

# The Inquirer and Mirror

## Sally Taylor plays benefit show at Summer House



Photo by Susan Finnerty

Sally Taylor will perform Saturday at The Summer House.

### Concert supports Partners For Youth with Disabilities

By Claire Martin  
I&M Staff Writer

Singer-songwriter Sally Taylor, the daughter of James Taylor and Carly Simon, will return to Nantucket Saturday for the second annual Partners For Youth with Disabilities benefit concert at The Summer House.

Joining her onstage in a special performance will be Taylor's favorite Colorado band, Something Underground, performing

a blend of folk, rock and funk.

The concert is this season's first event of the Summer Series: a handful of concerts, social gatherings and events throughout the Cape and Islands that was launched last summer. Saturday's concert will raise both money and awareness for the organization to which Taylor has close ties. She believes supporting the Partners for Youth foundation to be vital due to the lack of funding that it, along with similar programs for individuals with disabilities, receives. These programs are necessary in helping to support these individuals to live successful lives and

achieve their dreams, she said.

"If it can bring people together and if it can inspire people to open up their hearts to a project, any project, but this one in particular, it is worth it," Taylor said of using her music as a platform to raise awareness. "It is so necessary because there's so little funding that gets to children with disabilities."

Established in 1985, Partners for Youth with Disabilities was founded by Regina Snowden in an effort to bring mentoring programs to an under-served population and to promote inclusivity in other youth programs. Stem-

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### Taylor: Summer House concert benefits Partners for Youth with Disabilities

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ming from one core program, PYD has expanded to five different programs that encourage self-esteem, healthy living, creativity, inclusive practices and career development for those between the ages of 6 and 24 living with a disability. The organization uses a very broad definition for the term disability, one that includes those who deal with cognitive, physical, sensory and learning disabilities.

"We thought it would be a slippery slope for us to start distinguishing between which disabilities were worthy of assistance and which were not," said Taylor's husband and PYD managing director Dean Bragonier. "So we instead designed our programs to be universal and 100 percent accessible to anyone who self-identified as having a disability."

The Boston-based organization is based primarily on the mentorship model. Close to 60 percent of program mentors share the disability with the youth that they mentor, Bragonier said. Group programs also create a strong support network, one that brings about a shared learning environment.

"This sort of transfer of wisdom is something that resonates particularly well if it is coming from a peer who has quite literally walked in your shoes," Bragonier said. "And that is something that is extremely powerful and lends itself to a very safe environment for individuals with disabilities to convey their own strength and hope to each other."

The overarching goal of the program is to empower individuals to realize their true potential and become productive members of society. The hope is that people will recognize the need to create a society that is inclusive of all disabilities, Bragonier said. "If we can demonstrate that people with disabilities are assets, not detriments to society, but that instead individuals with disabilities have a unique perspective and if their unique perspective is welcomed, then our society grows in its diversity and its strength."

"That's why this is so important. It's so important that because we get to feel successful in the world every day and take that for granted, that we give the opportunity for people with disabilities to do the same thing," Taylor added.

"I'd like to say that we have found some secret sauce," Bragonier said of the program's success. "But the reality is we just quite simply create a community for individuals with disabilities to feel safe and to recognize who they truly are and how they can be the most productive individuals that they can be."

Partners for Youth with Disabilities is planning to expand to other regions, beginning with the Cape and Islands. This summer's benefit concert is one way to raise awareness and create connections on the island in an effort to bring the services to the Nantucket community, to serve those individuals and their families who could benefit from them, Bragonier said.

Like her parents and brother Ben Taylor, Sally Taylor has pursued a musical career and is perhaps best known for her acoustic sound, and evocative, introspective lyrics.

In collaboration with his wife's musical talents, Bragonier was able to use his fundraising capabilities to kick off the summer concert series last summer.

"I feel so incredibly grateful at my husband's inspiration to participate in children's lives with disabilities and that I get the opportunity to sort of jump on the coattails of that and ride it around because what could be more worthwhile than helping kids to grow and live their lives?" Taylor asked.

Bragonier said he is also thankful for the support of Danielle de Benedictis and Peter Karlson, owners of The Summer House, who have long supported PYD. de Benedictis first shared her interest in wanting to assist in raising visibility and fundraising for the program early last summer. For the second season in a row the pair will be offering The Summer House as a venue for the concert and sponsoring the event.

"The two of them are spreading wings as far as I'm concerned," said Bragonier. "They're incredibly generous. I can't say enough about them."

Both Taylor and Bragonier are excited for their return to the island this weekend.

"Nantucket is particularly enjoyable because it's this kind of mysterious 'other' island," said Taylor, who spends much of her time on Martha's Vineyard. "I absolutely love being surrounded by that beauty. It's so incredibly clean and bright and festive."

The songstress is actually quite familiar with the island's music scene. Throughout the 1990s, Taylor would perform here with a band called The Boogies. "We'd play at The Muse every summer and it was just the highlight of our summer," she said.

"We'd come over and set The Muse on fire, doing sold-out concerts."

Most importantly however, she looks forward to supporting the cause she believes to be very important. "It's magic for these kids and it's music, and to participate in the growing of the organization," said Taylor. "I can't imagine a better thing to sing for."

*Sally Taylor, 6-8 p.m. Saturday, July 13 at The Summer House Beachside Bistro, 17 Ocean Ave. Tickets are limited and can be purchased for \$100 online at [www.pyd.org](http://www.pyd.org) or by calling (617) 556-4057, ext. 17.*

***"We'd come over and set The Muse on fire, doing sold-out concerts."***

*– Sally Taylor On previous island visits*