



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COCA Raises \$825,000 at April Fundraiser to Benefit Arts Education Programs and Scholarships

Anheuser-Busch Presents Event for Ninth Year

ST. LOUIS, May 1, 2019 – COCAcabana 2019: *Upside Down*, Center of Creative Arts’ annual spring fundraising event, raised \$825,000 on Friday, April 26, 2019. COCA, the fourth largest multidisciplinary community arts center in the country, relies upon this yearly event to sustain its programming in University City and throughout the St. Louis community. With a core value of accessibility, COCA annually provides nearly \$1 million in scholarships and arts education programs at no cost to more than 4,000 students in low-income schools and communities around St. Louis.

The event, usually held on-site at COCA, was at The Ritz-Carlton St. Louis to accommodate construction at the COCA building – a result of Create Our Future, a \$45 million capital campaign to renovate and expand COCA’s historic building and raise capital reserves and endowment funds.

“We were so pleased to have hosted 600 people at COCAcabana this year,” said Kelly Pollock, COCA Executive Director, “and to have had the support of our Presenting Sponsor, Anheuser-Busch, for the ninth year in a row. We are grateful to all of our generous supporters who value COCA’s role in this community. Funds raised through COCAcabana help students attend COCA classes regardless of financial means and bring arts programs to area schools that would otherwise not have these opportunities.”

This year’s COCAcabana theme, *Upside Down*, dictated the décor and dress and celebrated COCA’s dedication to helping everyone reach their creative potential in order to turn the world upside down. The evening featured “flipped” hors d’oeuvres, an upside down photo booth, and performances by Kennedy Holmes, The COCA Hip-Hop Crew, and COCADance. After dinner, guests danced the night away to the tunes of FatPocket.

PHOTOS: Event photos available at:
https://www.facebook.com/pg/COCastl/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10157356622832028

LEADERSHIP: *Event Chairs:* Diedre & Michael Gray; Kerrin & David Kowach; Stephanie & Anthony Randall; Rachel & Jermal Seward; *Honorary Chair:* Anthony “Redd” Williams

SPONSORS: *Presenting:* Anheuser-Busch; *Lead Scholarship:* Centene Charitable Foundation, McCormack Baron Salazar, Wells Fargo Advisors; *VIP Reception:* U.S. Bank; *Band:* Edward Jones; *Outreach:* Boeing; *Cocktail:* Stifel; *Celebrity Guest:* Express Scripts; *Live Auction:* Thomas R. Green Family Foundation; *Dinner:* Lewis & Clark Ventures; *Scholarship Match:* MiTek; *Travel Concierge:* Smartflyer St. Louis, Melissa & Rob Merlin, and Betsey & Hunter Brown; *VIP Wine:* Dierberg Estate Vineyard; *Performance:* Ameren; *Table One:* Ash Leonard Design, LLC; *Bar:* Major Brands; *Champagne Raffle:* Elleard Heffern Fine Jewelers and Three Sixty; *Fashion:* Neiman Marcus and LKS Styling & Consulting; *Technology:* Emerson; *Marketing:* FastSigns; *Art Direction & Design:* Cannonball Advertising and Promotion; *Media Partner:* Town & Style; *Production:* Touchwood Creative; *Friend of the Arts:* Switch

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ABOUT ANHEUSER-BUSCH

For more than 100 years, Anheuser-Busch and the Anheuser-Busch Foundation have reached out to groups in need, contributing to community organizations across the country and touching countless individual lives. For more information, visit www.anheuser-busch.com.

ABOUT COCA

Founded in 1986, COCA is the fourth largest multidisciplinary community arts center in the country, one of only 16 schools in the nation accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools (ACCPAS), and a national leader in innovative arts education. With a mission to enrich lives and build community through the arts, COCA serves 50,000 people of all ages and skill levels, from enthusiastic amateurs to emerging professionals—all taught by a faculty of distinguished arts educators. We provide meaningful arts experiences in our own studios, gallery and theatres as well as in schools, community centers and corporate settings in order to build a vibrant St. Louis that is creative, connected and inclusive. Visit www.cocastl.org to learn more.