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Artists For A Cause Announces Cast Of Martin County Singing With The Stars

Artists for a Cause (A4AC) is pleased to announce the cast of the second annual **Singing with the Stars** (SWTS) performance, competition and fundraiser.

The nonprofit organization called out to singers in the community to apply and audition to compete in Singing with the Stars and they were heard! Out of the many applications received, seven community "note"-able stars have been selected and paired with professional singers. Each duo has selected their song and has begun their practice sessions and fundraising efforts as they prepare for the competition on stage at StarStruck Theatre in Stuart on Friday, Feb. 20 at 7 p.m.

This year's cast of Singing with the Stars is peppered with well-known members of the community in fields varying from Major League Baseball to Broadway. The professional singers were carefully selected by A4AC founder and Executive Director Terry Barber and SWTS Director and StarStruck Theatre owner Jennifer Jones.

Professional singers include: Avery Sommers, Broadway performer who appeared in *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Showboat* and *Chicago*; Shelley Keelor, actress, entertainer and vocal teacher who most recently appeared in *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber* at the Lyric Theatre; Peter Jones, musical director and owner of StarStruck Academy & Theatre who most recently starred in *The Best of Broadway* at StarStruck Theatre; and Charles Jones, actor and lead singer of a four-piece band called SubGroove.

The local "note"-able community stars include: Anne Scott, Martin County commissioner; Rusty Meacham, Major League Baseball alumni; Leslie Levy, owner of Style Encore Stuart and Plato's Closet; Shaun Kelly, owner of Perfectly Legal Office Solutions; Glenn Webber, attorney; Rick Creech, civil engineering and surveying consultant and Hank Gonzalez of Sailfish Point Realty.

The event is about more than the glitz and glamour of performing on stage – the community stars are also tasked with raising funds for Artists for a Cause. While the cast is excited to get onstage and compete to win the Best Performance category, there is also an award category for the fundraising portion.

The first cast rehearsal was Monday, Jan. 5 and the energy in the room was palpable. As the community stars and celebrity professionals worked on group numbers separately, each pair of duets were professionally coached to prepare for the competition. The cast members, although friendly, were ready to compete and jested about everything from who could raise the most money, to who chose the best song, to whose Florida heritage stemmed back the furthest.

Cast member and Martin County Commissioner Anne Scott summed up the feeling in the room when she said, "I know something is wrong if a day goes by and I'm not bursting into song!"

"We have a very dynamic group of individuals performing this year and are excited to watch them showcase their talent while using their creativity to raise funds," said A4AC Executive Director Terry Barber. *Singing with the Stars* is our signature fundraising event with the proceeds helping our organization to continue to do what we do best – to use art as a catalyst to improve communities."

The cast is also hard at work securing sponsors. Thank you to Virtuoso sponsor Mr. Chain, Harmony Sponsor Paul J. Feinsinger, CPA, CFP and Duet sponsor NisAir, as well as Your Voice Weekly for their partnership. A4AC also thanks Elisabeth Lahti, The William H. Donner Foundation, The Elmezzzi Foundation, and The MAH Foundation for their continued support of programs that help artists to meet the critical needs of our community.

For more information about sponsorships, visit www.a4ac.org/Upcoming-Events.html#SWTS, call (772) 419-8778, or e-mail: info@a4ac.org. To show your support for Martin County's local talent, purchase a ticket to *Singing with the Stars*. Tickets are on sale now at www.starstruckfl.com/tickets.html and range in price from \$35 to \$100.

Cast Biographies:

Community Stars:

Rick Creech is past president of Creech Engineers, a 90-person civil engineer, surveying and mapping firm headquartered in Stuart with offices ranging from Fort Lauderdale to Tallahassee. Rick currently works as an engineering consultant and serves as an expert witness in this field. Rick is a sixth generation Floridian and Treasure Coast native, graduated from Carnegie Mellon University and served on their Board of Trustees. Rick enjoys being on stage and is excited to be a part of the A4AC network.

Hank Gonzalez has over 40 years of experience in real estate and currently provides real estate brokerage services at Sailfish Realty of Florida LLC and at Gonzalez

Associates Inc. He is a seventh generation Florida native. Hank is a supporter of Artists for a Cause, the Arts Council of Martin County and the Young Singers of the Palm Beaches and is very involved in community theatre.

Shaun Kelly graduated from Martin County High School in

1980 and currently works as a legal secretary. Shaun owns Perfectly Legal Office Solutions, which provides freelance legal paralegal services and is a member of the original Martin County Legal Secretaries Association. Shaun is actively involved with the Humane Society of the Treasure Coast, SafeSpace and the American Cancer Society. She inherited her love of singing from her father. Although he passed in

beautiful daughters, all who have been involved in the arts in Martin County. Her passion stems from seeing how important the arts have been in the lives of her children. While she has watched her children perform on countless stages over the years, this will be her first time performing on stage and she is both excited and terrified to embark on this endeavor.

