



Issue XV

Newsletter

July 2020

Your Impact

What YOU Make Possible

At a time when kindness matters more than ever, we are so glad you are a part of the Acts Of Kindness Cabaret family. You support us at performances, donate, volunteer, perform, serve on our Board or a committee, and help make connections. In one way or another, you are a link in our kindness chain, so we are always overjoyed to share with you the impact of your kindness.

National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation (NOAH)

NOAH has been serving the albinism community since 1982, by providing information and support. They envision a world where barriers and the stigma of difference no longer exist, and where people with albinism are empowered to be fully-functioning members of society and have a quality of life that is rewarding, dignified, and fulfilling.

NOAH's mission is to act as a conduit for accurate and authoritative information about all aspects of living with albinism and to provide a place where people with albinism, and their families, can find acceptance, support, and fellowship.

Last fall, AOKC had the privilege to provide a benefit

performance for NOAH. It was a unique event for AOKC. The venue was Wagner Farm in Glenview. AOKC kicked off the afternoon with a show, then the kids and their families went on hay rides, enjoyed lunch, took tours, and explored the historic farm on their own. Cabaret and hay rides may not be a typical combination, but it turned out to be a winning one!



AOKC-ers join the folks from NOAH after a farm performance of 'You Can't Be Serious!'

Seniors Assistance Center

The mission of SAC is to provide for the needs of senior citizens (60+), as well as the disabled, and assist them in maintaining a meaningful, dignified, and quality lifestyle. They provide a variety of services to the populations they serve in Norridge and Harwood Heights.

SAC provides case advocacy and support with Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Prescription Assistance, Free Transit Rides, License Plate Renewal, and other programs. SAC's Home Delivered Meals Program provides hot, nutritious meals to home bound seniors. They also provide Home Energy Assistance, a Friendly Visitor Program, and a Telephone Reassurance Program.

The November 2019 performance we gave was our second benefit for SAC and was even more successful than the first. Although SAC is funded in part by local municipalities and grants, much of their budget comes from their own fundraising efforts. One can imagine how the needs of the seniors SAC serves have risen during the social isolation caused by Coronavirus. We are proud to have been able to help SAC ahead of the pandemic. Thanks to you, we were able to provide them with a wildly successful event at next to no cost.

Family Promise Chicago North Shore

We also did a fall 2019 benefit performance for Family Promise Chicago North Shore. FPCNS helps homeless families with young children return quickly to permanent housing. It was our second benefit performance for this organization as well and it, too, built on the success of the first event. As always, it's your generosity that makes this possible. Thank you for being a part of so much goodness!

Leadership Change

In March, the AOKC Board made the decision to move forward under the guidance and leadership of our Artistic Director and Founder, Hilary Ann Feldman. We feel this best represents who we are as a unique arts nonprofit with specific goals and the dual mission of helping local nonprofits and spreading the art of cabaret. We are grateful for the time spent under the leadership of our now former Executive Director, Katelynn Woodin, and wish her the best. We would also like to congratulate Katelynn on the June 10th birth of her son, Frederick.

Artistic Directors' Update



Hilary Ann Feldman
Founder/Artistic Director



The Elephant in the Room

There's a pachyderm in the room, and her name is Corona (*actually, her name is Wassana, and I'm borrowing her beautiful face for this bit*). Like so many nonprofits, small businesses, and arts organizations, AOKC was hit hard by COVID-19.

On a personal level, we lost a lovely family member to Coronavirus in March. Several other members of the AOKC family, as well as the larger cabaret community, have fallen ill or lost loved ones. We hope you have found ways to connect and reconnect with those most important to you, and we hope you and your loved ones are all well and keeping safe as things start to open up again.

On an organizational level, we have 'gone dark' since mid-March, when quarantine went into effect, and it is yet unknown when we'll be able to get back to live performances. HOWEVER... we have a plan! The data shows that, in terms of dollars raised, virtual events are often outperforming their live counterparts. It's been a wonderful surprise. While I don't believe virtual events ever could (or should) completely replace live events, I do believe virtual events are here to stay.

