

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

As of November 17, 2011

As it has for the past 38 years, our Pavilion once again served the Town of Westport, Fairfield County and the Tri-State area as a unique and valued cultural resource. The Pavilion excelled in its mission by providing an unrivalled number of free performing arts and entertainment events; presenting paid professional artists throughout the season; and preserving and cultivating a dynamic outdoor destination downtown, welcoming audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

- 59 top-quality concerts and events were presented to residents of Westport and neighboring communities at no charge.
- Audiences, ranging from 500 to 2,000, flocked nightly to the Pavilion bearing picnics, blankets and lawn chairs.
- Opening night with *The Cast of Beatlemania* was one of the most highly attended opening nights in Pavilion history, with crowds spilling into the parking lot and RiverWalk, a testament to both the programming and the promotion of the season launch.
- The caliber of our **FREE** entertainment reached new levels of excellence and included Grammy Award winners, international, national and regional headliners and recording artists and emerging talent.
- The variety in the programming reached out to meet the needs of all within the community, including the oldest and youngest, teens, families, those of different ethnic backgrounds, and diverse economic and social lifestyles.
- Over 1,500 people attended the Summer Benefit Gala and Concert starring the legendary *Doobie Brothers*. The proceeds from this annual ticketed event helped to underwrite the Pavilion's almost 60 free performances. In addition, Award-winning *Big Bad Voodoo Daddy* and *Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes* drew enthusiastic audiences with special performances to benefit the Pavilion's free programming.

Our Outreach and Education Programs included:

- Our *RiverSwing Series* continued to be a huge hit. Enthusiastic toe-tappers of all ages enjoyed classes led by professional instructors in 6+ different dance styles on 6 different evenings sprinkled throughout the summer season: swing, jump jive, salsa & cha cha, tango, samba and bhangra (a Pavilion first!).
- Co-presenting the *TeenFlix* movie series for Westport's Youth Commission in partnership with Westport Youth Film Festival and Westport Arts Center, The Westport Public Library and Toquet Hall.

- Expanding our Monday Night Movies to include a special presentation by Westport Cinema Initiative in July
- Hosting the 2nd Annual *Eco-Fest* for the Green Village Initiative and Staples High School as a pre-season event in May.
- Co-presenting *DNR's Tribute to First Responders*, a fundraiser* to benefit Westport Emergency Medical Service.
- Hosting a fundraiser* to promote Haitian children's literacy.
- Co-Producing and programming a *Sunday Music Series* at Westport's Senior Center.
- Assisting Homes with Hope in producing their fall fundraiser at The Westport Country Playhouse by securing Martin Short as the star.
- Co-presenting the 4th Annual Westport Downtown Merchants' Blues, Views & BBQ Festival.
- Internships for 3 high school students.

*Note: The "visiting" fundraisers above involved voluntary donations to the cause during a free event; they did not add to the Pavilion's roster of ticketed events and did not create a barrier to the evening for people who could not give.

Fundraising achievements, separate from ticketed events

- We were awarded the inaugural Super Grant in amount of \$10,000 by The Westport Young Women's League, the highest donation by the League in its history.
- We were awarded \$39,000 by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, one of the highest grants in the state.
- We were awarded a \$50,000 gift from the Adolph & Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation.

In terms of **organizational growth**, two key developments were undertaken successfully. The first was that the Pavilion hired its first full-time **Marketing & Communications Director**, essentially doubling the Pavilion's full-time staff from one to two – an investment that was necessary and timely not only in light of the Capital Campaign but also in terms of the organization's strength and sustainability. The position has increased media coverage, sponsorship and community outreach, strengthened audience development and fundraising capacity; and of course it has achieved great advances in online platforms such as social media as well as our communications infrastructure such as our list management and e-news.

The second was the reorganization of the **Capital Campaign**. We engaged new fundraising consultants and restructured the campaign comprehensively so as to

directly address not only the building of a new Pavilion, but also to ensure the new Pavilion's sustainability.

Despite weather that was more challenging than usual (Irene!), 2011 was a banner year on many levels. In addition to the overview above, below please enjoy some testimonials from audience members, press and community leaders.

Freda Welsh
Executive Director

**"Summer doesn't officially begin
until the Levitt Pavilion opens."**

- Westport Patch

From: The Lals
Sent: Friday, September 02, 2011 1:57 PM
To: Welsh, Carleigh
Subject: regarding DJ Rekha
Importance: High

A heartfelt THANKS to the team behind the Levitt Pavilion – for bringing DJ Rekha to Westport!

I was so excited to see DJ REKHA on the roster when the summer 2011 brochure arrived in the mail. I am not exaggerating when I say that it was surreal! In fact, till the last minute I could not believe that this is actually happening in Fairfield County Connecticut– so I called the Levitt Pavilion a few days before the event to confirm that DJ Rekha is indeed coming to Westport!

My husband and I hosted 40 of our close friends and family – we had such a blast that day. DJ Rekha was phenomenal! She made us all get on our feet and dance – NOT STOP. We enjoyed our wine and cheese, and danced to Bhangra music under the stars! Just like good old days in India.

The best part about such an event being held at a venue like Levitt Pavilion was that people of all ages could participate. Our parents, and kids and in our family would not have been able to enjoy DJ Rekha's talent – had the venue been a nightclub. **This was a family-friendly perfection!**

Looking forward to many such wonderful surprises!

Kind regards,
Yamini Lal

From: ejay
Sent: Saturday, September 10, 2011 3:16 PM
To: Welsh, Carleigh
Subject: Re: 9/9

Hi Carleigh,

We had a great time last night! Thank you! Civil Twilight was fantastic! I really hope you can have them back. I thought the Alternate Routes were equally terrific and look forward to their breakout, so you should have them back as often as you can, as well ;) The Wood Brothers and PJ Pacifico are also very talented original musicians. Great job having them for our enjoyment! I also had loads of fun with the Cast of Beatlemania, the Nu-Utopians, Keltic Kick, Cynthia Sayer, the Doughboys and Hank and Cupcakes. Thanks so much!
Ejay

From: Cassidy

Sent: Tuesday, September 27, 2011 9:43 PM

To: Welsh, Carleigh

Subject:

hi carleigh

my sister, dad, and i went to the civil twilight show at the levitt pavilion and i've known of civil twilight for a while and was so psyched/shocked you booked them!! and the fact the show was free! and the fact that the whole place is adorable !!

love what you guys are doing - it's such a great venue and such a great cause and it's so pleasant and i love knowing there are things out there that aren't just looking for a profit but is there just to entertain and bring people together via music for music's sake

so thank you for all of that
levitt pavilion = the best

take care :)

Go Forth
-Kassidy C.

“The Levitt Pavilion is an absolute treasure and such a unique facility.

To be able to see artists like Willie Nelson, the Beach Boys, Chuck Berry or Little Richard without leaving town is priceless and the 50-plus nights of free entertainment add such great value to summer in Westport.” – Stuart McCarthy, Director of Westport Parks and Recreation, *Westport News*, April 4, 2011

“Pleasantly adventurous.”
– *The New York Times*