

OUR DONORS – SHAPING LIVES, SHAPING FUTURES

At the 15th Annual Gala, Josh Groban shared the impact arts education had in his own life and how it came to shape his future. He stated “The arts are not a luxury for students ... they are a necessity!”

We could not agree more here at the Foundation which is why we are so committed to our mission and grateful to YOU, our donors for your support. Because of you, over 27,000 students were able to attend a Schooltime performance this year and experience the wonder of the performing arts.

Director of Education & Community Engagement, Kelli Maldonado, says, “We are lucky that we can offer a variety of programming, so there is really something for every child. It’s also important to the arts in general ... we are making the Van Wezel a place where young people feel welcome, a place they will want to come back to.”

The Van Wezel Education Department has been hard at work on next year’s programming and has some exciting shows in store for the 2016-17 season that are focused on the areas of children’s literature and music history. Stay tuned to our website and social media for more details soon.





A LETTER FROM MONICA VAN BUSKIRK PRESIDENT AND CEO

With the end of the 2015-16 Season upon us, I'm pleased to report that the Hall presented another incredible season. Congratulations to Mary Bensel and all of her staff who work so hard to make it all come together. The Van Wezel had many first-rate performers and shows. Some of my personal favorites were "the people's diva," Renee Fleming, the eternally graceful and beautiful Sophia Loren,

and of course, Josh Groban as our 15th Annual Gala star who exceeded all of our expectations! Our 2016 Gala was a picture perfect evening on the Bayfront and turned out to be another huge financial success in support of the children's programs at the Hall.

The 2015-16 Van Wezel Education program featured nine shows with over 27,000 students attending from four counties. The Hall's Education Department is hard at work finalizing the next Schooltime Season which will be announced shortly. It will focus on themes of children's literature and music history.

I am also pleased to announce that the Foundation won Sarasota Magazine's "Best Of" award for Best Fundraising Event for the second year in a row. I want to congratulate our staff, gala chairs, committee, donors, board and Mary Kenealy Events who all work so hard to make it such a success year after year. Let's keep our fingers crossed for another "best of" win next year for the 2016 Gala!

The Broadway, Dance and Orchestra 16-17 season was announced by the Hall late last month and the rest of the upcoming season will be announced in early September. I know the new lineup will be nothing short of spectacular! Enjoy your summer and stay tuned for more news from us in the coming months as the new season comes together.

See you next season!

Monica Van Buskirk

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A LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN SHAUN MERRIMAN

Congratulations to the Van Wezel Hall and the Foundation for a fantastic 2015/2016 season! I have been very proud to serve as Chairman of the Foundation Board this year. Through outstanding efforts by Mary Bensel and staff at the Hall, this fantastic and historic venue continues to draw incredibly fabulous talent and to charm our generous donors and patrons. The highly skilled artists

captivate guests with their awe inspiring performances. Programming has been wonderfully diverse, appealing to a wide range of audiences, especially our younger patrons. Many exciting and wonderful programs are already on the schedule for next season that will be equally, if not more, enchanting!

I am very pleased to announce that the Foundation won Sarasota Magazine's most recent "Best of the Best" award for the Best Fundraising Event for 2015! This acclaim provides the Foundation with impetus to continue its focus on providing exceptional children's performing arts education and programming to benefit and enrich the lives of multitudes of children in our local community. We want to maintain our heritage with these excellent and vital programs since any singular performance or experience could transform a child's life and future. And, a special thanks to Monica Van Buskirk and staff for their tireless efforts in fulfilling the vision of the Foundation.

Some renovations and improvements have been done to beautify and improve the function of the Hall, and we are excited to see further progress on the Bayfront 20:20 initiative. In order to preserve the legacy of the Van Wezel and the entire unique 42-acre city-owned Bayfront property for the next half century, important strategic planning is in progress, led by Michael Klauber and the Bayfront 20:20 Initiative. The plans focus on future growth and sustainability but also emphasize a common vision to benefit all parties involved. A bright future is ahead!

I wish you a fantastic summer and encourage you to look forward to the next exciting and sensational season starting in the fall!

Shaun Merriman

Shaun P. Merriman

Chairman, Van Wezel Foundation

President and CEO, Gateway Bank of Southwest Florida

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS A SEASON TO REMEMBER!



Harold Ronson and Daughter

RENÉE FLEMING

On January 27th the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, the Van Wezel Foundation and the Sarasota Orchestra collaborated to present Renée Fleming in her Sarasota debut. The Foundation hosted a beautiful after-party and meet and greet with Ms. Fleming immediately following the show. Thank you to our generous event sponsors, Bill & Sandy Dietrich and Harold Ronson.



Van Wezel Foundation Staff



Sandy Dietrich and Guests

15TH ANNUAL GALA WITH JOSH GROBAN

It was a picture perfect evening on the Bayfront at the sold-out 15th Annual Van Wezel Foundation Gala featuring Josh Groban!

Following cocktails, dinner, and a captivating performance by Josh Groban, guests were swept along to an after-party in the grand foyer for more fun and dancing to the sounds of the Soul Sensations!

