

Anthony Anderson Hosts LACHSA Foundation 40th Anniversary Gala Drawing Major Aid for LA County High School for the Arts

Member of LACHSA's First Admitted Class in 1985, Anderson Returns to Alma Mater, Recognizes Favorite Teacher, Hosts Evening of Arts Inspiration and Philanthropy

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, May 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In celebration of the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts (LACHSA), the [LACHSA Foundation](#) held its 40th Anniversary [Gala](#), hosted by Emmy and Golden Globe-nominated actor Anthony Anderson, member of LACHSA's first admitted class in 1985. Anderson joins a long list of former LACHSA students who have become successful professional artists

including Robert Vargas, Josh Groban, Josefina Lopez, Jenna Elfman, Phoebe Bridgers, Kehinde Wiley, Taran Killam, HAIM (sisters Alana, Danielle and Este Haim), Charm La'Donna, Maya Erskine, Corbin Bleu, Kris Bowers, Tammy Townsend, Gerald Clayton, Jon B., and many more.



Anthony Anderson poses on Red Carpet with Favorite Teacher Jerry Freedman at 40th Anniversary Gala Benefiting the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts.

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Anthony Anderson

Another accomplished LACHSA alumna, Grammy-nominated jazz vocalist Gretchen Parlato performed at the Gala with students from the LACHSA Impulse Jazz Combo inviting guests to imagine the next 40 years with her jazz rendition of “Pure Imagination.” This performance and others were part of a series of performances throughout the night by current LACHSA student artists in dance, music, musical theatre, and theatre, with additional artistry on display by students in cinematic arts, interdisciplinary arts, and visual arts, proving that LACHSA's impact is

everywhere you turn.

"I was part of the inaugural class of '85 that opened the L.A. County High School for the Arts, which was something new to Los Angeles," said Anderson as he welcomed guests to the Gala. "And for it to be a public school and a county school, for it to still be standing here doing what it has been doing for the last 40 years, not only for the students but for the community and for the arts, is a beautiful thing."

Anderson enjoyed a surprise reunion on the Gala red carpet with his LACHSA teacher Jerry Freedman, Chair of the Social Studies Department for the last 25 years. Previously named a "Teacher of the Year" in Los Angeles County and an "Education Hero" by the Los Angeles Dodgers, Freedman shared stories about his time teaching the teenage Anderson back in 1985.

"I couldn't be prouder to see how far he has come, but most of all, to see what a great human being he is," said Freedman. "That's the thing, you hear about people who make it. He's not any different than he was in school – except he's just better. He's still so talented, but the thing that matters to me is his quality as a human being. I am so honored and so happy to be here today with him."

During the Gala, LACHSA Principal Dr. Tina Vartanian, together with Assistant Principal Sue Freitag, presented the inaugural "LACHSA Legacy" award to Anderson. The award honors a LACHSA Legend who not only achieves professional success but also betters their community.



Opera Student Artists from Los Angeles County High School for the Arts sing "Climbing Over Rocky Mountains" from "The Pirates of Penzance" at LACHSA Foundation 40th Anniversary Gala



Anthony Anderson Hosts An Evening of Arts and Philanthropy to Benefit Alma Mater, LACHSA

Noted Anderson, "So many have come through these doors at LACHSA, making their impact in the arts and in their respective communities, these last 40 years. We will all have our window of opportunity to do whatever it is that we want to do in life, but we just have to be prepared for when that opportunity presents itself. It's all in the preparation."

Headquartered at the California State University campus in Los Angeles, LACHSA has been ranked the #1 public arts high school in the nation for multiple consecutive years. Currently, more than 550 students are enrolled, representing more than 80 school districts. LACHSA artist scholars study and train in multiple disciplines such as dance, music, theatre, visual arts, cinematic arts, and interdisciplinary arts, showcasing their diverse creativity through student-performed theatre, music concerts, film festivals, dance compositions, and visual art exhibitions. As a public high school, LACHSA students represent all socioeconomic cultures and communities and are consistently ranked amongst the top high school performers and honorees in nationwide arts competitions including Young Arts, Music Center Spotlight, DTASC competitions, and more. Its graduates continue to further their artistic pursuits at top universities and conservatories as well as launching professional careers as artists and leaders in the creative economy.

"The arts are an important part of our shared humanity every day but especially during this time of uncertainty, rebuilding and recovery all over L.A. County," said Trena Pitchford, Executive Director of LACHSA Foundation. "Every donation is greatly appreciated, especially now, and will support LACHSA students today, as well as the future young student artists who will walk LACHSA's hallways in the next 40 years. We invite others to join our mission. Our donors and supporters – the philanthropists, corporations, private foundations, and investors – all believe in these students who are born to create."

Led by Pitchford, the 40th Anniversary Gala is part of a two-year campaign celebrating the first 40 years and imagining the next 40 years of these talented emerging artists of LACHSA. More than 400 guests attended this celebratory event, including many alumni and representatives from three members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, who also sponsored the evening: Supervisor Horvath, Supervisor Hahn and Supervisor Barger. Additional sponsors included Today, I'm Brave, the Schlesinger Family, Menachem Gastwirth, Warner Bros. Television Group, as well as executives from Apple TV, the Battery, Los Angeles County Office of Education, National Endowment of the Arts, and more. All guests were treated to a night of arts inspiration and philanthropy at City Market Social House in Downtown LA, raising nearly four hundred thousand so far for LACHSA, just short of the event's fundraising goal.

To participate in the two-year fundraising campaign, help the LACHSA Foundation reach its goal, bid on the [online auction](https://lachsafoundation.org/40thanniversarygala/) until May 10th, or to find more information, visit: <https://lachsafoundation.org/40thanniversarygala/>.

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