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## U.S. Variety News: Winter 2007

The  
Heart  
of  
Show  
Business



**Kids on the Go!**

### *Note from the CEO: Ana LaDou*

*Variety - The Children's Charity has always been there for the children who need our assistance the most. Today, that stays true as we continue to grow and expand our mobility program, Variety Kids on the Go!, which provides durable medical equipment for children whose families need support. The special mobility equipment aids the children in becoming active and independent members of their communities, which makes a positive impact now and will continue to do so for years to come. As the mother of one recipient said, "You have made it possible for him to feel independent and free - and you have given him*

*the chance to play just like every other five year old boy." Variety has implemented the program in the United States and worldwide, providing grants to children in Australia, Great Britain, Israel and Canada. Our enthusiasm for the program grows with each letter we receive from a grateful parent, with each photo we see of a child grinning while seated on a new bike, or when we hear about a child finally taking steps with his or her very own walker. We have eased their way in the world for some special children, and we look forward to bringing the same gift to many more children in 2008.*

# 2007 Conference Highlights: Another Rewarding Year

U.S. Variety's 4th Annual National Leadership Conference was a great success thanks to the hard work and dedication of our host, Variety of Pittsburgh. Executive Director Celia Hindes planned three fantastic days and brought in extremely informative, motivating speakers who shared their expertise on topics like planned giving, creating diverse and successful boards and new trends in non-profit governance. The conference refocused Variety's efforts on ways to better serve our children throughout the country.



Variety of Philadelphia received the 1st Place Fiscal Excellence award for the second year in a row. "We are extremely excited and absolutely honored by the award," Philadelphia Executive Director Andrew Pack says. Philadelphia cuts costs by seeking sponsorships and focusing on direct programming. "We go out and get donated services," explains Andrew. "We have a lot of in-kind gifts for programs, services and special events. I think because we are program-driven, that makes us a lot more attractive to corporate sponsors."

Philadelphia also received \$5,000, a Freedom Concepts adaptive bicycle and a Focus Features DVD set. Freedom Concepts, which makes custom-built mobility devices for individuals with disabilities, donated an adaptive bicycle to Philadelphia as part of its prize. President Ken Vanstraelen was on hand to award the bike, and by the end of Thursday, was so impressed by Variety's work and dedication that he generously donated adaptive bikes for each of our telethons.

In addition to the educational aspect of the conference, attendees enjoyed dinner at the home of Pittsburgh board member Michele Atkins, an evening meal and show at the CLO Cabaret Theatre sponsored by Keith and Carol Louiselle, and the final night award dinner and entertainment at the distinguished Duquesne Club.



Pictured at left: Celia Hindes, Pittsburgh Executive Director, and Grahame Mapp, Variety International President. At top: Lance Hood, North Texas Executive Director; Ana LaDou, U.S. Variety CEO/President; Pahjmon Lipsey, Houston Chief Barker; Mircea Divricean, Utah staff member



Pictured above: Jennie Cascio, Detroit Executive Director; Sue Mapp, Variety International Ambassador; Jan Albus, St. Louis Executive Director; Sandi Pape, Variety International Ambassador



Pictured above: Monique Jackson, Pittsburgh staff member; Randy Hester, U.S. Variety 2nd Vice President and North Texas Chief Barker; Ed Jablonski, Illinois board member; Jan Albus, St. Louis Executive Director

# meet & greet

## Message from the U.S. President: A year for Strategic Planning

Through his strategic planning, Variety International President Grahame Mapp's forward thinking has led to worldwide change to our organization, and we too have embarked on our own plans for growth and improvement.

The first phase of this process is complete, and USV has gained more autonomy as well as fiduciary oversight of all 30 U.S. locations. We have standardized the USV financials, logos and reporting forms for all U.S. locations, and for the first time, USV meets all 20 Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance charity standards.

We have now embarked on our second phase of strategic planning, which includes updating our By-Laws with the regional representation and the unification of our programs across the country. It is imperative that our local leadership has a voice at the board level, and this will formalize representation by providing additional local seats on the national board. The unprecedented growth of USV over the last year with three satellite locations slated to open in 2007/2008 is an exciting time in our history. The support of the entertainment community over the last 80 years is expanding into many other areas of our local communities, and we are thrilled to be a part of this expansion.

