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FEBRUARY 10, 2011

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VARIETY KIDS TELETHON 2011
MAKING GOOD THINGS HAPPEN EVERYDAY...
FOR "OUR" KIDS!

Buffalo, New York: **BILL RANSOM**, President and General Manager of WKBW-TV, Channel 7 joined Variety Kids Telethon 2011 General Chairman **PATRICIA SOMOGYE** in announcing details for "*The Annual Variety Kids Telethon 2011*" on WKBW-TV, Channel 7. The 12 hour telethon will originate LIVE from the Grand Ballroom of the Adam's Mark Hotel in Downtown Buffalo, Sunday March 6th from 7:00a.m. through 7:00p.m. Sunday. This is the 49th annual Telethon for Variety – The Children's Charity of Buffalo & Western New York which is the longest locally produced Telethon in the world, and the 48th for Channel 7.

All monies raised by the Variety Kids Telethon benefit The Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo, Robert Warner M.D. Center For Children With Special Needs and many other local charities benefiting children that Variety serves.

Making Good Things Happen Everyday...For "OUR" Kids!...is the theme of Telethon 2011. It is always great to see a smile on the beautiful face of a child and with the continued generosity of the people of Western New York, Variety's special children will see many good things happen for them everyday in their lives.

Times are tough this year and the Telethon is aware of that. **EVERY** donation is important and is truly appreciated. The needs continue for our kids; we know the people of Western New York will continue to support our special kids by calling in their donations on Sunday March 6th. In addition to calling, donors can go online and make

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their donation, or use their credit cards and receive some wonderful premiums. You can even pick up a cell phone and text a donation for Variety's Special children.

PATRICIA E. SOMOGYE is the General Chairperson of Variety Kids Telethon 2011. Variety - The Children's Charity of Buffalo and Western New York could not have chosen a more adept candidate to represent our children this year. Pat's selfless contributions began in 1982 when her mother and member, Helen Jacob, asked her to answer phones for the Variety Kids Telethon; an annual event broadcast each year on Channel 7. This inspiring and heartwarming event "Varietized" Pat, and she's been involved ever since.

Beginning with events like Bingo, selling hot dogs at Sam's Club Labor Day weekend, running a table at Lombardo's for the Italian Festival and helping her mother's spaghetti dinner for the Armed Forces, Pat was soon considered an indispensable force in the Variety Family. She went on to Co-Chair the Variety Club Women's Cocktail Party, serve as Chief Barker in 1994-95, and act as previous Telethon Chairman in 1998 - the same year she was named "Person of the Year."

Pat was employed at Philip Setel and Sons for 35 years until their closing in 2009 and is now employed with the Visiting Nurses Association. She is happily married to her husband Tom, a great success for almost 20 years, and resides in Cheektowaga where she loves to work in her garden. She has 4 stepchildren, Chris, Erica, Adam and Kevin, as well as four step-grandchildren, one of which lives in Australia. We hope you will join Pat and your fellow Variety members as we embark on yet another successful Telethon year!

Serving as Honorary Chairman for the telethon is **JOSEPH & PAULA SALVATORE** owners of Salvatore's Italian Gardens. This is the first time that the Telethon has ever selected a "couple" to serve as Honorary Chairs. Joe and Paula are no strangers to Variety as they have graciously participated in many Variety fundraisers. Both Joe and Paula have been very busy and active with fundraisers of his own this year for Variety's kids.

Patricia, Joe and Paula are being assisted by co-chairpersons **MARGIE ARNOLD**, the Assistant Vice President for Russell Bond Inc. and a two time past Telethon Chairman and **MICHAEL BENEVENTO**, a long time member of Variety.

The 2011 Variety Kids Telethon stars include some of the best in the business! The brightest star is the 2011 "Celebrity Child", **GRACIE JOYCE** of Lakeview, New York. Gracie lives with her father Michael, mother Alicia, 9 year old sister Madalyne, and the family dog, Pupcake. Gracie is currently in first grade at Pinehurst Elementary School where she is studying to be a teacher/dancer/fashion designer. She has not quite made up her mind yet so she is keeping her options open. In her free time Gracie enjoys playing

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with her friends, swimming and she just started ice skating with SABAH. Gracie also likes to collect jewels and gems; she is a very busy six year old.

When the Joyce family first found out Alicia was pregnant with their second child, they were overly excited and couldn't wait to discover the sex of the child. Alicia and Mike were ecstatic to learn that they would be having a boy. Alicia's due date was supposed to be December 24, 2004. On October 21, 2004 Alicia went for her 31 week check up. She informed her doctor that she felt like she was going to have the baby that day. They performed an internal sonogram. After the examination, Alicia was told everything was going great and not to worry about anything. Later that afternoon Alicia began hemorrhaging and began experiencing labor. Michael rushed Alicia to the ER. They were immediately taken to an exam room to check on the baby's heart rate, which they could not detect. They were then informed that the baby was entering the birth canal breech and Alicia had to have an emergency cesarean section. Upon delivery the baby was taken to the NICU to check vitals and heart rate etc. This is when the Joyce's had another surprise; they actually had a baby girl. Gracie was born prematurely, at just 31 weeks, on October 21, 2004 at Women's and Children's hospital of Buffalo NY, weighing 3 pounds and 8 ounces.

