



**VARIETY - THE CHILDREN'S CHARITY OF BUFFALO  
& WESTERN NEW YORK/TENT #7**

6114 Broadway Ave. Lancaster, New York 14086  
716-854-7577 / [www.varietypuffalo.org](http://www.varietypuffalo.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 19, 2025

CONTACT:

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**The 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon "Journey of Hope" starts in WNY!**

**On Saturday and Sunday March 8th and 9th, we kindly encourage the community to help Variety Club Tent #7 with their mission to support Oishei Children's Hospital, the Variety Dr. Robert Warner Rehabilitation Center, and other Children's Charities.**

Buffalo, NY ([varietypuffalo.org](http://varietypuffalo.org)) We are excited to announce The 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon, serving and helping children and their families who need us the most right here in our hometown! Variety is proud to be the longest running locally produced Telethon in the United States, which will once again originate from the Variety Club Headquarters located at 6114 Broadway in Lancaster, New York.

The Telethon will air on **WGRZ-TV Channel 2** from 6pm – 11pm Saturday, March 8th, 2025. The presentation will also be streamed LIVE at [www.wgrz.com](http://www.wgrz.com).

The Sunday telecast will air from 10am – 8pm LIVE on **WBBZ-TV 5**, Your Hometown MeTV Station, Channel 67.1 on-air & DirecTV. The Sunday presentation will be streamed LIVE on the Variety Club of Buffalo Facebook page.

For 2025, we welcome back actor/singer **Donny Most**. Fans will remember Donny as the character of Ralph Malph on the iconic "Happy Days" TV series. Donny appeared on the Telethon back in the 70's, and is returning to sing & pitch.

We also welcome back Buffalo's popular "Goo Goo Doll", musician **Robby Takac** – a longtime supporter of Variety with his presentation of the popular song "Mr. Brightside!"

Watch for hometown hero "**Buffalo**" **Joe Andreessen #44!** The Lancaster native is a linebacker playing for the Buffalo Bills. He will meet legendary Buffalo Bills linebacker, #56 **Darryl Talley**, returning to support the Telethon. Together they will make a touchdown for the Kids.

West Seneca's own **Sydney Sterlace** ( who placed 3rd while appearing on Season 26 of NBC's "The Voice") will perform. From Buffalo's First Family of Music, **Frankie Scinta** returns! Jazz Musician **Will Holton** will be featured, along with other hometown talent Sunday that include The **New Direction Polka Band**, **Soleturn**, **The Ramblin' Lou Family Band**, **Taylor Made Jazz**, **DJ Milk**, choirs from **Mount Olive** and **True Bethel Baptist** Churches, youth singing groups, and other incredible talent coming together as a community to raise funds for the kids that need us the most.

*(Continued)*



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### 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon

For 2025, prominent attorney **Paul Cambria** (Chief Barker, Emeritus of Variety) will return with **Bishop Darius Pridgen** of True Bethel Baptist Church to co-host the Telethon.

The Variety Kids Telethon continues because of the support from Western New Yorkers who tune in and pledge their support each year, along with business partners who participate in our "Corporate Match." Proceeds benefit dozens of local children's charities, and the Variety Tent #7/Robert Warner MD Rehabilitation Center at Oishei Children's Hospital. Our Variety Kids Telethon raised over One MILLION Dollars in 2024.

For the 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon, we will be on a "Journey of Hope". We look forward to having a wonderful celebration filled with memories, stories and focusing on the future!

On behalf of all of us at Variety and the children of WNY that we serve, we would like to say THANK YOU for your support for over 60+ years and hope you will be a part of a tradition that supports a great cause, our children!