Currently, AOKC is working hard behind the scenes to retool so that, as of this fall, we will be able to offer all services virtually as well as live. The learning curve for us, and for the nonprofit community at large, has been steep, but this new tool in the fundraising toolkit opens up tremendous possibilities, and we are excited to become a vital part of this brave new world.

Thank you for your continued support of AOKC during this unprecedented time. Stay well!

She's AOKC - Cynthia Clarey

Cynthia Clarey has been singing with AOKC since 2016, and we love her! However, we are but a small stop on her long, illustrious career journey.

Cynthia spent the better part of her life as a professional opera singer. Her reputation as a consummate singing actress led to roles in opera houses throughout the world. The role of Carmen was a cornerstone of her opera career, and she has performed the role in Houston, Toronto, Madrid, Barcelona, Paris, Tokyo, Berlin, Innsbruck, Budapest, and Sydney, as well as touring with Peter Brook's innovative "La tragedie de Carmen." Her concert career has included performances with the great symphonies of Chicago, Boston, Houston, Washington DC, New York, London, Berlin, and Jerusalem.

When a young Cynthia moved to NYC to attend a graduate program at The Julliard School, she had wanted to pursue musical theatre, but there weren't many opportunities for black women at that time. After getting cast in one opera after another, she figured that was where she was supposed to be, so that became her career trajectory.



Vocal changes later in life meant the end of her opera career, so Cynthia pursued another path, and we are so lucky she did! She now performs as a cabaret artist in and around Chicago and is loving the art form.

"Cabaret is much more 'me'," says Cynthia. "When you're performing classical music, the page is everything; there's no deviation. Now I get to sing music in any key I wish, and I get to change things up and make them my own. I feel as though I have things to say, and now I'm free to say them my way. I miss all the travel and, of course, the music was lovely, but I don't otherwise miss my opera life."

Cynthia created her latest solo show, *Bridge Over Muddied Waters*, as the Obama Presidency was coming to an end and the 2016 elections were ramping up. Racial tensions were building, and Cynthia needed both to explore the tangled problem of race relations and to express what she felt was one possible solution. She never imagined events unfolding that would make the show even more relevant today than when it first debuted, and the show was in high demand before the pandemic halted all live performance.

Still, Cynthia remains hopeful. The show doesn't preach; it merely asks the question and gives one possible solution. *"We have to see the humanity in each other, person to person, one on one. Conversations are finally happening now that have needed to happen for decades. Now is the time. This is our opportunity to finally cross that bridge."*

Cynthia will be retiring from teaching at Roosevelt University at the end of the upcoming school year and looks forward to returning to live performance as soon as the world is safe for it again. Acts Of Kindness Cabaret is thrilled to have this lovely singer and beautiful human as part of our family.

2020 Vision for Kindness Event

Acts Of Kindness Cabaret is thrilled to announce our 2020 Vision for Kindness Virtual Fundraiser. Join us for 45 minutes of fun, kindness, and cabaret... and a really rad raffle!

All year long AOKC provides modern cabaret performances as fundraising events for other Chicago-area nonprofit organizations. Once a year, in April, we hold an event to raise funds for AOKC, so we can continue our good work. We lost our original April event due to COVID-19, so we're going virtual! At this critical time, nonprofits need our help more than ever. We need your support as we shift our benefit performances to online offerings. We're all in this together!



Raffle goes live on Friday, July 24 and will run through the end of the event on Sunday, August 2nd.
Use this link for both, starting 7/24.

<https://Go.EventGrooveFundraising.com/AOKC>

Raffle Prizes Provided by:

A La Carte
Broadway in Chicago
Cellular Intelligence MedSpa
Curt's Cafe
CutCo
GirlFran Jewelry

Gordon Salon
HandMaine Knits
Mr. Dave Music
Northlight Theatre
Osteo Strong

Quilts by Hilary
Sisters Salon
Skunkworks Dance
Vibrato Boutique
Wilmette Massage
Yellow Bird Stationery

More items may be added!

