

Sharefest, local nonprofit, draws inspiration from the late Kobe Bryant for their virtual gala on October 30

Sharefest's 17th annual fundraising gala's theme was inspired by a quote from the late Kobe Bryant, "...Dedication sees dreams come true."

LOS ANGELES, CA, USA, October 27, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Sharefest](#) has been working in the greater LA area for 17 years to give under-resourced youth life skills, connections and opportunities to transform their futures and their communities. This year their 17th annual fundraising gala was forced online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic hit, Sharefest had already selected their theme for the year, Dedication. The theme was inspired by a quote from the late Kobe Bryant who said, "Great things come from hard work and perseverance. No excuses. Deduction sees dreams come true."

Though the event is now virtual, there have been no shortage of sponsors and special guests who are showing their support. Pau Gasol, former Laker who played alongside Kobe Bryant in the 2009 and 2010 NBA Championships, will be sharing a few words about what dedication means to him. Other guests will include all-Star basketball player, Olympic gold medalist and WNBA league MVP Lisa Leslie, comedian Colin Mochrie from *Whose Line is it Anyway*, and Heisman Trophy winner and former USC quarterback, Matt Leinart. The evening will also feature inspiring stories from youth, their instructors and community members.

Sharefest received an amazing gift of an autographed Kobe Bryant jersey to [auction](#) off for their event. Joyce Sharman, wife of the late hall of famer Bill Sharman, the Lakers coach who coached them to their first championship in 1972, donated her only signed Kobe Bryant jersey. "While it is hard to part with, I know this jersey will help fund their efforts." shared Joyce. "It's worth it because the work Sharefest does is so important." Other items in the online auction will include trips with flexible travel plans and other interesting local experiences. The jersey will remain open for bidding until November 13 while the other items will only be available until October 30 at 9 p.m.

Early on in planning for Dedication, Toyota stepped up as the Champion sponsor. Toyota believes in the work Sharefest does with youth and believes Sharefest youth are 'going places.' Longtime Sharefest supporters, Greg and Debi Raasch, stepped in as sponsors as well. This year was especially challenging as Greg battled stage 4 cancer and just lost his battle a few weeks ago. Their example of dedication is very special to Sharefest. Other sponsors include Alaska Airlines,

Fielding Electric, Inc. and Marathon. "Watching local businesses and individuals step up and sponsor our gala in a year that has been hard for everyone has been inspiring to me and the whole team," says Chad Mayer, Executive Director of Sharefest. "We are so honored to have their support and very thankful for their dedication to seeing youth transform their futures."

The gala brings in a crucial part of Sharefest's annual budget. In March, they were forced to cut their expenses by 50%. Since then they have remained focused on meeting the needs of youth who are struggling in a distance learning environment. But they have also been able to take a step back and dream about their future. The funds raised by the gala will help launch Sharefest's new Workforce Development program which will connect youth to the trades. They will also be able to expand on their pilot Sharefest Alumni Program which provides funding and mentorship for Sharefest youth who continue on to college. "In a year when everything was going wrong in the world, we still got to watch 85 continuation high school students achieve their dream of high school graduation. That's the most ever for us!" says Chad. "Now several of those students are receiving mentoring as they navigate the complicated world of college which makes them much more likely to stay enrolled and get a degree."

The Sharefest Virtual Gala: Dedication is free to attend with online [registration](#). All are invited to register by visiting sharefestgala.org.

Sharefest's 17th Annual Gala: Dedication
Friday, October 30 | 6:30PM Pre-Show | 7PM Program

About Sharefest: Sharefest exists to empower underserved youth to transform their futures and become leaders of collaborative community change. Sharefest programming helps keep students enrolled in school through graduation, achieve significant increases in their GPA and develop social skills that help them reach college or career goals. In 2020 alone Sharefest served 408 youth, their continuation high school students increased their GPAs by an average of 28%, and 248 Sharefest students earned credits toward graduation.

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