EPACENTER: ILLUMINATED! CELEBRATION RAISES MORE THAN $1 MILLION

TO SUPPORT EAST PALO ALTO COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

EAST PALO ALTO, CA (2 June 2026) — Arts, community, and civic leaders celebrated under the stars with Grammy winner **Sheila E.** and aerial dance troupe **BANDALOOP** at East Palo Alto's **EPACENTER** for the organization's annual fundraising gala, ***EPACENTER: Illuminated!*** held **Saturday, May 30.** The wildly successful event raised more than $1 million to support free and low-cost community programs that enable youth and adults to amplify their creative voices through classes and professional training in visual arts, design, technology, dance, music, and more.

Guests started their evening at the architecturally stunning creative development center with a cocktail reception DJ'd by **DJHeyLove,** roaming an art walk featuring student creations ranging from photography, posters, and sculptural art installations to presentations from the center's media production, graphic design, and dance studios. Then the patrons stepped into the courtyard and looked up, to see a breathtaking live performance by internationally acclaimed **BANDALOOP**, whose unparalleled artists turned the walls of EPACENTER's Amphitheater into a vertical dance floor in a spectacular presentation that incorporated EPACENTER's youth dance company, all set to powerhouse vocals by singer **Destani Wolf.**

Next, guests were ushed inside the center's state-of-the-art theatre, where they were seated at colorful tables to enjoy a gourmet dinner, followed by presentations emceed by Broadway actor **Christopher Hanke**, who introduced performances by EPACENTER dance students, and special guests including community icon and beloved drum instructor **James Henry,** globally renowned Congolese percussionist **Kiazi Malonga,** and seven-time Grammy-nominated percussionist **John Santos.** Guests also heard from EPACENTER students **Isabella Nygaga** and **Janet Ibarra** and EPACENTER Executive Director **Nadine Rambeau** on the contributions and impacts the creative youth development center has made on its community.

As dusk fell, the electrifying ***EPACENTER Illuminated: The Afterglow*** party kicked off with another stunning aerial performance by BANDALOOP, followed by the night's headliner, Grammy-winning percussionist **Sheila E.**, who took the stage for a dazzling concert of R&B and Latin jazz favorites that had the crowd on its feet.

Notable attendees included longtime EPACENTER supporters **Marcia and John Goldman** and other civic leaders including **Connie and Robert Lurie**; **Sandi and John Thompson; Caretha and Ken Coleman,** NFL Hall of Famer **Ronnie Lott** with his wife **Karen Lott**, **Stephanie and Fred Harman; Anne and Ken Lawler; Nicole Taylor and Steve Seleznow**; **Susan Ford Dorsey and Michael Dorsey**; **Fred Blackwell and Pauline Ui;** Golden State Warriors Play-by-Play Announcer **Bob Fitzgerald**, and many others.

ABOUT EPACENTER

EPACENTER (*pronounced epi-center*) is a multidisciplinary arts center in East Palo Alto that ignites creative potential and community connection by delivering inclusive, high-quality education, experiences, and career pathways for people of all ages and abilities. Through a wide range of creative disciplines including visual arts, music, dance, theater, design, and digital media, EPACENTER ensures that every member of the East Palo Alto community can find a meaningful entry point into creative expression, fostering artistic growth, cultural engagement, and civic stewardship. Programming and support are offered in multiple languages, reflecting the rich diversity of the communities EPACENTER serves. EPACENTER envisions East Palo Alto as a beacon of creativity, where every generation has ready access to the arts, cultural pride is celebrated, and artistic innovation fuels individual growth and economic opportunity.

For information on EPACENTER programs and how to support its mission, visit www.epacenter.org.

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