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63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon

**Variety Telethon 2025:**

*The 63rd Variety Kids Telethon will be guided by Variety Board leaders who include:*

- **Tony Vaccaro**, Chief Barker
- **Brad Gawron**, First Assistant
- **Bill Simon**, Second Assistant
- **Paul Cambria**, Chief Barker Emeritus
- **Leah Rasier**, Comptroller
- **Rose DiPaola**, Assistant Comptroller
- **Cindy Simon**, Secretary

*The 2025 Variety Directors include:*

*Dennis Adolf, Jenna Brown, Paul Cambria, Judy Decker, Rose DiPaola, John Di Sciullo, Cheryl Donner, Bradley Gawron, Sam Gikas, Dawn Hitzges, Kathy Kaminski, Robert Klein, Diane Kuciel, Frank Lignos, Deb Meacham, Carol McMahon, Don Raiser, Leah Raiser, Sally Schueckler, Bill Simon, Cindy Simon, Tony Vaccaro and Rich Zavarella.*

*The Variety Club Of Buffalo Staff include:*

*Richard Goldstein - Executive Director  
Sally Schueckler - Financial Specialist  
Jessica Ritch - Development Director  
Sandy Doerfler - Office Assistant  
Cheryl Donner - Office Assistant*



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## 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon

### TV and Radio Personalities:

Television personalities who are scheduled to participate in the 63rd Annual Telethon from WGRZ, include **Scott Levin** and **Mary Alice Demler**, co-anchors of "Channel 2 News, "Channel 2 News at 5:30pm" anchor/reporter **Claudine Ewing**, meteorologists **Dan Russell** and **Patrick Hammer**, and "Daybreak" co-anchor **Melissa Holmes** sharing the story of our Celebrity Family. They join everyone at WGRZ, Channel 2 "Our Your Side!" in supporting the kids!

\*Important Note for Viewers: The Polka Hour will be held at 2pm on Sunday, March 9th\*

Other radio and media personalities scheduled to participate Sunday include:

**Clay Moden** from WYRK Country 106.5FM  
**Dave Jickster** from 97 Rock  
**Brad Riter** from WLVL Radio  
**Mercedes Wilson** from WKBW Channel 7  
**Liz Mantel** from 107.7 The Wolf  
**Joe Chille** from The Big WECK  
**Dan Rinelli** from The Big WECK  
**Kate Glaser** from "Hope Rises"  
**Don Postles** retired News 4 Anchor  
**Judge Penny Wolfgang** retired NYS Supreme Court Judge  
**Kim Piazza** Program Host  
**Gayle Petri** Miss Finger Lakes

with more special guests being scheduled!

Appearing on both telecasts as the "Credit Card Premium Anchors" are **Ted Shredd** and **Tom Ragan**, "Shredd and Ragan" - the morning team from 97 Rock.

In addition, personalities **John Pirrone** from Rustic Buffalo Artisan Market, **Stephanie Mateczun**, **DJ Anthony**, **DJ Milk** and Junior Reporter **Finnegan Ritch** will also appear.



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### 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon

#### **2025 Celebrity Child- Evelynn**

It is with great pleasure, we announce The Enchanting Extraordinary, Evelynn as the Celebrity Child for The 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon taking place in March 2025.

Evelynn was born in the Spring of 2021. Shortly after Thanksgiving 2021, Evelynn was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a form of childhood cancer. At approximately 7 months old, the tumor was reported to be a dumbbell shape, sitting inside her spine with large masses protruding from each end. Evelynn required hospitalization for a month at Oishei Children's Hospital as a result of the swelling of her spinal cord caused by the tumor. The swelling was so significant that she was unable to lift her own head. With the support of her treatment team and loved ones, Evelynn successfully completed eight rounds of chemotherapy at Roswell Park Pediatric Clinic. The tumor responded so well to treatment that Evelynn did not require surgery to remove it. Evelynn has been in remission for over two years!



Due to the location of the tumor, Evelynn has a spinal cord injury. Although Evelynn's core is weak and she has minimal movement in her lower extremities, she is continuing to work on her mobility and strength daily to be able to meet her milestones through extensive physical therapy and supportive occupational therapy. Currently Evelynn participates in physical therapy four times per week through the Robert Warner Center, The Motion Project, and school based physical therapy (previously Early Intervention). She has made a tremendous amount of progress, including being able to walk for short periods of time, in her own way, with assistive equipment.

Aside from being one of the most determined 3-year-olds, Evelynn is kind and smart. She loves Ice cream, Disney Princesses, and camping. Reading, singing, and dancing are her favorite things. Because of all of the support she has received through Oishei, Roswell, and the Motion Project, Evelynn is not only recovering, but thriving.

Variety is thrilled to have Evelynn and her loving family a part of The 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon taking place Saturday, March 8th from 6 pm-11 pm on WGRZ, Channel 2, AND on Sunday, March 9th from 10 am-8 pm on WBBZ, Channel 5 and streaming online.