They were not allowed to hold Gracie for 1 week and they only saw her through the incubator. Gracie remained in the NICU for five long weeks and in that time she had two blood transfusions, and was diagnosed with the following: pulmonary insufficiency, respiratory distress syndrome, hypoglycemia, bilateral IVII grade one, apnea/bradycardia of prematurity, nutritional support, bilateral periventricular cyst, prematurity, anemia of prematurity, abnormal newborn screen, enterovirus viral infection, hyperbilirubinemia & group B strep. Gracie also was diagnosed with grade 2 and 3 urine reflux which requires her to take daily antibiotics to prevent kidney infections. Finally, Gracie was released the day before Thanksgiving 2004 with a heart monitor, which she remained on for an additional month. Upon arriving home they discovered that she was highly allergic to eggs and had to be put on a gluten free diet. Beginning at approximately 1 ½ and continuing into the present, she frequently breaks out into hives. Even after several meetings with various allergists and dermatologists, the cause of her hives remains a mystery.

When Gracie came home she was constantly screaming, just lying there stiff and never content. Gracie had constant doctor appointments. At three months old, she began early interventions at her home which consisted of OT, PT and speech therapy. Gracie had a very hard time with these multiple therapies and would often cry. Gracie first crawled at 17 ½ months. In 2007, at 18 months Gracie was referred to the Robert Warner Center for evaluation due to concerns in all areas. Gracie was diagnosed with Periventricular leukomalacia also know as (PVL), which is a type of brain damage, and mild Spastic Diplegic Cerebral Palsy. Shortly after the diagnosis of PVL Gracie was also diagnosed

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with Accommodative Esotropia, which is a visual diagnosis, and at just 1 ½, Gracie had to get glasses.

Prior to walking, Gracie utilized AFO's, which unfortunately did not work for her. In addition to trying the AFO's, she underwent her first Botox treatment at 2 years old to reduce the spasticity in her legs. This first experience with Botox was pleasant. Unfortunately, the following Botox treatments were not as successful and the results did not last as long. She continued to have various types of intensive therapy, including swim therapy. She began walking with the assistance of a walker at 3 years old and independently at 3 ½.

She began attending Wee Can Pre-school at three years old. The entire staff at Wee Can made this an amazing experience for Gracie. While Gracie thrived in this program, she began experiencing other issues including multiple ear infections which resulted in her receiving two sets of ear tubes so far.

Last March, at 5 years old, Gracie underwent Selective Dorsal Rhizotomy Surgery at Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo. Immediately following the surgery she was placed in the ICU where she remained for a week. After release from Children's she was transported to a rehabilitation center in Rochester for five weeks of intensive physical therapy. Gracie continues with therapy 5 times a week.

With all her hardships Gracie remains a fighter and strong willed little girl. Her personality and spirit outweigh her disabilities tenfold. With all of Gracie's needs the Joyce family is very grateful to The Robert Warner MD Center For Children With Special Needs and Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo for all their spirit and support from the minute she was born to the present and the future. What does the future hold for Gracie? With Gracie's determination and fortitude the sky is the limit for her. For the time being Gracie will enjoy being the 2011 Variety Kids Telethon Celebrity child!

Look for **GRACIE**, and her parents **MICHAEL & ALICIA**, as well as her big sister **MADALYNE** to share their story with viewers.

The 2011 Variety Kids Telethon will have something for everyone. A very diverse cast (LISTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER) and mix of entertainment will be presented to viewers not only during the 12 hour broadcast, but also at the 6th Annual “Concert With The Stars” at The Riviera Theatre in North Tonawanda.

BRANDON BARASH

From the #1 ABC Daytime soap opera, GENERAL HOSPITAL, Brandon Barash returns for his fourth year to help the 49th annual Variety Kids Telethon.

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In October 2007, Brandon Barash joined the cast of "General Hospital" in the role of Johnny Zacchara, the brooding, rebellious son of a mob boss based in New York City who has come to Port Charles to wreak havoc on the town's residents. Johnny's tortured past makes him a wild card, but a select few have witnessed his softer side.

A graduate of the acclaimed theater program at the University of Southern California, Barash has quickly amassed an impressive list of television credits, including "Tell Me You Love Me," "NCIS," "24," "Gilmore Girls" and "The West Wing."

In addition, Barash was recently named the National Celebrity Ambassador for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. His efforts with the charity include auctioning off his photography and donating profits to MDA, speaking out on their behalf, and traveling across the country to meet with the MDA board members, donors and affected families. In addition, Barash has performed and co-hosted the Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon.

Born in St. Louis and raised in California, Barash currently resides in Los Angeles. In his spare time, he likes to acquaint himself with nature, jumping out of airplanes and taking solo expeditions to Alaska. In addition he enjoys photography, painting, singing, writing and listening to music, as well as playing the piano and harmonica. He's always up for a competitive game of baseball, basketball or racquetball, as well as for another favorite pastime... eating great food!

Look for Brandon to sing his heart out for the kids, answer your questions about "General Hospital" during the Telethon on Sunday March 6, and sign autographs as well as perform during the 6th Annual Concert with The Stars at the Riviera Theatre, on Saturday March 5.

