

For Immediate Release

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## **Now in its 19th Year, Festival of Children® Goes Virtual in September to Raise Critical Funds for 67 Children’s Charities**

*Special Performance by Kodi Lee, America’s Got Talent 2019 Champion, on Saturday, September 5, to Kick-Off Event*

**COSTA MESA, Calif. (Aug. 31, 2020)** – For the past 18 years, the month-long Festival of Children® was held at South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa, California, to celebrate the magic of childhood and the charities that work tirelessly to improve the lives of children across Southern California. This year, the event will pivot to an [online fundraising campaign](#) for 67 local children’s charities whose resources have been dramatically impacted by the pandemic, with 100% of funds raised going to the charities.

With the theme, “Let’s Pony Up for the Kids,” this year’s virtual event which runs the entire month of September, will also feature a special performance by Kodi Lee, America’s Got Talent 2019 Champion, on Saturday, September 5, which can be viewed at [www.festivalofchildren.org/ponyup](http://www.festivalofchildren.org/ponyup). The gifted musician has been a highlight of the event for 13 years, performing at many Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

While in years past, the family-friendly festival featured 100+ live activities and performances at the center, this year the virtual festival will offer a myriad of online entertainment each weekend for children of all ages, including Debbie Allen Dance Academy, the Wyland Foundation, Orange County School of the Arts, McCoy Rigby Conservatory of the Arts, among many others.

“Each September, we recognize National Child Awareness Month by celebrating the incredible work charities do on behalf of children,” said Sandy Segerstrom Daniels, founder and executive director of Festival of Children Foundation. “While we are not coming together in person this year, children need us now more than ever, and so do the charities that serve them. Millions of children and their families count on charities to provide program and services that help create a healthy, successful childhood, but right now, they are strained to their limits. We hope that others will join us in our efforts to “pony up for the children.”

Festival of Children is hosted and organized each year by Festival of Children Foundation, (FOCF), a Costa Mesa, California-based, national non-profit organization that supports and serves nearly 500 children’s charities in all 50 states, which founded the Festival in 2002 and since then more than 32

million people have been educated to the important work of the participating charities. The event also celebrates U.S. Senate-designated National Child Awareness Month, another FOCF program, which seeks to refocus critical attention on improving the lives of all children in America. The grassroots effort initiated in 2002 by Daniels soon blossomed into a state and then national initiative. In 2008, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed its first resolution designating September as National Child Awareness Month, which it has done each year since. The resolution is sponsored by the U.S. Senator from California, Dianne Feinstein, who has sponsored the resolution each year.

“I’ve been proud to introduce a resolution designating National Child Awareness Month for many years. It’s an excellent opportunity to highlight the work charities do to help children across America,” said Sen. Feinstein. “We’re thankful for the support they provide the countless children that are living better lives because of their dedication.”

Among other longtime co-sponsors, the U.S. Senator from Oklahoma, James Lankford, adds, “Coronavirus had caused an upheaval in our nation, and its disrupted schools, sports and other activities have dramatically impacted our children and families,” said Sen. Lankford. “I am grateful to be joined by Senator Feinstein to again recognize September as National Child Awareness Month to offer us a much-needed moment to pause and highlight thousands of non-profits, social workers, healthcare providers, and many others who help us care for our children every day. You’ve had an even harder task this year, and we appreciate your tenacious service to connect with families in need to be sure our children are cared for, fed, and safe.”

#### **About Festival of Children Foundation**

Festival of Children Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that serves to bring together and coordinate the efforts of charities, companies and individuals who work to improve the lives of children. 100% of the administrative costs are covered by designated funding, allowing donations to go further in direct support of programs and services that improve the lives of children nationwide. For more information please visit [www.festivalofchildren.org](http://www.festivalofchildren.org).

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