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63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon

**2025 Honorary Chairperson- Karan Durkin of HDE Electric**



**Karan Durkin** is a current Marilla resident, former Lancaster High School graduate, and is VP of HDE Electric, Inc., as well as President of the Iroquois Music Boosters. She recently came across Variety and felt a connection to the organization, and its mission to help children and their families, in various ways, after receiving a personal thank you phone call from Development Director, Jessica Ritch for a business donation that was made on behalf of the company.

Karan lives with her husband of 27 years, her 24-year-old daughter, who is a band teacher and musician, her 22 year old daughter who is in her Senior year of College, at a local University studying to be a teacher and a waitress as well as her 2 cats. She is blessed to be surrounded with a great family and an amazing group of friends.

Her faith in God has opened up many new doors and experiences that have been blessings. She enjoys praying, volunteering, helping others, music, musicals, The Buffalo Bills, walking, traveling and being outdoors. She firmly believes we have the ability to change the world through kindness, faith and a love for each other and the world. We all have the ability to make a positive difference, no matter how big or small.



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63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon

**2025 Telethon Chairman- Rose Ann Heilemann**



**Rose Ann** is a member of both the Tent and the Variety Club Women. She has basically grown up helping with Variety functions since her mother joined the organization in 1971.

Fund raising is where much of Rose Ann's energy has been spent. She was Chairman of the School's Committee for the 1987 and 1988 Telethons, and has sold candy bars at various malls and bowling alleys through the years. She was Co-Chair of a big band dance in 2006. She also Co-Chaired the Women's Tea for Telethon 2023. In more recent years, Rose Ann has worked alongside her mother on the Phone Committee, acting as Supervisor.

As a retired teacher, Rose Ann enjoys being a volunteer at The Teacher's Desk. She also is a lector at St. Amelia's Roman Catholic Church, and a member of the Respect Life Committee at the Roman Catholic Church of the Tonawandas.

She has a wonderful husband, son and daughter-in-law. She also has an adorable grand puppy.

Rose Ann is looking forward to Chairing Telethon 2025. Her goal is to get the community more involved with some old and new fund raising endeavors.

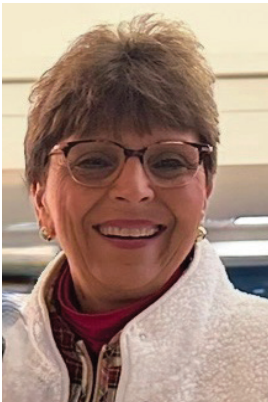


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### 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon

#### **2024 Telethon Co- Chair- Kathy Kaminski**



Kathy Kaminski was born to Joseph and Katherine Inzinna on September 14, 1951 in Buffalo, New York. She spent the first three years of her life in Buffalo, New York and then moved to Cheektowaga where she spent her early childhood years. At the age of 8, Kathy and her family moved to Amherst, New York. It was there that Kathy and her three sisters grew up, and Kathy first began volunteering as a girl scout by running errands and performing various chores for the elderly. She remembers her parents taking her downtown to Channel 7 for the Variety Club telethon with donated money that she collected from the neighborhood. During her high school years she volunteered as a candy striper at Sisters Hospital.

After graduating from Bishop Neumann High School, Kathy was employed by M+T Computer Center. Shortly After, she had two sons Joel and Craig. As she was raising her sons, she always found time to help others in need. Kathy was very close to her nephew Joey who was born developmentally delayed. Her love for Joey and others with disabilities inspired her to organize her first charitable fundraiser through a local running club in 1991. Titled Dance Back in Time, all the proceeds were given to the Variety Club of Buffalo. This is when Kathy was first introduced to Variety Club and was asked to join the women of Variety.

Kathy worked for the Town of Amherst Highway Dept for over two decades, in 1997 she became the first female crew chief in highway dept. History. Working in the forestry division, Kathy became best Known to the community as coordinator of the tree planting program throughout the Town of Amherst. She had a reputation for always making herself available to hear residents' issues and worked hard to make sure they got resolved. One of Kathy's proudest accomplishments was her work with the development of the 9/11 memorial hill Grove located on the Ellicott Creek Trailway, The living monument was created to honor the victims and heroes of the September 11th tragedy.

