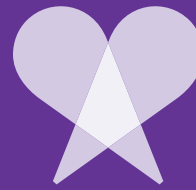


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What We Accomplish Together

Fall 2026, Vol. 5



**Entertainment
Community Fund**
Formerly The Actors Fund

Gala Raises Record-Breaking \$1.8 Million

Our Annual Gala held on June 1 in New York City raised \$1.8 million to support our programs and services. The evening celebrated the cast from the HBO Original series *The Gilded Age*; Tony Award-winning producer Daryl Roth; and global icon and legendary composer-philanthropist Yoshiki as they received the Entertainment Community Fund Medal of Honor.

The evening welcomed special guests and presenters including Entertainment Community Fund Chair of the Board Annette Bening, Board members Brooke Shields and Chandra Wilson, Ali Louis Bourzgui, Nicholas Christopher, Tovah Feldshuh, Lorne Michaels, Jerry Mitchell, David Hyde Pierce, Michael James Scott, Richard Thomas, Ben Vereen, Jessica Vosk and many more. Fund Board member and producer Bob Greenblatt and casting director Bernie Telsey presented the Medal of Honor to the cast of *The Gilded Age*. Actors Carrie Coon and Morgan Spector accepted the award on behalf of the cast. Yoshiki was presented the Medal of Honor by Board member Katherine Oliver of Bloomberg Philanthropies, and Jordan Roth presented the Medal of Honor to his mother, Daryl Roth.



Medal of Honor recipients Daryl Roth and Yoshiki

Photo credit: Natalie Powers

The Gala featured performances by Lea Michele and the Broadway cast of *Chess*; Julie Benko and Ben Levi Ross from *Ragtime*; Yoshiki, who delivered a special drum and piano solo; the Broadway cast of *Schmigadoon*; Primo Thee Ballerino, Jonathan Burke, Baby Byrne, Dava Huesca and Dudney Joseph Jr. from *Cats: The Jellicle Ball*; readings by Judith Light from *Three Tall Women*, John Benjamin Hickey from *The Normal Heart*, Paula Vogel from *Indecent* and Bess Wohl from *Liberation*; and a finale performance from *Kinky Boots*, led by original Broadway cast member Stark Sands, with J. Harrison Ghee, Delaney Westfall and others.

The Entertainment Community Fund Medal of Honor was inaugurated in 1910 when it was first presented to President William Howard Taft.

**To view past honorees, visit
entertainmentcommunity.org/honorees.**



The cast of *The Gilded Age* with producer and Fund trustee, Bob Greenblatt and casting director Bernie Telsey.

Photo credit: Tricia Baron

A Message from the Chair of the Board

You may not recognize his name, but Edwin Forrest was one of the foremost actors of the American theater in the 1800s. One of his dreams was to create a retirement home for older adults who devoted their lives to the theater, and he left the bulk of his estate to make this dream a reality. The Edwin Forrest Home opened in 1876 in Philadelphia and served retired theater professionals until the 1980s. Upon closing, assets were donated to the Actors Fund Home in Englewood, New Jersey, and the Fund gratefully named our Planned Giving Society after him.

One of the stipulations in Mr. Forrest's estate plan was that Shakespeare's birthday be celebrated. We do so every year at our annual Edwin Forrest Society luncheons on the East and West coasts. This year, the celebration returned to the Actors Fund Home where I was honored to share some of Shakespeare's work with Home residents and our Edwin Forrest Society members.

Every time I visit the Home, I am grateful that older adults in our community receive excellent care among peers who also dedicated their lives to performing arts and entertainment. How fitting that our planned giving donors had this opportunity to celebrate alongside our residents, who themselves have left a legacy through their work.

To maintain our commitment to providing the best possible care to residents, the Home will soon be embarking on a modernization and expansion project. It's a thrilling new chapter for a storied and celebrated facility, and we look forward to sharing updates with you in the months ahead.

Thank you for your continued dedication to supporting a life in the arts.



Annette Bening (she, her, hers)
Chair of the Board

To learn more about leaving a legacy gift to the Entertainment Community Fund or for more information on the Actors Fund Home expansion, please contact Jay Haddad, Manager of Planned & Principal Giving, at jhaddad@entertainmentcommunity.org.

Recent Entertainment Community Fund Events



Broadway Brunch hosts Mark Sullivan and Jim St. George with Ann Harada, Julie Halston and Santino Fontana.

Photo credit: Tricia Baron



Jane Krakowski and Marc Shaiman discuss his memoir, *Never Mind the Happy: Showbiz Stories from a Sore Winner*, for our *In the Spotlight* members.