A great big THANK YOU to our incredible group of committee volunteers and a very special thanks to our terrific co-chairs, Brenda Maraman and Wendy Merriman. Also, kudos to Mary Kenealy Events for designing such a stunningly beautiful event.

As a result of YOUR support and the combined efforts of our staff and committee, we were able to exceed our fundraising goal in support of the children's arts education programming.



PRESIDENTS SOCIETY DINNER

On April 21st, the Foundation held its very first Presidents Society dinner at the Bijou Cafe with Mary Bensel and Monica Van Buskirk as co-hosts. The dinner was well attended and provided an intimate VIP experience for these special guests. We look forward to hosting more of these as our Presidents Society membership continues to grow.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT:

ED & BETTY ROSENTHAL

Ed and Betty Rosenthal are longtime Van Wezel Foundation members with an interesting background.

Ed and Betty are the founders of Florikan, a Sarasota based manufacturer of controlled release fertilizers.

In the photo at the right, Ed, Betty and their son Eric are featured with Dr. Gioia Massa lead scientist of the NASA Veggie Program as well as the NASA veggie team during a visit to the Florikan manufacturing plant in January 2016.



Many years ago, Ed was selected to be a collaborator with NASA to develop a sustainable food production system for our astronauts in space because of his expertise in polymer chemistry and agricultural science. Ed developed a controlled release polymer-coated fertilizer called Florikan Nutricote which, according to the results of NASA funded rigorous research, performed better than all the other products tested.



Space Plant Biology team crest of the NASA veggie sustainable food production team

Florikan "Nutricote controlled release fertilizers" are now being used on the International Space Station (ISS) to grow lettuce and cabbage for astronauts in space, paving the way for long range space flights and potential colonization of other planets such as Mars. As a result Florikan Nutricote also produces the best results in hydroponic vertical vegetable production not only in space but here on Earth as well.

Ed is so proud to be collaborating with NASA to help our community, and our country, conquer space the last frontier

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: CAMBER PECOR

I became involved with the Van Wezel Foundation board through the CYD Program. CYD (Community Youth Development) is a local not-for-profit organization that allows high school students to get involved with the Sarasota and Manatee communities. I became involved with CYD in the fall of 2012, with the Star Leadership Program. The Star Leadership Program is a 13-week leadership program that encourages students to take action in their school and community. At the end of the program students are allowed to interview with a local board of directors to try to attain a position as a voting member!



I've wanted to be on the board of directors of the Van Wezel Foundation since the fall of 2012 and finally was allowed to be a member in fall of 2013. My time on the Board has been amazing. I've been able to meet so many influential people in Sarasota through all the other members and events that I've been able to go to. I also think being a part of the Board has given me a new perspective on working with adults, as I am considered a full-voting member, it is nice to know that the other members will still listen to my opinions. Plus the board has given me an immense number of opportunities and contacts that I would not be able to do or have without them!

In June, I'll be graduating from Riverview High School from the International Baccalaureate Program. After graduating, I'll be heading up to Gainesville to study Biology and Business at University of Florida.

A very large thank you to all the members of the Board for their constant support!

PRESIDENTS SOCIETY HIGHLIGHT: SABAL TRUST COMPANY

We want to give a special thanks to Sabal Trust for being our very first Presidents Society member! Sabal Trust's Managing Principal Lowe Morrison says "Sabal Trust is excited to be the first member of the Presidents Society VIP Program of the Van Wezel Foundation. We are already enjoying the benefits and invite other Sarasota businesses to join us."



Lowe Morrison- Managing Principal, Joyce Gallagher- Relationship Manager, Anita Rahn- Relationship Manager and Ron Koepsel- Principal. Photo: Cliff Roles

As the largest independent, employee-owned Trust and Investment Management company in Florida, Sabal Trust Company has been providing trusted wealth advice to affluent individuals and families for more than 30 years. Sabal Trust's professional and dedicated advisors provide customized investment management, IRA, trust and estate settlement services for individuals and nonprofits. As the owners of the firm, Sabal's staff members have the commitment to serve each relationship with the greatest of care and concern. As Lowe Morrison says, "When you own the firm, you own the outcome." Learn more about how Sabal Trust approaches Your Life, Your Legacy by visiting our website: www.sabaltrust.com.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: JIM SELINSKI, M.A., CFRE

We are thrilled to introduce our new Chief Development Officer, Jim Selinski. Jim has been with the Foundation since late January and some of you may have already met him in the Founders Lounge, office or at the gala. If not, you will meet him soon!

Jim most recently served as Executive Director & Stewardship for St. Thomas More Parish Diocese of Venice, Florida where he oversaw business operations, stewardship, and development initiatives for one of the most successful operations in the Diocese and was instrumental in raising the necessary capital for the construction and completion of their new Church expansion. Prior to this, Jim spent 20 years, B2B, cultivating and consulting key stakeholders within Fortune 200 consumer product manufacturers.



Photo: Cliff Roles

Jim and his wife Michele reside in Sarasota.

NEW FRIENDS AT THE VWF!

