as Bob Gaudio in the feature film and on Broadway in the Grammy- and Tony-winning musical *Jersey Boys*.

"I'm so excited to produce this show for such an important cultural organization," said Bergen. "Arts and creativity play such an important role in children's lives. The performances I saw growing up helped shape my career direction, and hopefully kids are inspired by what we have put together."

The Gala will feature prominent artists and performers providing exclusive content for the viewers. The stars of the show are well known entertainers with Pittsburgh connections, including appearances by:

- Host of the show:

- **Conner John Gillooly**, a star on Broadway in *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*
  - **Patina Miller**, graduated from Carnegie Mellon University, recently starred as press secretary Daisy Miller on hit drama series *Madam Secretary*, and has starred as Deloris Van Cartier in the West End and Broadway productions of *Sister Act* as well as *Pippin*, for which she won a Tony Award for Best Actress in a Musical
  - **Corey Cott**, is 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 the FOX tv show *Filthy Rich*
  - **Katharine McPhee**, 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**, is a Grammy winning and Emmy nominated songwriter and producer with chart topping hits spanning five decades
  - **Jonas Rivera**, is a Senior Vice President of Production at Pixar that has worked on many animated children's classics, including the Academy Award winning movies *Up* and *Inside Out*
  - **James Gilmer**, a Pittsburgh native who trained at CAPA as well as the Pittsburgh Ballet Theater School, now living in New York City, James is part of the famous Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
- Prominent Pittsburgh Sports and Media:
  - **Bob Pompeani**, is a KDKA sports anchor, inductee into the PA Sports Hall of Fame, and longtime friend of the Children's Museum, including previously hosting the Gala
  - **Franco Harris**, four time Super Bowl winning running back from the Pittsburgh Steelers
  - **Josh Bell**, first baseman and MLB All Star for the Pittsburgh Pirates
  - **Don Kelly**, originally from Butler PA, played baseball at Point Park University, for multiple teams in MLB, and is now a coach for the Pittsburgh Pirates
- Performances by:
  - **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
  - **Montgomery Lamb**, currently stars as Katie the bass player in the Broadway musical, *School of Rock*
  - **Elise Duckworth**, is 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
  - **Jau'mair Garland**, is graduating from CAPA with plans to attend the USC School of Dance
  - **Liam Kress**, is a student at Winchester Thurston School and multi-instrumentalist artist
  - **Jordan McNeal**, is graduating from CAPA and has been accepted to Berklee College of Music for Vocal Performance
  - **Aria Ramanathan**, will be a 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
  - **Moriah Carey**, is a Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School graduate, and plans to study musical theatre at Kent State University in the fall
- Children's Artists

- **Mo Willems**, a number one *New York Times* best-selling author and illustrator will be providing insights on his animation / work. In 2019, the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC named Mo the first-ever Education Artist-in-Residence. Mo began his career as a writer and animator on *Sesame Street*, where he garnered six Emmy Awards
- **Hervé Tullet** is an artist and performer, as well as a renowned children’s book author of more than 75 internationally acclaimed children books. He will be showcasing some of his famous doodle lessons
- And more special guests...

The entertainment program will be widely available to the public online starting at 6:30 pm. Advance ticket buyers will take in the family friendly entertainment, including an after show, and enjoy a delicious, locally-sourced spaghetti dinner delivered to their home. Each spaghetti dinner box feeds four and includes:

- 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*.

Our focus for the event is 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 will also be encouraging a conversation on these pressing topics. Specifically the Gala program will address - and enable parents and children to have heartfelt discussions about - the killing of George Floyd and resulting events impacting our city, region, nation, and beyond.

These ongoing developments around race and equality – paired with the COVID-19 pandemic –have created an environment that can be very difficult for children to comprehend. These issues are having an impact on the lives of children, in ways we can see and in ways we cannot see. Kids may not know how to talk about everything they are watching on television or reading on the internet. They may not fully grasp the conversations that adults are having around them. We want to ensure that our Gala reaches them, and gives them an outlet for speaking and asking questions, understanding and learning.

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 equality ([available here: https://pittsburghkids.org/education/learning-resources/talking-to-children-about-tragic-events](https://pittsburghkids.org/education/learning-resources/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.

As part of our Gala, on Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, the museum delivered more than 300 dinner boxes to community families experiencing food insecurity through our partners Providence Connections Family Support Center and Manchester Academic Charter School. This food delivery was made possible through the generous support of PNC.

All of the food was sourced from neighborhood businesses to support them 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 will deliver the food.

The Great Night In 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. This year also impacted four neighborhood food establishments, more than 25 volunteer drivers delivering spaghetti dinner boxes, hundreds of Gala ticket buyers and over 300 food-insecure households.

For more **Great Night In Family Gala** information, visit [greatnightgala.org](http://greatnightgala.org); or email [imalik@pittsburghkids.org](mailto:imalik@pittsburghkids.org); or call **412-657-7409**.

For media availability and interview requests please contact: Bill Schlageter, Director of Marketing Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, at [bschlageter@pittsburghkids.org](mailto:bschlageter@pittsburghkids.org) or 412-559-2744

\*Tickets must have been purchased by May 26<sup>th</sup> to receive a meal.

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### **2020 Great Night Gala chairs**

Kim and Curt Fleming

### **2020 Great Night Gala committee**

Melissa Bizyak  
Jennifer Broadhurst  
Christopher Daley  
Barrett Donovan  
Michael Duckworth  
Jennifer Kilgore  
Karen Larrimer

Tracie McCormick  
Matthew Meade  
Rosemary Moriarty  
Greta Rooney  
Evan Rosenberg  
Robert Stein  
Penny Zacharias

### **2020 Great Night host committee**

Melissa and Matthew Bizyak  
Jen and Brooks Broadhurst  
Barrett Donovan and Nora Minahan  
Michael Duckworth and Tracy Howe  
Lynn Gagne and Evan Rosenberg  
Mary Louise and Henry J. Gailliot  
Judy Horgan and Steve Pavsner  
Jennifer and Todd Kilgore  
Carole King and Chip Burke  
Scott and Sue Lammie  
Karen and James Larrimer  
Richard I. Lerach and Elizabeth E. Krans

David and Julie McCandless  
Josh McElhattan and Lesley Carlin  
Tom Mole  
Dan and Shelly Onorato  
Billy Porter  
Jimmi Sue and Matthew Smith  
William and Jane Valenta  
Bonnie and Tom VanKirk  
Beth Wainwright and Russ Kemerer  
Jane Werner and Bob Rutkowski  
Penny Zacharias and Kirk Burkley

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