Photo credit: Tricia Baron



Keith McNutt, Executive Director of the Western Region with actor Jessica Frances Dukes at our Edwin Forrest Day Celebration in Beverly Hills.

Photo credit: Nina Prommer



David Henry Hwang, Hal Goldberg, Jason Laks and Lee Perlman at the Fund's Leadership Council event held at the Perelman Performing Arts Center.

Photo credit: Tricia Baron



Donor Spotlight: Debra Samuelson

Over the years, Debra Samuelson has seen how much support theater professionals have needed from their whole community.

Photo provided by Debra Samuelson.

Debra Samuelson has a deep understanding of the needs of the entertainment community—and why the Fund’s programs are so critical.

Debra and her sister Cindy run Stagedoor Manor, a theater camp in the Catskill Mountains. Their parents founded this acclaimed company in 1976. Some of their noteworthy alumni include Natalie Portman, Robert Downey Jr., Lea Michele, Jon Cryer, Mandy Moore and Zach Braff. Many others in the performing arts also got their start at this groundbreaking establishment as kids.

But Debra acknowledges, “Some of the people I’ve thought are the most talented and worked the hardest

haven’t always been the most successful—especially monetarily. You then have to be lucky. It’s just a hard way to earn a living.”

Since 1999, Debra has provided that much-needed support through her generous gifts to the Entertainment Community Fund.

To celebrate Stagedoor Manor’s 50th anniversary, Debra and her sister are planning a benefit event with 100% of the proceeds supporting the Fund—produced by and starring former campers. **Thank you, Debra, for your exceptional commitment to our work and the entire entertainment community!**

Erich Bergen began performing professionally at just 10 years old. By 20, he was a lead in the national tour of the hit musical *Jersey Boys*.

He moved to Los Angeles and booked a few TV parts. But Erich still struggled. He was not able to pay his bills and was unsure how to make ends meet. He confides, “Out of pure desperation, I called the Entertainment Community Fund. I told them I didn’t have a dollar in my bank account.” Because of your generosity, we provided Erich with economic and financial wellness resources to get him back on his feet. Additionally, we were able to help him with rent assistance, ensuring he had a stable housing environment.

Erich then joined the tour of *Anything Goes*; but unfortunately, a week after finishing, he was diagnosed with cancer. Thanks to his work on the show, he had health insurance that covered his care.

Erich stresses, “The only reason I could do the tour and have insurance was because the Fund helped me while I was trying to find a new job.”

His success since then is a testament to his talent—and the Fund’s life-changing impact. Erich has had numerous roles on Broadway and on television, with works ranging from *Boop! The Musical* to *Love Story: John F. Kennedy Jr. & Carolyn Bessette*. Erich tells us, “I remember the Fund wanting to solve my problems as though they were theirs. They weren’t just handing me money; they helped me come up with a plan.”

Giving back to the Fund has also expanded Erich’s career. Shortly after Broadway shut down in 2020, Erich had the idea to bring back *The Rosie O’Donnell Show*. He acted quickly and produced a successful streaming event, raising over \$600,000 to support the Fund’s response to the pandemic.



Client Spotlight: Erich Bergen

“I wouldn’t be here doing this if not for the Fund,” says Erich.

Photo credit: Josh Andretti

He’s now producing an upcoming benefit that stars alumni from Stagedoor Manor performing arts camp—which Erich attended for seven summers! **Thank you for being there for Erich, and so many others.**



Entertainment Community Fund

Formerly The Actors Fund

729 Seventh Avenue, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10019
entertainmentcommunity.org

—Your Newsletter Enclosed—

Save the Date!

Stagedoor 50: A One-Night-Only Concert Celebrating 50 Years of Stagedoor Manor

Monday, September 28 | 7 pm ET

The Town Hall, 123 West 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036
stagedoor50.com



Stagedoor Manor and the Entertainment Community Fund are thrilled to present *Stagedoor 50: A One-Night-Only Concert Celebrating 50 Years of Stagedoor Manor* with appearances by Skylar Astin, Erich Bergen, Michael Ian Black, Zach Braff, Josh Charles, Jon Cryer, Sofia Hublitz, Shawn Levy, Julia Murney, Chris Olsen, Larry Owens, Adam Pascal, Amy Ryan, Shaina Taub, Jeanine Tesori* and more.

Stagedoor Manor has played a singular role in identifying, nurturing and shaping generations of performers, directors, writers and creative leaders who now define contemporary Broadway, film, television and the wider performing arts landscape.

This unprecedented event will celebrate Stagedoor's past, present and future, featuring an incredible lineup of Stagedoor alumni and friends. 100% of the proceeds will benefit the Entertainment Community Fund's programs.

**Artists subject to change.*



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