We'd like to say thank you and recognize our NEW friends at the Van Wezel Foundation! All of our donors are special to us and we could not accomplish our mission without your help! We are so grateful to our new friends, longtime friends and all who have helped the Van Wezel Foundation in its continued success.

Gerri Aaron

Robert Peterson & Connie Attanasio

Myrna & John Blume

Dr. Jenne Britell

Michael Kneeland & Roxzene Hunter

Dennis P. Jesse

Jim & Pat Lehmann

Jim Roque & Carla Malachowski

Deborah Moore

Margaret Noble

Charles & Hilary Porter

Bill Gentile & Mary Swift

Arthur & Peggy Wood

NEW FOUNDERS SOCIETY/ INSPIRATION MEMBERS AT VWF

Gail Baird Foundation

Tom & Sherry Koski

John W. and Arlene McKittrick

Charlie & Dee Stottlemeyer

Joel & Diane Schleicher



WANT TO EARN FREE SHOW TICKETS & DINNERS?

Our **Refer-A-Friend** program is an easy way for friends to earn free tickets to shows at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall and free pre-show dinners at Mattison's Bayside. Refer one friend and receive (2) tickets to the show of your choice. Refer a second friend and receive (2) show tickets PLUS (2) dinners. Call us at 941-366-5578 for more details.

*Tickets based on availability.



AND THE WINNER IS... SARASOTA MAGAZINE BEST OF 2016

For the second year in a row, the Van Wezel Foundation was named "Best Fundraising Event" by Sarasota Magazine. Winners are selected via an annual readers poll under the category of best arts & entertainment. This is representative of the 2014 and 2015 Galas.

A Warm Welcome To Our New Presidents Society Members!

We are thrilled to welcome this first group of members into our brand-new Presidents Society program!

Ali & Gloria Bahaj

David and Myrna Band

Jeffrey & Beverly Berger

Donald H. & Barbara K. Bernstein
Family Foundation

Mr. and Mrs. John Cavanaugh
(Super-Sensitive Musical String Co.)

Herta Cuneo

Robert & Ineza Hart

Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine

Jacqueline M. Lewis

David & Lori Liner

Dave & Brenda Maraman

William & Elaine McClure

Marty & Iris Rappaport

Mary Ann Robinson

Sabal Trust Company

Karen & Michael Valentino

Dr. Richard & Monica Van Buskirk



If you would like more information on how you can become a part of this program, visit our website at www.vwfoundation.org/pre or contact us at 941-366-5578



STUDENTS ATTEND FAMILY NIGHT OF PEDAL PUNK

Emma E. Booker Elementary School honored their top 13 readers by bringing them to the Family Night of Pedal Punk on April 23. This opportunity was made possible through the Van Wezel Foundation. The students were in awe of the performance, discussing the many tricks and their own skills during intermission and after the show. All students stayed for the talk back, and had the opportunity meet company members and take pictures.

THE VAN WEZEL'S 2016-17 SEASON

As members of our Friends Society program, you should have recently received a mailing from us announcing the exciting lineup for the 2016-17 Broadway/Dance/Orchestra series.

Set along Sarasota's beautiful Bayfront, the Van Wezel's 2016-2017

Season will be "A Season for Everyone," headlined by the biggest blockbuster on Broadway and on tour, the Tony® Award-Winning Best Musicals **KINKY BOOTS** and **ONCE!** The Hall will be filled with sought-after and cherished Broadway musicals including the return of **CHICAGO**, Grammy®-nominated pianist **LANG LANG**, world-class orchestras, renowned ballet companies and Broadway Specials throughout the season that will delight all. Variety shows will include an array of super-star musicians, comedians, vocalists and holiday entertainment. Check the website for up-to-date information.



FRIDAY FEST SCHEDULE

Everyone's favorite free outdoor summer concert series is back starting in June! Grab a chair and enjoy sunset by our gorgeous Bayfront while listening to a great band. The diverse lineup has something for everyone!

June 10th - Koko Ray & The Keepers

July 29th - Jah Movement

August 26th - Rebelheart

September 23rd - Dr. Dave Band



DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT!

Many organizations and retirement plans support matching gift programs where they will match any qualified charitable contribution made by their employees. This is a great way to further your impact and could possibly double or triple your annual gift.

If you have any questions on this program, please contact our finance department at 941-366-5578.

VAN WEZEL FOUNDATION STAFF

- Monica Van Buskirk**, President and CEO
- Barbara Brosius**, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Operations
- Jim Selinski**, Chief Development Officer
- Erin Guzzo**, Marketing and Events Manager
- Elsie Merrill**, Donor Relations Manager
- Jeff Granston**, Donor Relations Assistant
- Cathleen Mai**, Database Coordinator

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2015-2016

- Shaun Merriman**, Chairman
- Mike Martella**, Immediate Past Chair
- Philip Delaney**, Vice Chair
- Karl Newkirk**, Secretary
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- Camber Pecor, Star Student
- Joel Schleicher
- Delia Smith-Orth
- Monica Van Buskirk, President & CEO

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SPRING 2016 EDITION