



The Grand Opera House receives grant for Sensory-Friendly Family Program

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WILMINGTON, Del., Dec. 19, 2018 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- The Grand Opera House will continue to showcase sensory-friendly programs as part of its community outreach initiatives, thanks to a \$2,500 donation from the Navient Foundation, the company's philanthropic arm. The Sensory-Friendly Family Program welcomes viewers of all ages with autism or other special needs to enjoy the experience of live entertainment with their families in a safe and comfortable environment.

"With our sensory-friendly programming, we aim to provide a comfortable and welcoming environment for those who would otherwise be too anxious to attend a live performance," said Pamelyn Manocchio, director of community engagement at The Grand Opera House. "Contributions from partners like the Navient Foundation are vital to making this initiative feasible. This program would not be feasible without the generous support of our funders."

This past weekend, The Grand presented its final sensory-friendly program of 2018 with the performance of *The Rainbow Fish*, an enchanting story about a silver-scaled and gold-hearted fish who learns to share his most prized possessions. The Sensory-Friendly Family Program will continue in the spring of 2019 with the performances of *Jeff Boyer's Big Bubble Bonanza* on Sunday, March 31 and *Magic Tree House: Showtime with Shakespeare* on Sunday, May 19.

The Grand, a historic landmark and live entertainment venue debuted the Sensory-Friendly Family Program this past spring with the performances of *Bubble Trouble* and *Acrobats of Cirque-tacular*. The programs welcomed more than 60 families.

"The Grand Opera House sensory-friendly family programming helps engage and inspire a community who would have been left out of attending live performances," said Nikki Lavoie, spokeswoman for Navient who also volunteers with the Grand as a trustee. "The Navient Foundation is proud to support this excellent program in our city."

The 1,208-seat theater entertains, engages and enriches the community with diverse live performances and educational programs. The Grand's education and outreach initiatives serve more than 35,000 young people and their families each year, including programs such as Stages of Discovery and Summer in the Parks.

Tickets to the 2019 sensory-friendly shows can be purchased online at TheGrandWilmington.org/sensory-friendly or at the box office located at 818 N. Market Street, Wilmington, DE 19801.

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