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Tuesday, July 9, 2013

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Sally Taylor and Something Underground at the Summer House

Katherine Berman

This Saturday's concert at the **Summer House**, featuring **Sally Taylor** performing with the Colorado band **Something Underground**, promises to be more than just a happening of gifted artists playing exceptional live music; the glamorous evening will benefit the efforts of Partners for Youths with Disabilities, a Boston based non-profit that empowers young people with disabilities to reach their full potential.

The event will include a two-hour musical set on the lawn at **Beachside Bistro** next to pool area. Summer House owners, **Peter Karlson** and **Danielle deBenedictis**, will reprise their role hosting and sponsoring the benefit as they did last summer, and provide the resort's famously delectable passed appetizers, wine, beer, and perhaps a cocktail of the night.

Dean Bragonier, PYD's managing director as well as Taylor's husband, explained that for him and his wife, the cause, concert, and the altruism making it possible are all near and dear to their hearts.

"Peter and Danielle are two of the most generous human beings I have ever met. This is probably around a \$10,000 donation by letting us do this in their space. They are incredible and so sweet," said Bragonier.

"When Danielle learned about our work, she immediately insisted that we do a benefit concert last summer, and that the Summer House would contribute everything, and all proceeds would go to us. We were completely blown away by the reception that we had."

Taylor, who played last year with a backup musician, will bring it up a notch by teaming up with the Boulder, Colorado-based band, *Something Underground*, with whom she has performed extensively all over the world. The two musical forces, noted Bragonier, have held previous charity concerts in southeast Asia to advocate for victims of landmines.

*Watch a [promotional video](#) for *Something Underground**

"To see all of them performing together brought tears to the eyes. It was so spiritually impactful. The love and camaraderie they have is so exceptionally rare," Bragonier testified. "The two brothers in the band (Seth and Josh Larson) are our sons' godfathers. We have known them for a long time, and they are a pair of the most talented musicians I have heard in my entire life. They just marinate in and exude goodness and sweetness. They emulate the generosity and compassion that PYD stands for. This is their first time to Nantucket ever. They are just so truly extraordinary I can't even describe it."

Bragonier is an avid supporter of his wife's artistic abilities, touting that the daughter of James Taylor and Carly Simon possesses a skill set and level of talent second to none.

[Video of Sally Taylor](#) at the Summer House last summer

"Sally is a prolific singer-songwriter, similar in style to Natalie Merchant. She's got melodies reminiscent of her father. The artistry of her lyrics is similar to Carly's writing. It's absolutely amazing," said Bragonier.

Saturday's event is part of Bragonier's efforts in his second year as managing director of PYD to steer funding away from government and foundation grants and focus on the passion and empathy of individuals who truly understand the wide spectrum of disabilities, which affect many families firsthand.

"When I say that everyone is directly or closely related to disabilities, it pertains to the fact that chances are, with the increasing diagnosis of autism, disabilities have become a tighter knit circle. People are much more cognizant of what it means to be disabled than they were 20 or 30 years ago," said Bragonier.

PYD's philosophy, centering on a mentorship model, is to empower individuals with disabilities to recognize their true potential and help foster a sense of confidence that will enable them to be productive and valued members of society.

"We run a variety of programs that are based on what I refer to as being 'disability agnostic,'" said Bragonier. "Disability agnostic is a term I have come up with to explain that we as an organization believe that it's a very slippery slope when you start to distinguish which types of disabilities are worthy of assistance and which are not. What we really prefer to do is demonstrate the sort of inclusion that we hope the United States as a society will emulate."



Bragonier shared that though both he and Taylor have dyslexia, they consider the learning disability to be one of their best character traits, helping them develop their most valued and interesting skill sets.

The wonderful thing about dyslexia is that for the difficulties that it may pose, it brings with it ancillary benefits. For Sally, it is her artistic skill set. She is the most diverse artist I have ever met, and her music is simply one aspect of her portfolio," said Bragonier. "What is so amazing about learning disabilities is that they bring with them benefits that are unprecedented. For me personally, my dyslexia has enabled me to cultivate a work ethic that I would never have achieved without it because I had to work twice as hard as everybody else."

Bragonier hopes that Saturday's concert will help every guest understand that there is an organization out there devoted to the inclusion of people with disabilities.

"The employment barriers to entry, as well as the social stigma that people with disabilities face is deteriorating," said Bragonier. "Individuals with disabilities will experience a tremendous transformation to acceptance and embrace. A society that welcomes people with disabilities and values their participation is a stronger and more productive society than one that does not include."

Sally Taylor with special guest Something Underground will perform Saturday, July 13, at the Summer House Beachside Bistro from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.; tickets are \$100 per person. To purchase tickets please visit www.pyd.org or call [617-556-4075, ext. 17](tel:617-556-4075).