TERRY BUCHWALD

TERRY BUCHWALD returns for his seventh year as a member of the national cast. Terry has been a part of the Variety Kids Telethon for over 15 years.

Terry is a well-known tribute artist and recording artist from Western New York, who has earned the distinction of being named one of the top tribute artists in the United States by the LA Times. Audiences across the nation are astonished by his dynamic voice and striking resemblance to Elvis. By all accounts, Terry has the looks, the moves and the voice of the legendary "King."

In October of 1991, Terry unexpectedly found himself on stage with a local band, launching what has rapidly grown to be a professionally greater accomplishment that he could have ever imagined.

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More than twenty thousand (20,000) scarves later, he has sold over 40,000 CDs and has "opened up" for national acts such as Lee Greenwood, Diamond Rio, Montgomery Gentry, Rick Springfield, Jim Brickman, Sixpence None the Richer, Johnny Rivers, Grassroots and the Charlie Daniels Band, to name a few. Terry has performed for such celebrity functions as: Post Production Party for Disney's 2005 CBS Elvis Mini-Series; Emmy Award Cast Party for the TV show, Ally McBeal and The Practice in Hollywood, CA; WNY Make a Wish Foundation's "An Evening With the Stars," hosted by Kathy Lee Gifford; NYS Governor Pataki's New Years Eve Ball; Former Buffalo Bills Quarterback, Jim Kelly's NFL/ESPN Retirement Party; New York City and Boston Marathon post-race parties; Alan Thicke Celebrity Classic; Anheuser-Busch Summer Tour; NFL Superbowl Parties; and NHL All-Star Benefits. These performances have taken Terry to many major cities in the United States and Canada, including Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Hollywood, New York City and Toronto. He has also performed in countries as far away as Japan, Puerto Rico and Mexico.

Terry's national television appearances include: the annual Variety Kids Telethon in Buffalo, New York of which he is part of the national cast; Your Big Break, a Dick Clark production; Doc, a PAX TV hit sitcom starring Billy Ray Cyrus; and U's Place, a Fox 29 children's show.

Locally, Terry's concerts and appearances are broadcast frequently on TV stations in upstate New York and Western Pennsylvania. Terry was the subject of a three part ABC Special on Buffalo's Eyewitness News. He is also a spokesman; guest DJ and entertainer for Buffalo radio stations, 104.1, 97 Rock, Star 102 and Kiss 98.5. Frequently, area listeners hear him on commercials and voice-overs.

The Buffalo Music Awards have awarded Terry Top Solo Artist for 2002 and Top Show Band for 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and again for 2010. In addition Terry was so honored this year when he was one of the first inductees into the 2010 Buffalo Music Awards Hall of Achievement. Another major award that Terry received was Buffalo's Night Life Magazine Best Show Band for 2010.

Terry takes part in volunteer work, charities, fundraisers and awareness events for organizations such as Variety-The Children's Charity of Buffalo & Western New York; Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo, Make A Wish Foundation, Children's Miracle Network, United Cerebral Palsy, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Muscular Dystrophy Association, AIDS Rochester and Hospice.

Terry has recorded four CDs which have hit the shelves of 13 Walmart stores, Sam's Club, Borders and Barnes and Noble. He is the first local artist to ever sell CDs in Walmart stores. He has sold 40,000 of his CDs: TCB, Big Hunk 'O Love, Home for Christmas and Good Rockin' then and now. His fans are awaiting the release of his next CD.

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Look for Terry to do some of his crowd pleasing Elvis songs and also watch as he performs some pop and soft rock with a little bit of country thrown in. Terry has a heart of gold and will help take care of business for our kids.

MR. FOOD

From Eyewitness News at Noon & 5pm the "Guru of Ohhh It's Soo Good,"MR. FOOD" (aka Art Ginsburg) makes his annual appearance for the kids. Mr. Food has been appealing to viewers at home to make those important pledges for the children for 19 years and this Telethon is one of only two events nationally that he makes sure that he does each year. Mr. Food will be anchoring the Corporate Match segments of the Telethon. These segments give viewers the chance to double their dollars as generous WNY companies offer to match up to a certain amount. In addition to his work on the day of the Telethon something's simmering at Salvatore's Italian Gardens in Lancaster as everyone is invited to "Lunch with Mr. Food!" on Saturday March 5th at 11:00am. Your \$35 donation entitles you to lunch, a Mr. Food cookbook, and lots of surprises. You can win big at the Chinese Auction, and get to meet Mr. Food! Get your reservations before they sell out by calling 854-7577.

Hugely popular and beloved by millions, MR. FOOD is an original. He was the first TV chef to promote practical, "anybody can do it" cooking and food preparation solutions, and, after more than 30 years of sharing his unique brand of quick 'n' easy food tips and recipes with viewers across the country, MR. FOOD continues to find fresh ideas for cooking up fun in the kitchen.

Art Ginsburg developed the MR. FOOD entity that has been a trusted name in media syndication as well as the consumer marketplace for more than a quarter of a century. With beginnings as a butcher with a flair for theatre, Art's "MR. FOOD story" began with his local television debut in 1975. Before long, MR. FOOD burst onto television screens across the Northeast in his self-syndicated, appealing 90-second food vignette. Rave reviews poured in! By 1982, King World took notice of MR. FOOD and brought him on as a client. (King World now syndicates such well-known television shows as "Oprah," "Jeopardy," and "Wheel of Fortune.") Today, the MR. FOOD vignette is syndicated by CBS/King World to affiliates in more than 130 television markets across the country, including our very own WKBW-TV Channel 7, bringing MR. FOOD into the homes of more than 6 million loyal fans daily.