Kathy has been active in the community for many years along with being the founder and chairman of the annual "Dance Back in Time" which is going on its 20th year, her work with Variety Club, includes telethon chairwoman in 2005, past president of Variety Club women, present board member of Tent #7. She was the former recipient of the Mary Jane Cunningham Memorial Award, Kathy is also past Chairwomen and supporter of the Girls of Italy, member of women interested in Cystic Health, and past member of Canisius College Scholarship Association and Autistic Services.





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63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon

**2025 Variety Co-Hosts**



***Paul Cambria***

Variety Board Member, and Chief Barker Emeritus, Paul Cambria has been a long-time supporter of children's causes in Western New York. Mr. Cambria is an American criminal defense and appellate attorney who has represented many prominent defendants and is with Buffalo-based law firm Lipsitz Green Scime Cambria. He practices in the areas of Criminal Trials, Appeals, Constitutional Law, First Amendment, Zoning, Antitrust, and Professional Licensing Defense. His practice is nationwide, and he divides his time between the firm's offices in Buffalo and Los Angeles. Mr. Cambria is a graduate of the State University of New York at Fredonia.



***Darius Pridgen***

Darius Pridgen is the former Buffalo Common Council President from the Ellicott District. He is a long-time Variety supporter, former Variety Kids Telethon Chairmen, and has co-hosted the Telethon for a number of years. Bishop Pridgen serves as the Senior Pastor of True Bethel Baptist Church in the City of Buffalo. Bishop Pridgen is an Air Force Veteran and a graduate of Buffalo State College and Medaille College.



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### 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon

### 2025 Talent

For 2025 we look forward to featuring a diverse group of entertainers including:

- Donny Most, from the iconic television show "Happy Days!"
- #44 "Buffalo Joe" Andreesen of the Buffalo Bills
- From "The Voice"- West Seneca's own Sydney Sterlace
- Buffalo's own, Frankie Scinta
- Will Holton; Jazz Musician
- Iroquois High School Swing Choir
- Lancaster Middle School Drama Club / Choir Students
- Maryvale High School
- DJ Milk
- Taylor Made Jazz
- Mount Olive & True Bethel Church Choirs
- The New Direction Band for Polka
- Local singer Krysten Sponaegle
- The Buffalo Girl Choir
- Soleturn Band
- The Ramblin' Lou Family Band
- and other surprises!

Additionally, a featured music video with an original song entitled "Journey of Hope" written, performed and produced by Jake Schoenle and Arianna Durkin.

\*All artists and times are subject to change.\*



**DONATE \$44**  
FOR  
**BUFFALO**  
**JOE ANDREESSEN**  
SCORE A TOUCHDOWN  
FOR THE KIDS!  
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63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon

**WGRZ-TV**



WGRZ, 2 On Your Side, Proudly Supports the 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon

Buffalo, NY – WGRZ, 2 On Your Side, is honored to be a part of the 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon, a cherished event that aligns with our mission to inform, advocate, and celebrate the Western New York community.

As WNY's favorite local news organization, 2 On Your Side is committed to making our community a better place to live. Our foundation is built on delivering trusted and timely information. When breaking news and severe weather strike, viewers turn to us first for the coverage they rely on.

Beyond reporting the news, we serve as strong community advocates—holding leaders accountable, asking the tough questions, and producing in-depth investigations that matter. We stand up for those who need a voice and help those in need.

Equally important is our dedication to celebrating the many great things happening throughout the region. We share uplifting stories that highlight the people, businesses, and organizations that make WNY an incredible place to call home.

The Variety Kids Telethon embodies these same values, making it a natural partnership for 2 On Your Side. By supporting this longstanding tradition, we continue our commitment to making a difference, helping children and families in need, and showcasing the generosity and strength of our community.

For more information about WGRZ, 2 On Your Side, and our involvement in the 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon, please visit [WGRZ.com](http://WGRZ.com).



## 63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon

**WBBZ-TV**



WBBZ-TV 5 is Your Hometown MeTV Station. As Western New York's only locally owned full power television station, we are committed to our hometown. Owner **Phil Arno** has assembled a team of award winning media veterans and digital newcomers to create local television and online programming, media and commercial production, mixed with popular classics from the MeTV Network.

