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MIRACLE PROJECT PRESENTS FAMILY-FRIENDLY 18th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION SHOWCASING NEURODIVERGENT ARTISTS OF ALL AGES IN A FESTIVE PROGRAM OF MUSICAL PERFORMANCES, SKETCH COMEDY, IMPROV, AND MORE

Event, which Honors Miracle Project Founder Elaine Hall for Her Selfless Work to Enhance the Lives of the Neurodiverse Community and Their Families, also Features Miracle Project Artists in the World Premiere of *The Miracle Project Takes the Cake*, an Original Theatrical Production that is Part of the Los Angeles County Take Action for Mental Health Campaign

**Celebration Includes Back-to-Back Matinee Performances
Sunday, May 28, 2023, at 2 pm and 4:30 pm,
at Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

LOS ANGELES, CA (May 15, 2023) – The Miracle Project – a groundbreaking fully inclusive neurodiverse theater, film, social skills, and expressive arts program for individuals with autism and all abilities – is celebrating its 18th birthday in grand style with two, joyous, back-to-back, family-friendly matinees spotlighting a neurodiverse cast of Miracle Project performers ages 5 to 65 in an array of musical, sketch comedy, and improv performances, and more on Sunday, May 28, 2023, at 2 pm and 4:30 pm, at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts’ Lovelace Studio Theater. The artists will share their unique voices, talents, and stories in a festive program that also honors Miracle Project Founder Elaine Hall for her tireless and selfless efforts to enhance the lives of the neurodiverse community and their families through the arts.

This inclusive event, which includes a Q&A with participants as well, is open to audience members of all ages and abilities. ASL interpretation and Audio Description will be provided. Each show is capped by a post-performance reception for ticket holders held in The Wallis’ Wells Family Education Courtyard.

The celebration also feature the world premiere of *The Miracle Project Takes the Cake*, an original production created with and starring children, teens, and young adults on the autism spectrum, those with and without disabilities, and their peers. During the interactive and improvised mystery, told in two parts, performers will task audience members with cracking the case of a harrowing cake heist. Stay for both shows to get to the bottom of this “whodunnit” mystery!

The Miracle Project and its 18th Birthday Celebration is part of this year's ***Take Action For Mental Health LA County*** campaign, a roster of events occurring county-wide during Mental Health Awareness Month, sponsored by the **Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH)** and the **California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA)**. Additional support for ***The Miracle Project Takes the Cake*** has also been provided by the **California Arts Council (CAC)** and the **Los Angeles Trial Lawyers' Charities (LATLC)**.

Tickets, \$25/show or \$45 for both shows, are available at <https://thewallis.org/show-details/the-miracle-project-takes-the-cake>.

About The Miracle Project

The Miracle Project is a fully inclusive neurodiverse theater, film, social skills, and expressive arts program for individuals with autism and all abilities. Through shared creative experiences with peers, The Miracle Project encourages individuals with autism, other disabilities, and all abilities to develop social and job skills, enhance communication, increase self-awareness, and confidence, ease anxiety and find joy in the experience.

About Take Action for Mental Health LA County Campaign

Take Action for Mental Health LA County focuses on helping County residents support their own mental health and the mental health of people they care about. The campaign's call to action encourages people to take action for themselves and others through the **Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH)** 24/7 Help Line and the myriad of resources available from **LACDMH** along each person's unique well-being journey. The campaign aims to prevent and reduce risk factors by decreasing stigma surrounding mental illness and providing people the tools and connections to seek help for themselves or a loved one. As part of the campaign, grant-funded community events will take place throughout May and June 2023 and include free community fairs, art festivals, after school programs, yoga and 5K run/walk activities, professional conferences, mental health trainings, outreach campaigns, and much more. Additionally, **LACDMH** will host free community fairs in each of the eight L.A. County service planning areas. Each event will provide free resources, connections, physical and mental well-being themed giveaway items, free meals in warm, celebratory atmospheres that will foster community and togetherness. More information and a list of events throughout the county can be found at: <https://www.takeactionlac.com>

About the Los Angeles Department of Mental Health (LACDMH)

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) supports the wellbeing of Los Angeles County residents and communities. As the nation's largest public mental health department, **LACDMH** ensures access to care and treatment for the most vulnerable residents in a region with more than 10 million people. With an annual budget approaching \$3 billion and a committed staff of 6,000, **LACDMH** embodies a "heart-forward" approach to supporting hope, recovery and well-being across Los Angeles County. For more information, visit: <https://dmh.lacounty.gov>

About the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA)

The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) is a Joint Powers of Authority (JPA) formed in 2009 by counties throughout the state to work on collaborative, multi-county projects that improve behavioral health care for all Californians. By pooling resources, forging partnerships, and leveraging technical expertise on behalf of counties, **CalMHSA** develops strategies and programs with an eye toward transforming community mental health; creates cross-county innovations; and is dedicated to addressing equity to better meet the needs of our most vulnerable populations. As a JPA, **CalMHSA** is not a state agency but is held to many of the same standards as other public entities, such as the Brown Act for all of its meetings. More information is available at: <https://www.calmhsa.org>