The broad mass appeal of MR. FOOD led to a cookbook contract with William Morrow & Company in 1989. Now, with a track record of more than 40 MR. FOOD cookbooks, the MR. FOOD group has relationships with publishers HarperCollins, Oxmoor House (a division of AOL Time Warner), and the American Diabetes Association (ADA) - with MR. FOOD diabetes cookbooks ranking among the all-time top-selling ADA consumer books...from all categories!

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With the television food vignettes and the cookbooks, a true American brand was born. In 1993, MR. FOOD went to QVC, where the increasingly popular brand was responsible for more than 25 million dollars in cookbook sales. As a result of the enormous success and growing credibility of the MR. FOOD brand, the MR. FOOD licensing division was launched in 1995. The MR. FOOD image became synonymously associated with quality product endorsements adhering to the no-nonsense "quick 'n' easy" MR. FOOD philosophy.

The MR. FOOD group now has to its credit a high-profile consumer Web site, www.mrfood.com, offering recipes, information, cookbooks and food-related products adhering to the MR. FOOD no-nonsense food preparation philosophy, in addition to a popular recipe continuity program, produced and distributed by Oxmoor House. The MR. FOOD brand has become well known to manufacturers and councils desiring to align themselves with a credible, trusted spokesperson who values quality and maintains exceptional standards.

MR. FOOD provides viewers, readers, and fans with the information they need to become heroes in their own kitchens. He knows that busy lifestyles require practical mealtime solutions, and he continues to provide creative ideas and foolproof, tasty recipes that use only readily available ingredients. Anyone can prepare and enjoy MR. FOOD recipes. That's because MR. FOOD stands for value, great taste, and quick 'n' easy practicality.

ILENE GRAFF

Returning to the Variety Kids Telethon for her seventh straight year, is ILENE GRAFF. Irene has been a favorite of Variety volunteers and viewers alike when she embraced the Telethon and became "Varietized" in the late 80's and early 90's.

Ilene Graff is a Grammy-nominated recording artist for her CD Baby's Broadway Lullabies. Audiences best know her as Marsha Owens, the mom on the long running ABC comedy Mr. Belvedere. She made her professional Broadway debut years earlier on the musical stage in Promises Promises, the Neil Simon, Bacharach/David hit, where she understudied the leading lady and sang backups from the orchestra pit. She performed the role of Fran Kubelik in New York a dozen times before starring in the National Tour.

Ilene went on to play Sandy for two-and-a-half years in the Broadway production of Grease, but her biggest Broadway triumph was creating the role of Cleo in the Cy Coleman, Michael Stewart musical comedy hit I Love My Wife, directed by Tony Award winner Gene Saks. She can be heard on the show's Original Cast Album. She had the thrill of performing the role of Mama Rose in a Los Angeles revival of Gypsy as well as entertaining Jerry Herman himself at a performance of Jerry's Girls.

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Ilene shared the screen with Rodney Dangerfield in the feature film Ladybugs, and is very proud to have co-starred in the ABC/Walt Disney Company film South Pacific, working with Glenn Close and Harry Connick, Jr.

Ilene has co-hosted Variety Club Children's Charities Telethons for many years, and has performed in concert for The Actors' Fund in programs saluting Kander and Ebb, Cy Coleman, Harold Arlen and Jule Styne. Ilene recently headlined at the world famous nightclub Birdland in New York as well as the Magic Castle in Hollywood. She's enjoyed sold-out engagements at the Metropolitan Room in Manhattan and most recently at the Crest Theatre in Florida.

Ilene is also an author, and her new book, co-written with Michele Gendelman and Donna Rosenstein, "What The Other Mothers Know," published by HarperCollins, is available from online booksellers everywhere (www.whattheothermothersknow.com).

Ilene and husband Ben Lanzarone met while working in the Broadway production of Grease, where Ben was playing the piano and conducting. Ben serves as Ilene's Musical Director, arranger, co-producer and accompanist. Their daughter Nikka Graff Lanzarone, recently made her Broadway debut co-starring with Patti LuPone in Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown.

Ilene will dazzle and captivate viewers into making the phones ring for Variety's special kids.

CLINT HOLMES

From England to Farnham, New York to the Las Vegas Strip and stages around the world..the 8 time Las Vegas Entertainer of The Year is coming back to help the kids of Variety! Clint Holmes is more than a singer. Like a painter with a blank canvas, he makes every performance an original. His powerful voice and magnetic stage presence embrace the upbeat side of life. When Clint is on stage, anything can happen, and usually does!

Holmes, best known for his silky vocal stylings, has also honed his many other talents, which include dancing and a warm comedic touch. Perhaps Clint picked up that comedy know-how from the ever-popular Bill Cosby, with whom he shared a stage.

"I learned a lot from Don (Rickles) and Bill who were both very generous with me when I opened for them," said Holmes. "They never held me back or limited my time on stage. I particularly learned a jazz comedian riffing style from the two of them."

