

Concert for a cause helps fund local education

By Matthew Hall on March 8, 2018 in News



Don't let the name fool you, the upcoming show featuring the band VENICE is all about supporting kids in Santa Monica and Malibu.

This weekend is the 2nd Annual Greg Coote Concert For The Arts and the annual event is one of the signature fundraisers for the Santa Monica – Malibu Education Foundation. Proceeds from the event support arts programs throughout the district.

This year, Grammy winner Rick Springfield and Terri Nunn from Berlin will join local favorites VENICE at the show.

Officials said the event has a 13-year history working with professional artists and members of VENICE have helped with the show since 2004. Those connections have helped build the reputation of the event but the performance also showcases students.

"Students are involved in nearly every aspect of this show. On stage, student choir, orchestra, and band members play and sing with the artists," said SMMEF Executive Director Linda Greenberg. "Backstage, student technicians assist the professionals with AV and lighting. In the audience, student ushers assist the attendees. A student also designs the concert poster. Hunter Pearson from Malibu High School designed this year's poster."

While the shows have been going strong for more than a decade, they were renamed last year in honor of SMMUSD parent Greg Coote. Coote was a strong supporter of the arts and ran the Ed Foundations arts endowment before his death in 2014.

Greenberg said these kind of fundraisers are representative of the community effort needed to fund local schools.

“Each year, we raise millions of dollars to fund essential staff and programs at all SMMUSD schools. Raising these funds is a true, community-wide effort with parents, community members, and businesses all contributing,” she said. “Events like this are a wonderful way to raise some of these needed funds while providing an incredible experience for both students and the parents and community members who attend.”

In a recent report, SMMEF said it has seen donations increase in the past year. For the current school year, through January 31, the Foundation has raised \$2,316,673. About \$186,000 came from corporate sponsors and 2,557 parents donated an average of \$590 per household.

The concert will be held this Saturday, March 10 at Santa Monica High School’s Barnum Hall. Emmy award-winning journalist Mark Steines, host of Hallmark Channel’s “Home & Family,” and longtime Los Angeles radio personality Cynthia Fox will emcee the evening, which includes a live auction. Auction items include four guitars (Fender Stratocasters, Telecasters and an Asher Electro-Hawaiian Junior lap steel), the DW Drums drum kit and Zildjian cymbals used in the show, tickets to The Voice, a stay at Welk Resorts Sirena del Mar in Cabo San Lucas and a case of Las Madres Syrah wine, with special concert-branded labeling.

Greenberg said the show is as enjoyable for attendees as it is valuable for the organization.

“The atmosphere at these shows is absolutely magical,” she said. “On stage, a special chemistry happens between the rock stars and our amazing choir, orchestra and band students. The students have never played with a professional rock star and the star rarely has an opportunity to perform backed by a full choir, orchestra and horn section. Because of this, everyone on stage is having the time of their life and that energy fills the audience.”

Tickets are still available from \$50-\$175 and can be purchased by calling the SMMEF office at (310) 396-4557.

For more information visit smmef.org or like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/smmeff