*Jack Foley, President, U.S. Variety*



## Branching Out

An increased need for services and Variety's growing capacity to reach more children has resulted in the opening of Variety satellite offices in Delaware, Iowa and Missouri, with plans to launch new satellites in Ohio, Nashville and Arizona within the next year.

Satellite subchapters that reach an even broader community base are paving the way for a new world in community-based philanthropy.

Fred Astaire Dance Studio owner Jerry Satava is pursuing a satellite office in Ohio and has already held his first fundraiser, a showcase at his Canton studio. His work illustrates why Variety's special relationship with Fred Astaire continues to yield great results for local children. "What I like about Variety is that the money goes to the kids. I can raise money in Canton and it stays in Canton," states Jerry.

Business owner Megan Cathey of Nashville is setting up a satellite office with the intent of focusing on mobility issues. "I just think it's so important," she says. "I watched them give a child with cerebral palsy a bike at the

National Conference, and watching him and the look on his face was just incredible."

Although Megan is in the initial stages of setting up the satellite, she has already held her first fundraiser: a Halloween party, complete with rock bands, music, costumes, and food. These satellites increase both our reach and visibility in the community, allowing Variety to fulfill its mission of positively impacting the lives of children in even more areas throughout the country.

## Variety International Convention: *Travel Across the Pond*

Variety of New Zealand invites you to the International Convention on May 11-14, 2008 to celebrate Variety's 80th birthday! The program will recognize and honor the success of Variety tents from around the world while providing opportunities for professional development for staff, executive directors, and board members. Unique New Zealand cuisine, beverages, entertainment and experiences will be showcased throughout the Convention. For more information, please visit: <http://2008.variety.org.nz/>



For those who haven't traveled across the pond before, please feel free to call the Variety International office at 212.695.3818 for assistance in making your plans.

## Anne Fontaine: *Stylish Fundraising for Variety's Women*

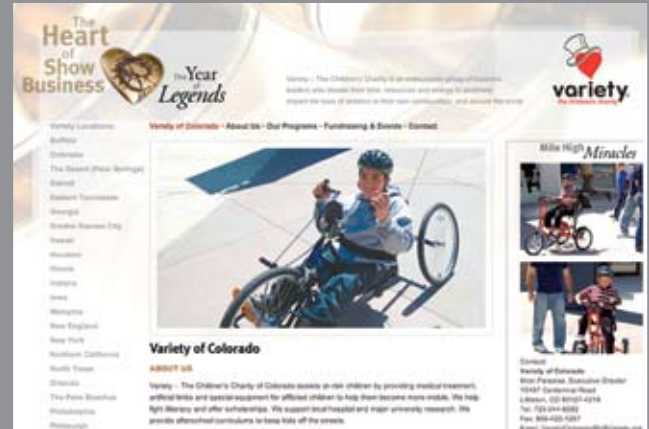
Variety was chosen as the beneficiary of the annual Mother's Day fundraiser held by Anne Fontaine, a women's boutique with locations in ten different countries, and with more than 20 locations in the United States. This partnership raised \$9,800.00 for local Variety tents and exposed our mission and efforts to many of the store's patrons. We thank Anne Fontaine for its work in promoting our charity, and especially Sandi Pape from Detroit for suggesting Variety as a beneficiary for this donation.



## U.S. Variety Revamped and Revitalized on the Web

U.S. Variety unveiled its updated Web site this fall with a wealth of information for those needing assistance and for those who wish to lend their support. Each Variety location will have its own page detailing unique information about the chapter, its programs and events, with links to the chapter's own site as well as a 'donate now' button.

Visit us at: [www.usvariety.org](http://www.usvariety.org).



## Go Green

Our daily work is committed to providing a greater today for the children of our community, but is your office doing enough to ensure a greater future for them as well? This is the first in our three-part series of suggestions on how to 'green' your office by recycling and reusing, saving energy costs and conscious buying. Follow these tips to make your office more environmentally friendly!