Holmes comes by his tremendous talent naturally. His father is an African-American jazz musician and his mother is a classically trained Opera singer from Great Britain. Clint

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admits it was the best of two musical worlds, "My mom taught me how to sing correctly, and my dad taught me how to enjoy it."

Casual elegance describes Clint's presence on stage. He has a magical way of filling a room with a warm, comfortable sound. Clint's musical selections range from contemporary to classic, with jazz and opera thrown into the mix. In addition, he has an energy and passion for life and performing that are infectious.

Having spent more than 20 years performing, Holmes has served as Joan Rivers' sidekick and announcer on "The Late Show," as the musical feature and event correspondent for "Entertainment Tonight" and as the host of his own Emmy-award-winning talk/variety show. Holmes freely admits, though, that he loves nothing more than performing before a live audience.

Among his various recordings, Clint had a "Top Ten," smash hit, "Playground In My Mind (My Name Is Michael)."

Named Atlantic City's Entertainer of the Year three times, the multi-talented, charismatic Holmes is an American treasure. He starred in "Clint Holmes' Sophisticated Rhythms," a dynamic stage show journey through music of the 1940's through the present. In an overwhelming success, "Sophisticated Rhythms" played to two sold out performances nightly at the Sands Hotel & Casino in Atlantic City.

In July 1992, Clint was honored to be asked to be the featured performer at the Democratic National Convention at Madison Square Garden on the evening of Bill Clinton's presidential nomination.

To prove he's popular in both camps, he also appeared at The White House performing for President and Mrs. Bush and Vice President and Mrs. Quayle at "The National Literacy Honors" which aired on ABC.

Since moving to Las Vegas, Clint has quickly become a favorite in the Las Vegas community as well as a rising star in the entertainment arena. He was selected as "Best Kept Secret" by Las Vegas Life Magazine, and "Best Singer" (two years in a row), Best All-Around Las Vegas Performer" and "Favorite Male Las Vegan" by the Las Vegas Review-Journal. Additionally, he has been the featured performer and host for the "Best of Las Vegas" Gala for the Las Vegas Review-Journal and host of the "Las Vegas Life Epicurean Awards. Clint was inducted into the Buffalo Musical Hall of Fame and into the Casino Legends Hall of Fame.

He released a DVD of his live performance at the Clint Homes Theater at Harrah's, which debuted nationwide via IN DEMAND on July 7, 2001. In 2006 his PBS special of his Las Vegas Act was aired nationwide. PBS filmed three acts in Las Vegas for airing last year and along with Barry Manilow and Andrea Boccelli, Mr. Holmes, found himself in great company.

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In the world of theater Clint is a seasoned performer and writer. Along with Nelson Cole he created the Book, Music and Lyrics for the musical Comfortable Shoes. Clint starred in the World Premiere of this musical at the legendary Papermill Playhouse. The musical had another successful run at the Royal George Theater in Chicago. Clint recently starred as Simon Zealotes in the YouthTheatre America One-Night-Only benefit production of Jesus Christ Superstar with Ted Neeley, Yvonne Elliman, Barry Dennen, Ben Vereen and Jack Black.

He has just finished writing his latest musical "Just Another Man" with Larry Moss and Bill Fayne. The Nevada Conservatory Theater will present the World Premiere of this exciting new musical starring Mr. Holmes in May and June at the Judy Bailey Theater at UNLV.

Perhaps what has endeared Clint most to people of Las Vegas is his never-ending spirit of graciousness. In a short time, he has become involved with several worthwhile causes in the community such as Candlelighters, ROB Reachout, Shadetree, St. Jude's, and various cultural events. Following a brief battle with Colon Cancer, he is currently serving as a spokesman for the American Cancer Society, encouraging people over age 50 to have annual colonoscopies. He has also taken a special interest in mentoring many young people interested in becoming entertainers by working closely with the Las Vegas Academy of Performing Arts. In December 2005, he launched the Clint Holmes Foundation for the Performing Arts, which benefits children in art and music programs in the Clark County School District.

MATT MORGAN

"The Blue Print" Matt Morgan is an athlete and an actor. Standing at seven feet tall, Morgan makes an impression no matter where he goes. Look for Matt to wrestle his way into the hearts of our kids and the wallets of our viewers as he makes his very first appearance on the Variety Kids Telethon.

Given Morgan's height, he did what any red blooded American would do and found himself playing basketball. After a successful high school basketball career at Fairfield High School in Connecticut, Morgan played Division I college basketball at Monmouth University. During Morgan's freshman year at the university, the Monmouth Hawks defeated Rider University to become the Northeast Conference champions. By winning the conference tournament, Morgan and the Hawks received an automatic bid to the 1996 NCAA tournament. Following a coaching change at Monmouth, Morgan transferred to Chaminade University in Hawaii, where he finished his college basketball career and graduated magna cum laude. It was here in Hawaii where he would meet the love of his life and future wife Larissa Vasper.

While Morgan had a strong love for basketball, he decided he had another hunger he needed to answer to, pro wrestling. Morgan tried his hand at some smaller organizations in Hawaii but it wasn't until he saw an ad for an MTV show until he saw his true potential.