Rusty Meacham was born in Stuart in 1968. He played 20 years of professional baseball, 10 of which were in the Major Leagues as a pitcher with the Detroit Tigers and the Kansas City Royals. He currently teaches local children pitching, and runs a baseball academy called MLP Players with Brook Fordyce and Kurt Abbott, both of whom are also former big leaguers. Rusty's other passion besides baseball is singing and he can be found performing in karaoke bars several times a week in Martin County.

Anne Scott is a resident of Hobe Sound and was elected to the Martin County Board of County Commissioners in 2012. She currently serves as vice chair. Prior to that, she served as a Town of Jupiter Island commissioner for six years. Her other

2003, when she sings, she feels him there with her.

Leslie Levy moved to Martin County in 1991. She has worked as a physical therapist for 23 years and is also the owner of retail franchises: two Plato's Closets and Style Encore in Stuart. She and her husband have raised five

public service includes nine years as a judge in the Circuit Court of Cook County, Ill. Despite a lifelong patronage of and interest in participation in the arts, Anne has no formal training and her first stage appearance was singing with the Jupiter Island Chorus. She has been a member of Women Supporting the Arts since 2012. Anne's family includes her husband, Stuart, seven children and nine grandchildren.

Glen Webber is a Stuart-based attorney and mediator. A Fort Lauderdale transplant, he lives in Willoughby Country Club with his wife and daughters. As an avid traveler, he has performed in showers and cars around the world; however, Glen is the last member of his family to appear on the StarStruck stage. Glen is the president of OPUS Boosters and a board member for the MCHC Drama Club. He is also a member of the St. Joseph's Council and is a board member for Mary's Shelter and supports many other nonprofit organizations.

Professional Singers:

Charles Jones has performed on the Treasure Coast for close to 30 years. He was a member of MCHS OPUS along with Peter Jones (yes, he's that old) and acted in several



The cast of 2015 Singing with the Stars fundraiser to support the nonprofit organization Artists for a Cause: Rusty Meacham, Peter Jones, Leslie Levy, Charles Jones, Shaun Kelly, Rick Creech, Avery Sommers, Hank Gonzalez, Anne Scott, Glen Webber

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productions to include: *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (Melvin Pee Thorpe) and *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Annas). Charles is equally comfortable on a theatre stage as he is on a concert stage. It is the music stage where he shines brightest. He currently is the lead singer of a four-piece outfit called SubGroove. Their music is described as funky-hop-pop. The band will be releasing their debut album in March. You can visit them online at www.subgroovemusic.com.

Peter Jones has been a music educator and music director for more than 25 years. He has performed in theaters throughout New York and Florida either onstage as a character or accompanying the show behind a piano. Memorable onstage performances include the emcee in *Cabaret*, Billy Flynn in *Chicago*, Mozart in *Amadeus*, Nathan Detroit in *Gypsy* and *Dolls* and many others. Peter has collaborated with Broadway composers Stephen Schwartz and Stephen Sondheim to help create student versions of their musicals. Peter is the recipient of a Martie Award from the Martin County Arts Council for Outstanding Performing Artist. He has been featured in numerous local and national magazines and newspapers for his work as a performer and as a musical theatre educator. During the week, Peter enjoys teaching private lessons in music theory, chord chart piano improvisation, advanced piano vocal coaching and musical theatre audition prep. Peter and his wife, Jennifer, are excited to be celebrating 15 years of musical theatre education on the Treasure Coast.

Shelley Keelor has been entertaining audiences regionally and internationally, on stage and in concert for nearly two decades. Most recently she can be found performing with Terry Barber, in his tour *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber*, which is playing in various venues in Florida and abroad. In addition, Keelor passionately enjoys the theatrical stage. Recently, she played to rave reviews, the role of Margaret White in *Carrie the Musical*, and Cindy in *Waist Watchers*, the longest running show in South Florida and, to much acclaim, the role of Penelope in the show *Rock Odyssey* to name a few. At ease with many genres of music, Keelor also performs contemporary, jazz and standard music. She received her music and vocal performance degree at Miami of Ohio and is also a proud member of *Actors Equity Association*.

Avery Sommers recently performed her "back by popular demand" One Woman Cabaret Show in the wonderful Royal Room in the Colony Hotel in Palm Beach and in the beautiful

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Stranaham House in Ft. Lauderdale. Avery appeared on Broadway in *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Showboat* and *Chicago*. She also appeared in National Tours of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* with Ann-Margret, and *Chicago* with Chita Rivera and Joel Grey. She has been featured in 10 independent movies all filmed in South Florida. She was nominated for and won Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Immigration Tango* presented to her at the Angel International Film Festival in Monte Carlo, Monaco. She is currently filming season two of the terrific new teen paranormal Web series *Tweet*.