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## **COUNT BASIE CENTER, BANK OF AMERICA ANNOUNCE SANDY HOOK FOUNDATION AS APRIL'S RECIPIENT IN 'THE GIVING YEAR'**

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**\$1 FROM EVERY TICKET SOLD THIS MONTH WILL BENEFIT  
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ORGANIZATION; TICKETS TO BE MADE  
AVAILABLE  
FOR VOLUNTEERS AND BENEFICIARIES**

**(RED BANK – April 3, 2023)** The **Count Basie Center for the Arts** and **Bank of America** have announced the fourth of twelve area nonprofits to be recognized during **THE GIVING YEAR**, the yearlong initiative to recognize and reward organizations for their contributions to the regional community.

The **Sandy Hook Foundation** ([www.sandyhooknj.org](http://www.sandyhooknj.org)), **The Official Friends Group of the National Park Service at Sandy Hook**, will receive \$1 from every Count Basie Center ticket sold in April, along with tickets for the organization's clientele and volunteers. Founded in 1969, the nonprofit has funded cultural, educational, environmental, and conservation programs and has helped restore and preserve historic structures of the Sandy Hook Lighthouse and Fort Hancock — both National Historic Landmarks.

"Sandy Hook is a national treasure, an unpolished gem right here in our community's backyard," said **Peter S. Izzo, President, Sandy Hook Foundation Board of Trustees**. "The Sandy Hook Foundation works to protect and preserve the park's natural and cultural assets and enhance the visitor experience through expanded and ongoing public programs and projects inside the park."

"This recognition from the Count Basie Center and Bank of America during The Giving Year will give us the opportunity to directly create a bigger impact at the park this year, and in years to come," Izzo added. "We are deeply appreciative of the support."

The Sandy Hook Foundation's mission is to enrich the visitor experiences at the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area, which the organization accomplishes by preserving and rehabilitating the park's natural resources, supporting public programs and services, raising awareness of park initiatives, fundraising, and acting as a local-centric liaison with the **National Park Service** and **U.S. Department of the Interior**.

"The work that the Sandy Hook Foundation does to advocate for, enhance, and rehabilitate the Gateway National Recreation Area is vital for the preservation of this natural park," said **Alberto Garofalo, president, Bank of America New Jersey**. "Together we must do our part to ensure ecological wonders like Sandy Hook are preserved for New Jersey families, including mine, to enjoy for years to come."

"Now more than ever, we need to do more to be mindful of our environmental impact — especially in a coastal

community such as ours” said **Jeremy Grunin, Chairperson, Count Basie Center for the Arts**. “The Sandy Hook Foundation’s work in this space is a shining example of how we can work together to preserve our region’s natural habitats and educate future generations on the importance of environmental care.”

Bank of America and Basie Center employees and board members started reviewing applications following announcement of **THE GIVING YEAR** initiative on Giving Tuesday last November. **THE GIVING YEAR** will focus on organizations serving causes related to arts and culture, health / wellness, food insecurity, diversity, equity and inclusion, or financial management or other services to underrepresented populations.

Organizations interested in consideration for **THE GIVING YEAR** may learn more and apply for consideration at [www.thebasie.org/thegivingyear](http://www.thebasie.org/thegivingyear). Organizations need only apply once – qualifying applications will be considered on a rolling basis throughout 2023.

### **ABOUT THE GIVING YEAR INITIATIVE**

**THE GIVING YEAR** will last throughout 2023, with the Count Basie Center for the Arts donating \$1 from every ticket sold to one of twelve area nonprofits, with a different organization highlighted each month. Organizations will be eligible to receive up to \$15,000 during their month, in addition to complimentary tickets for distribution to their volunteers and / or their beneficiaries.

Upon announcing **THE GIVING YEAR** last November, Basie Center and Bank of America officers presented the initiative as an opportunity to use the organizations’ platforms to highlight important work and causes throughout their service regions. In January, mental health nonprofit **Shore House** was announced as the inaugural Giving Year recipient, receiving \$15,000 from the Basie Center and its patrons.

“The Count Basie Center is a unique nonprofit organization,” **Basie Center Board Chairperson Jeremy Grunin** explained. “In addition to our work in arts education, from classrooms in under-resourced communities to professional development opportunities for teachers, we have world-renowned performing artists on our stages almost every evening. We recognize the platform that affords us, and we feel it’s right to use that platform to highlight other organizations attending to vital causes in our region.”

“Bank of America and the Count Basie Center share many causes and concerns, especially the betterment of our communities,” said **Bank of America’s Garofalo**. “During ‘The Giving Year,’ we’ll use our long-standing partnership and platforms to highlight and reward the efforts of twelve area nonprofit organizations, whose commitments to our region help those who need it the most.”

“Part of our responsibility as a nonprofit organization is to look inwards and say, ‘What more can we do?’” said **Adam Philipson, President and CEO, Count Basie Center for the Arts**. “And because we have this status as a place where world-class musicians, actors and performers come to play, we also have this opportunity – and responsibility – to lend our visibility to others. Bank of America and the Basie Center want **THE GIVING YEAR** to become a pedestal for organizations that deserve to have their hard work and purposes known and recognized.”

May’s beneficiary organization will be announced later this month.

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### **ABOUT THE COUNT BASIE CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

The Count Basie Center for the Arts is New Jersey’s premier center for the cultural arts, dedicated to fostering powerful, inclusive artistic experiences and creative exchange of ideas. The Basie mission is to inspire, educate and entertain through its distinct and engaging cultural and artistic offerings that embrace and amplify the diversity of the region. As a nonprofit organization, the Basie is committed to enriching the community’s quality of life by generating opportunities for participation in the arts, partnering with schools, collaborating with other mission-based organizations and driving regional economic prosperity. The Basie Center has hosted an array of world-class artists, including Bruce Springsteen & the E-Street Band, Jon Bon Jovi, John Legend, Crosby Stills & Nash, Tony

Bennett, Diana Ross, and Ringo Starr. Count Basie Center programming is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

For more information, visit [www.thebasie.org](http://www.thebasie.org).

#### **ABOUT BANK OF AMERICA**

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