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In 2002, MTV was casting for the second season of their hit reality TV series "Tough Enough". The World Wrestling Entertainment hosted the show and granted two of the show's winners a one-year contract with the company. During the taping of the show Morgan suffered a knee injury that would see him being forced to withdraw from the show. WWE knew that they had a true giant with unlimited potential on their hands and decided to offer him a developmental contract with the company.

It was late 2002 when Morgan debuted in the WWE developmental territory Ohio Valley Wrestling. OVW was used to train future WWE superstars on how to perform in front of a crowd, tell stories in the ring, and develop their abilities to talk on the mic and perform as a character. During his stay in OVW Morgan caught the attention of a long time wrestling legend and his future mentor Jim Cornette. Jim is credited with creating the "Blue Print" moniker sitting that "Matt is the blue print for how big men in the wrestling business should be in the future."

Morgan would get his first taste of the WWE spotlight in 2003. It was short lived but WWE was very anxious to put someone as physically impressive as Morgan on their television. He would go on to appear on several shows on the UPN Network as well as a few Pay Per Views before returning to OVW for more fine tuning.

When Morgan returned to OVW this second time he was a new person. He was more focused and more determined than ever after getting a taste of what it was like on the main WWE Roster. The heads of OVW took notice and it wasn't long before he held OVW's more prestigious title. Morgan dominated in OVW for nearly a year before being called upon once more to join the main roster of the WWE's Smackdown Roster.

Although Morgan had found himself still in love with the business and working for the top company in the world, something felt missing. He would leave the WWE in 2005 and take his talents internationally.

Many don't realize the amount of acting that goes into pro wrestling and Morgan was confident he could demonstrate just how conditioned actors wrestlers were. While he was in Italy, Morgan was cast in a movie called "Hercules". This would be the first of many Morgan would go on to perform in. The wrestling bug was far from dead though as he wrestled throughout Europe and Japan during his down time.

Back in the states, a new wrestling company had received a chance to perform on a cable network. It was October 2005 to in which Total Nonstop Action Wrestling signed a deal with Spike TV. This caught Morgan's attention and he wanted to find his way to the company. He would do so in 2006.

Coincidentally Morgan found himself aligned with his long time mentor Jim Cornette once again. While he didn't stay in this role long, he certainly turned the heads of people in Hollywood.

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After a successful first season of the NBC revival of "American Gladiators", the company was looking to attract bigger gladiators. It didn't take long for NBC to sign off on bringing Morgan into the fold. Morgan joined the show to become the largest Gladiator in the history of the show. He was cast in the role of "The Beast". While on the show he held an undefeated record when competing one on one with the contestants.

Morgan's size and stature would soon be immortalized thanks to Richard Garriot. As part of a project "Operation Immortality", Richard Garriot spent over thirty million dollars to purchase a seat aboard a Russian Space Shuttle. On that space shuttle with him he was carrying what was called "The Immortality Drive". The drive carried the Digital DNA Sequences of select American's for the preservation of humanity. The drive is stored on the International Space Station and contains the DNA of Morgan as well as Stephen Colbert and Stephen Hawkings. Morgan was chosen because Garriot and his company believed that Morgan was the antithesis human genetics.

Morgan still wrestles for TNA and now not only referred to as "The Blue Print" Matt Morgan but also as "The DNA of TNA".

Morgan's acting career is also far from finished. Not only has he appeared in several indy movies but in September of 2010 Morgan was a featured actor on an episode of the Fox TV Series "The Good Guys". This appearance has led to several other outside projects and appearances still in development.

MORE THAN ME

More Than Me will be taking time out of their national tour to come home and help the kids of Variety by participating in the 49th annual Variety Kids Telethon. They will be appearing for the very first time.

MTM having recently returned from a successful show at the prestigious London Calling festival in Hyde Park opening for Paul McCartney in front of an estimated crowd of over 45,000 +, true to form hit the road again at the end of June to play some National dates beginning with Summerfest in Milwaukee - the largest U.S. Festival.

The Hard Rock London Calling event came about from a national contest held by the Hard Rock Corporation. More Than Me competed with hundreds of bands throughout the US and Canada but in the end, there could be only one! Spurred on by a grass roots movement by the fans of MTM and the Western New York community as a whole, and the Facebook community, the band won the competition by being judged by music fans around the world via an online voting competition and a panel of judges. WNY truly embraced this young band evidenced by the fact that the band was in the smallest market, competing with the likes of cities such as New York City, Detroit, Boston and Los Angeles.

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Robin Wilson of the Gin Blossoms notes the band are "some of the coolest, smartest, Rock&Rollers he's ever met" while Teen People magazine stated that More Than Me "may be young but are not short on talent". Their single "Unconditional Truth" from their upcoming self-titled record, has won the rock category in the international songwriting competition songoftheyear.com (VH1 Saves the Music Foundation) and is featured in the Emerging Artist Compilation at Summerfest this year (10 thousand copies to be distributed). WNY People's Choice Awards also voted "Best Original Rock Band" the group.

