



****PRESS RELEASE****

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LA's PREMIER AUTISM ORGANIZATION TO HONOR EMMY-NOMINATED ANNA MARIE HORSFORD & LA CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT HERB WESSON FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THE STATE'S FIRST EVER DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER ON THE CAMPUS OF THE MLK HOSPITAL

[Los Angeles, CA-October 5, 2017] - The Special Needs Network, Inc., California's leading autism advocacy organization, will host its **12th Annual Evening Under the Stars Award Show and Gala on Saturday, October 21st at 6pm**. The star-studded charity event will be held at the California African American Museum located at 600 State Drive in Los Angeles.

The evening will include a red carpet, reception, entertainment and award ceremony honoring Special Needs Network's Golden Heroes. Hosted by **Beverly White (NBC4, Southern California)**, this year's honorees include **Los Angeles City Council President Herb Wesson (Man of the Year Award)**, **Emmy nominated actress Anna Maria Horsford (Vanguard Award)**, **Drs. Ludlow and Ruth Creary (Lifetime Achievement Award)**, **Walsh Shea (Corporate Citizen Award)**. The night will feature special appearances by actress and comedian **Kym Whitley (ABC's Young and Hungry)**, the cast of A&E's Emmy Award-winning show **Born This Way**, **Donnell Turner (General Hospital)**, and much more.

In partnership with our fabulous sponsors **Dwayne and Naomi Cox, The Olson Company, Walsh Shea Corridor Constructors, Los Angeles County Board Chair, Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, CBS2/KCAL9, US Bank, SEIU 721, SEIU 99, IBEW Local 18, USC and Founders of Behavioral Autism Therapies Larry and Mia Humphreys**, the grandiose night will offer guests a magical evening with friends and colleagues, exceptional music and entertainment, stimulating discussions, and creative costumes and attire, all while inspiring stories of triumph!

The Evening Under the Stars Award Show and Gala is a Special Needs Network's annual flagship fundraiser. This black tie event will bring together over 500 of Los Angeles' top corporate executives, political and community leaders, entertainers, and stakeholders. Opening remarks recognizing the 2017 honorees for the night will be provided by Los Angeles County Board Chair and Event Honorary Chair, Supervisor **Mark Ridley-Thomas**.

"I am thrilled at the outpouring of support for families and kids with special needs and am super excited about this year's honorees and special guests. With 1 in 64 children diagnosed with autism every year, and African American and Latino kids in California lagging behind in services, grassroots organizations are needed more than ever," says SNN founder and President, **Areva Martin**, civil rights attorney and co hosts of the Emmy award-winning talk show, **The Doctors**. "It has been an incredible year," says Martin, but kids and families in underserved communities need so much more, particularly given the uncertainty with Medicaid and other services that our families rely upon to survive."

As more than your "standard" Gala, EUS will grant the Special Needs Network with the opportunity to raise awareness about the impact of autism and related disorders on underserved communities. The Special Needs Network will also have the amazing opportunity to raise funds for their health and human services programs, including the first-ever comprehensive developmental center on the campus of Martin Luther King Hospital and Healthcare Center. This state of the art and technologically advanced autism clinic will provide medical and behavioral services, assessments, ABA, speech and occupational therapy, family counseling, legal support, education, and training. This center will be a game changer for thousands of kids and their families. Since majority of these individuals live in the most economically depressed communities in our county, this center will not only provide some extremely vital support, but it will also help California continue to lead the way in innovative healthcare models.

"So often families living in underserved communities are overlooked in the autism debate," says **Bonnie Berry LaMon**, Los Angeles entertainment attorney and SNN board Vice President and Event Chair. SNN has and continues to be on the fore of giving these families a much needed voice. "At the Gala, we give our families an opportunity to share their stories and we give policy makers, funders, corporate and entertainment executives an opportunity to see first-hand how their donations and support changes the lives of real people in need," says LaMon.

ABOUT SPECIAL NEEDS NETWORK

Special Needs Network (SNN) is based in Los Angeles and is California's leading grassroots autism advocacy organization. Since its inception, the organization has provided critical direct services to over 40,000 kids and adults with a range of developmental and mental health disorders in the state's poorest communities. As a nonprofit organization, SNN was established to help families faced with autism and other developmental disabilities. The organization focuses on raising public

awareness, impacting public policy, increasing education and access to resources for families, children and adults.

www.snnla.org

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For tickets, sponsorship and more information, contact 323-291-7100 or go online at www.specialneedsnetwork.org For media inquiries, contact Lynn Jeter and Associates at lajass@att.net.



Mistress of ceremony NBC's Beverly White and SNN president Areva Martin, ESQ

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