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The Peter Pan Foundation continues quest to help others

Submitted by Gina Campo



Who are these selfless superstars? The kids and teens of The Peter Pan Foundation in Lafayette. Photo provided

The Peter Pan Foundation started as an organization that inspired children of all ages to be creative and give back while producing several big stage musicals a year. Since adding a performance troupe and partnering with local charitable organizations, PPF is now involved in non-stop community service. Any given month, they will be performing at an average of 8-10 events, as varied as St. Baldrick's Brave the Shave at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital in Oakland, participating in the Dance for Kindness event, to helping at local food banks.

"Doing community service activities with the PPF teaches kids and teens what can't be taught in any classroom," explained Juliette Benazra, a senior at Acalanes High School and president of the PPF teen leadership council, Bay Area Magic Makers. "We are able to realize the significance of kindness, empathy and our ability to make a difference in our community and on a larger scale."

PPF has participated in about 30 events so far this year for both The Make-A-Wish Foundation and Easter Seals Bay Area and is thrilled to be joining forces with the Born

This Way Foundation in 2019.

This Veterans Day, the troupe performed their annual abridged version of their signature musical "Wish Upon A Star" at Children's Hospital. This was the PPF's 12th time bringing this magical show to the hospital and the performance concluded with a donation of \$15,000 and more than 150 PlayStation video games. With this recent donation, the PPF has donated more than \$200,000 to the hospital over the past 10 years.

In addition to the audience that day, patients at the hospital throughout the year will get to enjoy the show through the weekly showing through the hospital's closed circuit TV system.

"Performing at Children's Hospital Oakland was an extremely impactful experience because we were able to bring our show to the kids who can't come to us," said PPF performer Alex Young.

"These events are instilling a sense of self, as well as a desire to be selfless," explained Leslie Noel, founder and artistic director for the PPF. "Our participants see first-hand how capable they are - how capable we all are - of making positive changes in the world. PPF is providing a safe space for them to grow, feel confident that they have much to give others and then to use their gifts to spread love and light. It is a beautiful and humbling thing to be a part of."

Where the excitement never stops, the foundation is thrilled to be moving into their new home Jan. 1 on Mt. Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette that will serve as an inspiring environment for their teen leaders, philanthropists and children of all ages, enabling them to extend love and light to even more people in need. They will be performing a winter gala of holiday music with a silent auction to help raise funds to support the expenses of the new location and their ongoing philanthropy work. The public is invited to attend on Dec. 7 at the Lafayette Library. Ticket information can be found on their website, peterpanfoundation.org.

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