The hosts of our locally produced programs will all participate in the Sunday edition of the Telethon. Those shows include the weekly "Big Picture: PRIME" with Phil Arno offering commentary and welcoming guests... The inspiring syndicated "Passionate Living" lifestyle program hosted by **Catherine Miller**... "Polka Buzz" the TV Dance Party with host **Ron Dombrowski** & Buffalo's best Polka bands... Cooking, cocktails, and conversation on "Sto Lat with Ania" hosted by hospitality entrepreneur **Ania Duchon**.... the nationally syndicated "Off Beat Cinema" with "Beatnik" hosts **Tony Billoni**, **Nia Marcolini**, and **Jeffrey Roberts**... Psychic Medium **Karyn Reece** from "The Karyn Reece Show".... "Your Hometown Health Connection" produced with Buffalo Healthy Living Magazine with **John Di Sciuolo**.... topical talk on "The Big Picture" with retired NYS Supreme Court **Judge Penny Wolfgang**, with reports from Tony Farina... The Big WECK's Buffalo on The Rise with **Joe Chille**, profiling hometown businesses... Army Veteran **Terry McGuire** recognizes hometown Veterans with services for Vets and their families on "Those Who Serve;"... "Jazz Scene Buffalo" with **Constance Caldwell** welcomes Buffalo's world class musicians for rare studio performances... with more local shows coming!

Owner **Phil Arno** commented, "The Variety Kids Telethon is a Western New York tradition that I, and many of our viewers grew up with. We are honored to be a part of continuing that tradition on WBBZ-TV in support of Oishei Children's Hospital and hometown children's charities. We have a great team dedicated to pulling all the details together to stage this show with our colleagues at WGRZ Channel 2, and satellite technical assistance from our colleagues at WKBW Channel 7. Only in Buffalo would you see media coming together for the good of the community."

The Telethon from Variety Club will be produced under the direction of Manager **Chris Musial** and the award winning WBBZ-TV 5 Production Team which includes Technical Director **Andy Smyczynski**; Creative Services Director **Joe Maulucci**; Videographer **Rich Lee**; and Editors/Technicians **Tim Marcolini** & **Chatham Marcolini**.

Other technical assistance is provided by **Joe Romanowski** from Indigo Productions; audio engineer **Jim Pritchard**; the **N.A.B.E.T.-CWA Local 25** videographers and engineers; set design by **John Dubreville** and **Hale Northeastern**, with support from **Printed Image of Buffalo**.

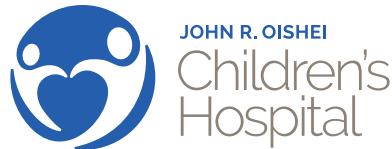


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63rd Annual Variety Kids Telethon

### *John R. Oishei Children's Hospital*



John R. Oishei Children's Hospital is Western New York's regional center for comprehensive and state-of-the-art pediatric trauma, surgical, and medical care, including neonatal, perinatal, and obstetric services. Oishei Children's Hospital is the region's only Level I Pediatric Trauma Center, Level IV Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, and state-designated Regional Perinatal Center.

As the only freestanding children's hospital in New York State and one of only 43 freestanding children's hospitals in the United States, Oishei Children's Hospital enjoys a worldwide reputation for innovation and research while providing highly specialized care and treatment through a broad array of co-located outpatient services.

Since 1979, the Variety Kids Telethon has donated nearly 30 million dollars to the life-changing and life-saving work of Oishei Children's Hospital, and The Variety Tent #7 Robert Warner Center for Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation.

### *Variety Club of Buffalo Tent #7*



In 1934, a group of Western New Yorkers came together and started a chapter of Variety—the Children's Charity, becoming Tent #7 in an international organization started with the intent to transform, uplift, and enrich the lives of children living with illness, disability, or disadvantage. The first Telethon was prompted by a request from Dr. Robert Warner, who asked the Variety Club for assistance in building a rehabilitation center for children with special needs.

Over \$80,000 was raised at the first Variety Kids Telethon on Channel 2, and Dr. Warner's dream became a reality at what was then Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo. Variety, the children's charity of Buffalo and WNY will continue to help the children right here in our community that need our help the most.