The band's sound, an energetic, fresh and exciting mix of Soul and Pop Rock affords them the freedom to play a wide variety of venues: from intimate acoustic coffee houses, to packed clubs, to college campuses, and festival audiences and has garnered them a formidable fan base in numerous markets. Road warriors with over 500 shows, and a 100,000 miles worth of national touring under their belts, the group has plenty of experience delivering a great live performance and the universality of their music has led to opening shows for Paul McCartney, Stevie Wonder, Pearl Jam, Ben Harper & Relentless 7, Jamiroquai, Crosby, Stills & Nash, The Hives, James Morrison, Crowded House, Corinne Bailey Rae, Elvis Costello, The Gaslight Anthem, Joshua Radin, Mary Mary, Robert Francis, Brett Michaels, The Black Eyed Peas, De La Soul, The Gin Blossoms and Boys Like Girls.

More Than Me are a four-piece band from Buffalo, NY featuring brothers Ryan Jacob Doyle (lead vocals /rhythm guitar)and Todd Doyle (drums/vocals), Joey Nicastro (lead guitar/vocals) and Justin Rizzo (bass/vocals).

Music will be provided by "The Variety Kids Telethon Orchestra" under the direction of **JOHN HASSELBACK**. John and the orchestra have performed at the show for many years.

Back for its sixth year..."**A Tribute To The Kids...A Special Concert by the Telethon National Cast**" This great concert event will take place at The Riviera Theatre on Saturday March 5th. The doors open at 6pm and the entire national cast will take the stage at 7pm. The public will see the cast performing in their element. During the telethon viewers only get the chance to see the cast do a song every once in a while. At this special concert, the cast will perform a show as they would in leading nightclubs and theatres around the world. This year, the concert is the only public place that the cast will appear. Midway through the concert, they will come out to sign autographs. Tickets are only \$20.00 and are available at Budwey's Supermarkets in Buffalo and North Tonawanda, The Riviera Theatre Box Office and the Variety Kids Telethon office on Delaware Avenue in Buffalo. For more information, call 854-7577

Channel 7 Personalities appearing will be news anchors **KEITH RADFORD, JOANNA PASCERI, GINGER GEOFFREY, PATRICK TANEY and KENDRA EAGLIN**

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with Chief Meteorologist **MIKE RANDALL**, Meteorologist **AARON MENTKOWSKI**, and Weather Anchor **JENNIFER STANONIS**. Sports Director **JEFF RUSSO** and Sports Anchor **SHAWN STEPNER** will pitch viewers for their contributions along with **LINDA PELLEGRINO and JON SUMMERS** from “AM Buffalo.”

Other Channel 7 personalities who will be on hand throughout the 12 hour event include, **JACLYN ASZTALOS, JOHN BORSA, LOU CHILELLI, ADAM FRANCIS, LAURA GRAY, JASON GRUENAUER, KYLA IGOE, ED REILLY and MIKE SPONG.**

The Executive Producer of *"The Variety Kids Telethon 2011"* for Variety is **STEVE PODOSEK** and **ED SMITH**. For WKBW-TV it's **JOHN DiSCIULLO**, Director of Strategic Content, News Operations and Community Affairs. He will be joined by “AM Buffalo Producer **LEA DICENSO**, Director/ Producer **LOU BUCHHEIT**, along with Programming Assistant **LANORA ZIOBROWSKI**.

JOEL BARONE and RICH LEE from Mobile Production produce the special video stories. Longtime veteran crew chief **CHARLIE SMITH** and Assistant Chief Engineer **KEVIN CHUDY**, under the supervision of Chief Engineer **MIKE ANGER** put the show together technically from the engineering and production side working with the NABET crew.

CHARLIE MIKOLAJCZYK and SHAWN DAVENPORT from the Graphics Department put the look together. The Promotion and Graphic Departments are under the supervision of Creative Services Director **SUE DOBMEIER** and Director of Client Services, **JIM EVANS**.

Every employee of **WKBW-TV**...including Station Manager and Vice-President of Sales **MIKE NURSE**, and the entire sales team, along with support from the Eyewitness News Team, plus members of news, production, and administration play a role in supporting Variety's Kids.

JOSEPH BEATO from the Adam's Mark Hotel together with **JOSEPH ROMANOWSKI** from **INDIGO PRODUCTIONS** will set the lights and sound for the annual event. **SPEIER DISPLAYS** under the direction of **CHARLIE SPEIER** return to put together some of the sets that transforms the Grand Ballroom of the Adam's Mark Hotel Buffalo into a television studio.

The Variety Kids Telethon will once again offer the opportunity for viewers to call in and make a donation with their **VISA, MASTERCARD, AMERICAN EXPRESS** or Discover credit card. This guaranteed donation means you can receive

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premium items from **DELTA SONIC, PIZZA HUT, BUFFALO BISONS, ENTERTAINMENT COUPON BOOK, SEASON PASS FOR 4 TO DARIEN LAKE AMUSEMENT PARK, JENSS DECOR, AUTOGRAPHED ILENE GRAFF CD, MILLS JEWELERS, ERIE COUNTY FAIR, BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY BOTANICAL GARDENS** and **much more** based on the amount of your donation. Credit card donations can also be made over the internet. See the entire list of premiums online by going to **www.varietykidstelethon.com**

The Variety Kids Telethon is also **online** through an exciting partnership with **LocalNET**. Reach the Variety Kids Telethon at **http://www.varietykidstelethon.com** and click on the **“Donate Online”** Graphic.

