

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Festival of Children[®] Celebrates 25 Years at South Coast Plaza During National Child Awareness Month

Month-Long Celebration Kicks-off with Performance by America's Got Talent Season 14 Winner Kodi Lee

COSTA MESA, Calif. (August 6, 2026) – Now in its 25th year, Festival of Children[®] returns this September to South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa, California, celebrating the magic of childhood and the charities that work tirelessly to improve the lives of children across Southern California. The month-long, high-energy event features a host of free, family-fun entertainment including activities and performances ranging from face painting and craft-making to karate demonstrations, live dance and singing performances, animal shows, and much more. The event also showcases the important work of 70 local children's charities, which receive free display space to help raise awareness for their individual causes among the 2 million people that visit the retail center each September.

Festival of Children Foundation (FOCF), a Costa Mesa, California-based, national non-profit organization that supports and serves 480 children's charities, founded the Festival in 2002. Since then, more than 48 million people have been educated to the important work of 213 charities. The event coincides with the 19th consecutive year the U.S. Senate designated September as National Child Awareness Month (NCAM). NCAM is a FOCF initiative, which seeks to refocus attention on improving the lives of all children in America.

"As we celebrate 25 years of Festival of Children, my heart is filled with gratitude for the incredible children's charities that have dedicated themselves to helping young people and families thrive. This Festival has always been about shining a light on their extraordinary work and creating meaningful connections between our community and the organizations making a difference every day," said Sandy Segerstrom Daniels, founder and executive director, Festival of Children Foundation. "We are deeply grateful to South Coast Plaza, our generous sponsors, talented performers, and the countless families who have made this celebration a tradition. Together, we are not only celebrating childhood, we are inspiring a community to invest in the well-being and future of every child."

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2026 Festival of Children®/2-2-2-2

Several charities have participated all 25 years, including: The All-American Boys Chorus, Braille Institute, Families Forward, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Orange County, MOMS Orange County, Orange County School of the Arts, and South Coast Repertory. Highlight events and activities include: The Rollettes, Orange County Aerial Arts – the performing troupe of the Ruby Karen Project, and Bob Baker Marionette Theater.

Among the many featured activities at this year's Festival are:

Opening Ceremonies: Saturday, Sept. 5, 12:00 p.m. – Featuring America's Got Talent Winner Kodi Lee, the 5-year-old viral singing sensation Angelica Nero, and the Hi-Tops.

Dance: Each Saturday and Sunday, various times – Ballet, Folklorico, Indian, Hip Hop Dance Troupes, and more.

Festival of Children® 2026 sponsors include: Hyundai Hope on Wheels and Rady Children's Health Orange County.

For more information about Festival of Children®, including a list of the participating charities, activities and entertainment, please visit www.festivalofchildren.org for most current schedule.

About National Child Awareness Month

The effort to have September declared as National Child Awareness Month began as a local effort in Orange County, Calif., by Festival of Children Foundation Founder Sandy Segerstrom Daniels to raise awareness and focus America's attention on our greatest asset – our children. The Orange County Board of Supervisors first unanimously designated September as "Child Awareness Month" in September 2002. In September of 2003, the State of California commended Festival of Children Foundation's efforts and designated September as "Children Awareness Month." In 2008, the U.S. Senate passed U.S. Senate Resolution 644 designating September 2008 "National Child Awareness Month." Since then, Ms. Segerstrom Daniels and Festival of Children Foundation have been successful in having every successive September designated as "National Child Awareness Month."

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.