

# San Francisco Chronicle

SFCHRONICLE.COM AND SFGATE.COM | Tuesday, March 4, 2014 | PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER | SLOO ★★★★★

## PHILANTHROPY



Leah Mills / The Chronicle

Page Hannah Adler, who dreamed up the Painted Turtle camp 17 years ago, smooches husband Lou Adler. The two are behind the entertainment at the benefit event at Davies Symphony Hall in S.F. next week.

## Star-studded event shines a light on camp for ill kids

Celebrities coming to S.F. to help program's founders do good

By Leah Garchik

A flock of big-name, big-heart celebrities — including Annette Bening, Danny DeVito, Josh Groban, Randy Newman, Jack Nicholson, Renee Zellweger and Bonnie Raitt — whooshes into Davies Symphony Hall on Monday for “A Starry Evening of Music, Comedy & Surprises.”

The invitation list includes local tech stars, too. Jack Dorsey (Twitter and Square) and Sean Parker (Napster and Facebook) are on the event committee, along with more familiar names: Montana, Wilsey, Newsom, Traina and Baer.

The evening is a benefit for the Painted Turtle, a camp for sick kids; the UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, which cares for

### A Starry Evening of Music, Comedy & Surprises

**What:** A benefit for the three organizations dedicated to helping sick children

**When:** 7:30 p.m. Monday

**Where:** Davies Symphony Hall

**Information:** [www.ucsfbenioffchildrens.org/starryevening](http://www.ucsfbenioffchildrens.org/starryevening)

sick kids; and the Teddy Bear Rescue Fund, which helps the families of sick kids.

Everything about all that — the healthy raising money for the sick, the have-nots, the bold-faced celebrities raising money for the publicly nameless — is noble and grand. But before the tree, there comes the seed: the marriage of co-producer and celebrity-wrangler Lou Adler and Page Hannah Adler, the woman who dreamed up the camp 17 years ago.

Lou Adler, record producer, artist manager, director, theater owner and Rock and Roll Hall of Famer, is in the notoriously tough music business. This year's show will include campers performing with the

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FROM THE COVER

# Event brings out the stars to help kids

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pros, and every one of those pros is a volunteer. "Nobody asks if they're going on first," Lou Adler said at a recent cocktail party benefit pitch at Ann and Gordon Getty's Pacific Heights home.

The Painted Turtle, worlds away in Lake Hughes (Los Angeles County), is free for the 2,400 children and family members who use it each year.

**'Raise a little hell'**

It is an offshoot of the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp founded in 1988 by Paul Newman, who envisioned a place where children, no matter how seemingly incapacitated, could "relax, kick back and raise a little hell." The camp ran on profits from sales of salad dressings he'd "invented" with pal, novelist and playwright A.E. Hotchner.

Lou Adler, 80, and Page Adler, 50 — whose father was a friend of Hotchner's — have been married since 1992, live in Los Angeles, and have raised seven sons. Page Adler had "been volunteering at everything possible since she was 15," said Lou Adler, and she volunteered at Newman's camp in Connecticut in its second year. A few years later, after she and Lou Adler married, "she opened the door to me," said Lou Adler, and they began planning a California camp.

A needs assessment study found there were 17,500 seriously ill children in California with no access to summer recreation, and a survey of state facilities resulted in UCSF's children's hospital becoming a founding partner of the California camp. The Painted Turtle was the sixth camp in Newman's SeriousFun Children's Network.

**Lab and X-ray facilities**

There were requirements for the site: lab and X-ray facilities less than 45 minutes away and an emergency room reachable by 15-minute helicopter flight (there's a pad at the camp). When a 173-acre former RV park two hours north of Los Angeles was chosen as the site, Lou Adler envisioned "a couple of bungalows and a fire pit." In 2004, seven years and \$30 million later, the Painted Turtle opened.

Every activity is accessible to all — "so if you're in a wheelchair," said Page Adler, "no one will say to you, 'Your entrance is around the back to the left.'"



Laura Morton / Special to The Chronicle 2008

Bonnie Raitt (center) shares the stage with Painted Turtle attendees at a benefit performance for the camp for seriously ill kids.



Courtesy Painted Turtle 2009

A child climbs on ropes at the Los Angeles County camp, which includes a medical staff and many fun activities.

And everything is ADA-compliant, including a high ropes course for wheelchairs. Dialysis is offered in cabins and in the Well Shell medical clinic. There's an on-site pharmacy, and every facility is within 600 yards of the clinic and dining hall. A medical director and nursing director are joined by rotating medical specialists.

Most summer campers attending weeklong condition-specific sessions are away from their families for the first time.

But there are family weekends year-round, and an Outpost Program that brings one-day, on-site play and activity camps to patients, including children at UCSF Benioff and 11 other participating hospitals around the state. The Painted Turtle's budget is \$4.5 million a year. Ten days before the benefit, \$850,000 (toward a goal of \$1 million) had been committed by sponsors. Tickets in the Davies tiers start at \$125, with orchestra seats selling for

\$1,000 and up. The Adlers are enthusiastic, but putting on a benefit means assuming a fundraisers' quid pro quo. "Whoever you ask will ask you next week," as Lou Adler puts it.

**Tech community**

There's a lot of asking being done by people at UCSF Benioff. Kathy Balestreri, head of patient services at the hospital, credits investor and political force Ron Conway, a longtime supporter of the hospital, for links to the tech community.

This year, dermatologist Richard Glogau and wife Pam Glogau's Teddy Bear Rescue Fund is included in the glittering Davies Hall event so donors aren't besieged with competing requests. The Glogaus spent time at UCSF when their young son required surgery for orthopedic problems. They noticed other parents sleeping in their cars, eating grape jelly on white bread for dinner. Realizing the need for "a cookie jar full of money for social workers to give out discreetly," said Pam Glogau, they created the Teddy Bear Rescue Fund. In 10 years, they have raised \$1.3 million, mainly through annual carnival-like Snuggly

Soiree parties at the Gettys' home.

**Medical crises**

Hospital executive director Kim Scurr talked to the Gettys' guests about the difficulties of helping children in medical crises. Most hospitalized children are sicker than hospitalized adults; more than 50 percent of the beds in the Benioff Children's Hospital are ICU beds. She also described a few cases (without names, of course), in which the Glogaus' fund had provided gas money for visiting parents and paid for "unfunded medications."

Midtalk, Scurr, whose everyday work involves helping these families, choked up at the Gettys' event. "Whoops," she said. "This doesn't usually happen."

Whatever has befallen those children isn't usual, either. "The goal of the camp," said Page Adler, "is to bring back some normalcy to these children. Their illness is part of them, but it doesn't necessarily define them."

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