A great way to catch this years Variety Kids Telethon is right on your computer! Log in to **www.wkbw.com** and you can see the Telethon live in the Video Box on the main page. More and more people use their computers each day for work and fun. The Variety Kids Telethon and Channel 7 want to make it as easy as possible for everyone to see this annual labor of love and lend their support. Donations from as far away as Germany have come in via the web. There are many former Western New Yorkers who remember all the great work that the Telethon does and they still want to lend their support.

BRAND NEW TO TELETHON 2011!!...In keeping up with the times, the Variety Kids Telethon is utilizing the newest fad medium: ***T-X-T-ing***. Through Give by Cell and the Mobile Giving Foundation, donors can simply **text the word “SARAH” to number 20222**, and be charged \$10 to their cell phone bills - 100% of which goes directly to the 2010 Variety Kids Telethon (messaging and data rates may apply). In this economy it's important to apply every angle we can, and hitting a younger population is a challenge all in itself. With this new promotion we can ensure that our charity makes its mark in the 21st century, and that our kids reap all the benefits.

Other fundraising events include the **DELTA SONIC SCENTS FOR THE KIDS** now through March 6th. You can have a fresh smelling car when you purchase a car freshener from Delta Sonic. Proceeds benefit the Telethon.

The Variety Kids Telethon is giving away a 2010 Chevrolet Aveo, thanks to **PADDOCK CHEVROLET** on Delaware Avenue in Kenmore. Tickets are available at the Walden Galleria Mall on the Lower Level in front of Kaufman's. Tickets will be available through 2pm on Sunday March 6th. This fund raiser has 2 great prizes! The winner receives the car and the seller of the winning ticket receives \$500.00 cash! Look for the winner announced during the Telethon in the 2pm hour!

The sale of items at all area supermarkets including **BUDWEY'S , DELTA SONIC CONVENIENCE STORES , JUBILEE, SAVE-A-LOT, SHURFINE RETAILERS ,**

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TOPS, WEGMANS, WILSON FARMS mean dollars! The Food Brokers of WNY are participating once again with donations from various vendors. A full page ad showing their generosity appeared in the Buffalo News on Sunday January 23.

The Buffalo News will continue its annual tradition of **Buffalo News Kids Day** on Tuesday April 26, 2011. Look for representatives from **The Buffalo News** to talk about Kids Day on TV during the Telethon. To date this great sale of special editions of The Buffalo News has raised over **\$3,800,000** since 1983.

The Telethon is broadcast from the **ADAM'S MARK HOTEL** on Church Street in Downtown Buffalo under the supervision of **MINESH PATEL**. For information on hotel operations, call (716) 845-5100. This is the 3rd year the Telethon will be broadcast from the Grand Ballroom of the hotel.

The Women's and Children's Hospital of Buffalo is the primary recipient of the funds raised. President **CHERYL KLASS**, along with **ELSIE DAWE**, **SUSAN SPANITZ**, from the Women & Children's Hospital of Buffalo Foundation and **JOHN MOSCATO**, Public Relations and Marketing for Children's look forward to telling the story about the place where medical miracles are made every day. Look for unique stories throughout the Telethon event, updates on the Variety Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit, the Robert Warner M.D. Center for Children with Special Needs and Early Childhood Program as well as Variety's charities. It was the late Dr. Robert Warner who began this whole television fundraising effort 48 years ago.

Other Western New York media are important in spreading the word about the Variety Kids Telethon. Radio partners like ...WJYE 96.1 with **Joe Chille and Cheryl Hagen**, and other Town Square personalities...**Ramblin Lou and the Family** from WXRL...**Bill Lacy** from WHTT, **Randy Bushover** from WBEN NewsRadio 930, **Mike McQueen** from WTSS 102.5 FM, **Larry Norton** and **Carl Russo** from 97 Rock...**Shredd & Ragan** from 103.3 The Edge, **Clay Moden, Dale Mussen and Wendy Lynn** from WYRK 106.5 FM, and **THE MAGIC MAN** from WBLK FM 93.3.

We thank **Bob Hill** from WJYE, Jack FM92, WBLK, WYRK, and WECK, **Chris Klein** from WEDG, WGRD, WHTT, WMMY and WHLD, **Mary Davis** with WWWS, WGR and Kiss 98.5, **Terry Frank** from WJTN in Jamestown; **David Rowley** from WDOE in Dunkirk; **John Raymond** from WLVL in Lockport; **Fred Haier** from WSPQ in Springville for their help and cooperation in airing their public service shows and talking about the Variety Kids Telethon.

WKBW-TV Channel 7 President and General Manager **BILL RANSOM** is committed to supporting "The Variety Kids Telethon" to benefit The Women and Children's Hospital

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of Buffalo, the Robert Warner MD Center For Children With Special Needs and other Western New York children charities for many years. Bill and his entire team are ready to

say YES to our children's request and continue **Making Good Things Happen Everyday...For "OUR" Kids!"** during "The Variety Kids Telethon 2011"

**Channel 7 and Variety - "MAKING GOOD THINGS HAPPEN
EVERYDAY...FOR "OUR" KIDS!"**

**49th Annual Variety Kids Telethon Sunday March 6, 2011 7am -7pm
Adam's Mark Hotel Buffalo Grand Ballroom**