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Arla & John Unwin 🎵
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Friends

(\$25 - \$99)

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Amazon Smile 🎵
Marc Ascher 🎵
Robert Banks
Linda Beckerman
Joe Berton & Gloria Groom
Brianna Bingham
Julie Boyer 🎵
Carri Carl
Sandhya Chandrasekhar 🎵
Kevin Coleman 🎵
Shirley Craven
Joan Curto 🎵
Deborah Darr
Joann Dinneen
Kristine Edmunds
Howard Engel
Karen & Morton Feldberg
Bobbie Fink 🎵
Cynthia Finlon
Karen Fitt
Cardi Fleck 🎵
Royce & James Gardner
Sarah Goalstone
Lisa Godfrey
Pauline Goldberg
Alvin Goldfarb
Valerie Gorman
Babbie Green 🎵
Geri Greenberg 🎵
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Beth Halevy
Carrie Hedges
Louis & Meredith Hellebusch

Friends (continued)

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Melissa Hornsberger
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Anita Jenke ♪
Felice Johnson ♪
Anita Kallen ♪
Scott Kempler
Lauren Klayman ♪
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Carol Knopf
Judy LaRose ♪
Alena & Ken Laube
Lesley Lee
Rhoda Levine
Sabina Lilly
Janet Lunsik
Susan Lynn & Bill Maca

Alice & Joe Magnani ♪♪
KT McCammond
Susan McCracken
Duncan Moore/Carolyn Frazier
Karen Morby & Scott Urban
William Morey
Judy Morris
Gigi Novello ♪
Ed O'Connell
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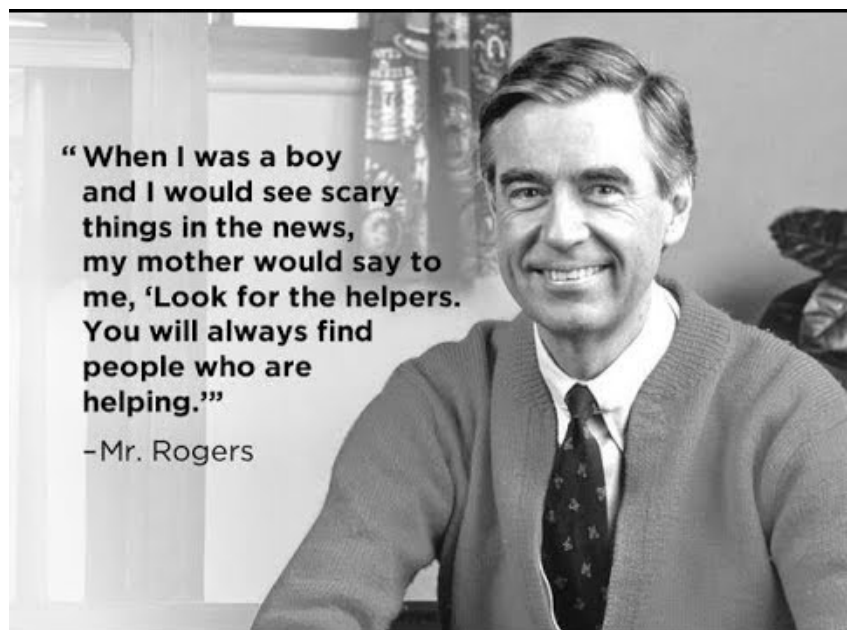
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Thank You, Volunteers!

Bridget Bean - Crew, Office
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Caron Buinis - Vocalist
Caryn Caffarelli - Vocalist, Board, Crew
Craig Caffarelli - Consultant, Crew
Cynthia Clarey - Vocalist
Karen Eickemeyer - Crew
Jim Frazier - Sound
Sydney-Paige Hernandez - Social Media
Adam Hibma - Vocalist
Nancy Himmelfarb - Advisory Board
Nikki Krzebiot - Vocalist
Joan Marks - Marketing
Marianne Murphy Orland - Vocalist
Eliot Osherman - Crew
Merril Prager - Board, Crew
Maria Rodriguez - Crew
Thomas P. Scheuzger - Technical Advisor
Allison Stein - HR
Linda Surlak - Board, Crew
Michael Unger - Board, Sound, Crew

Arla Unwin - Advisory Board
John Unwin - Photography
John Witzgall - Crew





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Hilary Ann Feldman
Founder/Artistic Director

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You Can Be AOKC
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