About the California Arts Commission (CAC)

As a state agency, the California Arts Council (CAC) supports local arts infrastructure and programming statewide through grants, programs, and services. Believing that culture is the strongest signifier of California's identity, **CAC's** mission is to strengthen arts, culture, and creative expression as the tools to cultivate a better California for all. **CAC** envisions a California where all people flourish with universal access to and participation in the arts, and its core values include: community, accessibility, aesthetics, autonomy and accountability, relevance, equity and sustainability. For more information, visit: <https://arts.ca.gov>

About the Los Angeles Trial Lawyers' Charities (LATLC)

The Los Angeles Trial Lawyers' Charities (LATLC) was founded in 2006 by a group of seven plaintiff personal injury attorneys practicing within the greater Los Angeles Area. **LATLC** has grown from the original seven founders to an organization of more than 3,000 supporters. Its managing Board of Directors includes 42 attorneys who have dedicated themselves to giving back to the Los Angeles community and who volunteer their time to help our organization. **LATLC's** members are committed to making a positive impact on the lives of those in need throughout Southern California. For more information, visit: <https://www.latlc.org>

About Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts:

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a dynamic cultural hub and community resource where local, national and international artists share their artistry with ever-expanding audiences. The campus, located in the heart of Beverly Hills, CA, is committed to robust and distinctive presentations and education programs curated with both creativity and social impact in mind. Distinguished by its eclectic programming that mirrors the diverse landscape of Los Angeles and its location in the entertainment capital of the world, The Wallis has produced and presented more than 350 theater, dance, music, film, cabaret, conversation, and family entertainment programs since its doors opened in October 2013. Hailed as "au courant" (*LaLa Magazine*), The Wallis was lauded by *Culture Vulture*, which proclaims, "If you love expecting the unexpected in the performing arts, you have to love The Wallis." Its programming has been nominated for 79 Ovation Awards and nine L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards. The campus itself, a breathtaking 70,000-square-foot facility, celebrating the classic and the modern, has garnered six architectural awards. Designed by acclaimed architect Zoltan E. Pali (SPF:architects), the restored building features the original 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places), which serves as the theater's dramatic yet welcoming lobby, and includes the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater; the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater; an inviting open-air plaza for family, community and other performances; and GROW @ The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education, where learning opportunities for all ages and backgrounds abound. Together, these elements embrace the city's history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for L.A.-area visitors and residents alike. The Wallis is led by Michael Nemeroff Chairman of The Wallis' Board of Directors, and Robert van Leer, Executive Director and CEO.

For more information about The Wallis, please visit: TheWallis.org.

Like The Wallis on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter and Instagram: @thewallisbh

About Project Miracle aka The Miracle Project

The mission of **Project Miracle aka The Miracle Project (TMP)** is to create a community where the authentic voices, passions, and stories of neurodiverse individuals and those with and without disabilities are celebrated, elevated, supported, and belong. **TMP** is a fully inclusive social skills, performing arts, and expressive arts program with emphasis on developing social, behavioral, and job skills within the neurodiverse community of southern California. Through shared experiences with peers and volunteers, individuals with diverse abilities and backgrounds find their voices, develop their talents, and are better prepared for life at home, at work, and within their community.

For 18 years, **TMP** has embraced those with disabilities for who they are and applied innovative arts curricula to creatively join their world instead of trying to force them to join ours. After years of being bullied, feeling unseen and unheard, many **TMP** participants suffer from low self-esteem and are severely challenged by social anxiety. **TMP** gives them a safe creative community where they can reveal their true selves. In 2014, researchers from CSUN deemed **TMP** an evidence-based intervention in easing anxiety, increasing confidence, and enhancing self-esteem for children and teenagers with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Program participants, once isolated and alone, report having close friends, attending social gatherings, and experiencing increased connection and joy. Families, once estranged from their communities, report feeling integrated into a supportive social network. Parents report reduced stress levels due to the new friendships and support, and young adults find their voice and passion that leads to confidence in the job market and secondary education. For more information, visit: <https://themicracleproject.org>.

The Miracle Project | Los Angeles, CA 90036 | (213) 793-5495

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

WHAT:

The Miracle Project's 18th Birthday Celebration

DESCRIPTION:

The Miracle Project's 18th birthday Celebration includes two, joyous, back-to-back, family-friendly matinees spotlighting a neurodiverse cast of Miracle Project performers ages 5 to 65 in an array of musical, sketch comedy, and improv performances, and more. The celebration also features the world premiere of *The Miracle Project Takes the Cake*, an original production created with and starring children, teens, and young adults on the autism spectrum, those with and without disabilities, and their peers. The event honors Miracle Project Founder Elaine Hall.

WHEN:

Sunday, May 28, 2023, at 2 pm and 4:30 pm

(post-concert receptions for ticketholders for each show will be held in The Wallis' Wells Family Education Courtyard)

WHERE:

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

Lovelace Studio Theater

9390 N. Santa Monica Boulevard

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

TICKET PRICES AND INFORMATION:

\$25/show or \$45 for both shows

<https://thewallis.org/show-details/the-miracle-project-takes-the-cake>.

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