### Recycle/Reuse:

Have recycling bins readily available

Double-side your printing

Use the blank side of paper for scrap paper or to print internal materials

Use washable glasses, plates, silverware and mugs instead of paper and plastic

Have a water cooler or drink tap water instead of bottled water

Recycle ink cartridges and toners

Reuse shipping boxes

## Passing the Torch *Young Variety of Iowa*

Young Variety of Iowa President Keeley Smith fondly remembers a pig-tailed kindergartener skipping hand-in-hand with her mother, excited to receive her new bike at the Bikes for Kids Giveaway in Des Moines. Although it was cold and rainy that day, when the little girl received her bike, she hopped on it and sped around in sheer excitement.

Keeley and her peers are a new generation continuing the Variety tradition of compassion and philanthropy for children with special needs. “When I see a kid with a new bike, it really solidifies for me what Young Variety is all about. If there’s something I’ve had that another kid hasn’t had, I want them to have that,” Keeley says.

Since being re-activated six years ago, Young Variety of Iowa has grown from seven young professionals to 650 dedicated,

enthusiastic members. The group teams with its parent chapter, Variety of Iowa, to grant durable medical equipment to individuals, provide Sunshine Coaches to children’s organizations throughout Des Moines, raise money for Bikes for Kids, participate in the annual telethon and take kids with disabilities on special outings.

In order to do this, Young Variety of Iowa puts on an assortment of charity events throughout the year, hosting an

annual Valentine’s Soirée and a Golf Tournament. “The idea is to get people talking,” states Keeley. “There’s no other way to spread the word than to speak with people about what we do.” Her goal is to make Variety and its mission visible among the young professionals of Des Moines and to



continue to expand the chapter. Young Variety’s dedication to children ensures that the torch they carry will burn brightly for many years to come. *Pictured above: Bikes for Kids 2007*

## *Helping Save the Tiniest Lives*

**T**he dedication and services of the Will Rogers Institute and Variety has exemplified the best that philanthropy and charity has to offer. Recently, the two came together to provide life-saving equipment to neonatal care units in Tennessee and Southern California.

In August, Will Rogers and Variety of Eastern Tennessee donated \$275,000 to St. Mary’s Medical Center in Knoxville with additional support from the Regal Foundation. The gift is designated for the Special Care Nursery and purchasing neonatal respiratory equipment.

“I appreciate the great generosity of these organizations in making a donation that will help to improve services in the Special Care Nursery and throughout the hospital,” says Debra London, CEO and president of St. Mary’s Health Systems. “The Women’s Pavilion at St. Mary’s Medical Center is undergoing a major renovation to better meet the needs of newborns, their mothers and families.”

Will Rogers also partnered with Variety of Southern California last fall to donate two new Giraffe Infant Warmer and Isolette ventilators for the neonatal intensive care unit, making Will Rogers and Variety part of an indelible legacy of humanity and kindness that will be remembered for generations to come.



*Education for Today.  
Research for Tomorrow.*

# The Fred Astaire Touch

## The Gift of Independence

7-year-old Elliot suffers from seizures that make riding a normal bike a dangerous activity. Dravet syndrome has created severe neurodevelopment consequences for Elliot, including mental retardation and an inability to coordinate voluntary muscular movements. As a result, riding a bike required the constant attention of his parents, and he was only able to ride for limited periods of time.

Upon hearing his story, Variety of Illinois agreed to pay for a special bike for Elliot using funds raised through a partnership with Fred Astaire Dance Studios. The family was presented with the bike at the Astaire Awards Championships in Illinois. With his new adaptive bicycle, Elliot can ride his bike as often as he likes and with far less risks than riding a normal bike, which can frequently spark seizures.

Although Elliot is generally resistant to the ongoing physical therapy he receives for his seizures, he truly enjoys riding his new bike, which is one of the best sources of physical therapy he could have. Being able to ride to his heart's content is not only a source of joy for Elliot, but for his parents as well.

"Because of the built-in safety features and the wide wheelbase, we no longer have to worry about him hurting himself in the event of a seizure," says Elliot's mother, Mary Anne. "This gift has offered him such a sense of freedom and independence. That is so important for him since we have had to place so many restrictions on him during his day-to-day life because of his disabilities."

Variety of Illinois and Fred Astaire Dance Studios are grateful for the opportunity to broaden Elliot's horizons, and they thank all of their supporters for this gift to him and his family.



## Kids Shine at Fred Astaire Dance Studio

Children from Variety – The Children's Charity of Detroit waltzed and tangoed every Saturday at the Fred Astaire Dance Studio in Bloomfield Hills, MI as part of a special session that exposes kids with disabilities to the magic of ballroom dancing.

Studio owner Evan Mountain and General Manager/Instructor Lada Reschikova sponsored and taught the three-month, one-on-one lessons.

Using their newfound dance skills, the children performed for the Variety of Detroit Board of Directors and starred in a dance video that was shown at the annual Martinis and Lamborghinis fundraiser. "The staff of Fred Astaire and the children worked with such dedication and commitment, and the result was phenomenal!" says Variety of Detroit staff member Jean Bugeaud. The first session was so successful that the studio and Variety of Detroit agreed to continue the lessons,

bringing even more of their special children out onto the dance floor. Variety would love to expand this program to all Fred Astaire Dance Studios with the corresponding Variety chapter.

Please contact the national office of Variety for more information.

*Pictured at top left: Elliot and his new bike.*

*At bottom, back row, from left: Evan Mountain (Owner, Fred Astaire Studio-WBF), Rafal Liedke (dance instructor), Mr. Debao (Parent/Dance Partner); Front Row: Jamie Bresso, Katie Kauffman, Ben Monkaba, Liesl Ramseyer, Jenna Debao, Asia Anderson.*



**FRED ASTAIRE**  
FRANCHISED DANCE STUDIOS.



# The Great Outdoors

Mikayla has the same sense of adventure as other 9-year-olds; she enjoys walks, trips to the park, hikes with her family, the beach, and many other outdoor activities. But her rare chromosome deletion means she has very low muscle tone and is easily fatigued, making it difficult for her to participate in family activities. Her mother Jodi says, "The most important thing to me is to keep my family as healthy and happy as possible. The outdoor activities that are low-cost for us to do, and that we enjoy the most, have been limited due to Mikayla's physical limitations."

Jodi began researching special needs strollers but found the cost overwhelming for her family of seven, especially with her husband

out of work due to a severe injury. After being denied aid from insurance companies and two state agencies, Jodi found

out about Variety through her local Starlight Starbright office. She applied for a stroller and was approved two weeks later.

"The look on Mikayla's face when we pulled the stroller out of the box was beyond description," Jodi says. "There are not enough words to describe her excitement. She was grinning from ear to ear."

U.S. Variety thanks Starlight Starbright for getting Jodi in touch with our organization and AMC Theatres for their hard work raising the money that funded Mikayla's stroller.

At Left: Mikayla in her stroller



## Gold Heart 2008 Twentieth Century Fox

Variety is proud to launch its 2007-2008 Gold Heart Pin Campaign with the support of Twentieth Century Fox. The pin features a child's handprints inside our traditional Gold Heart, with supporting marketing materials highlighting the very core of our organization: the special children we serve.

This campaign allows the new Gold Heart to remain timeless and will surely be a classic collector's item for many years to come. Variety is honored to work with Fox for the second year in a row, and we are privileged to have their support for our signature fundraising endeavor.

## Variety Story: Winter 2007

One Atlanta family is celebrating an extra special Christmas this year thanks to Variety of Georgia. The chapter celebrated its 1st Big Hearts for the Holiday Film and Popcorn Party on December 8 at the Lefont Sandy Springs Theatre. After the film screening, Santa made a special appearance to present gifts to 100 deserving children from a wide range of charities that Variety of Georgia supports. One recipient, Harrison, who was diagnosed with probable Mitochondrial Disease, was thrilled to receive his very own specially adapted bike. His grateful mother wrote, "I cried half the way home on Saturday and again when I looked at the pictures of the event. Variety is amazing.

'THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

"Variety has made it possible for him to feel independent and free - and has given him the chance to play just like every other five year old boy. The bike is going to be great for physical therapy and improving his balance, muscle tone, etc. - but it is also a wonderful tool for letting him play."

A special thanks to all of our supporters who help make Christmas wishes come true for Variety's special kids!



*At top: Harrison on his new bike. At right: Harrison and his very special Santa.*



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