

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Annual bluegrass benefit concert April 28 features five bands, craft beer tasting

Evening-long music show at Synod Hall aids St. Joseph House of Hospitality

PITTSBURGH -- A re-tooled Allegheny Drifters and the return of up-and-comers Echo Valley highlight the 19th annual St. Joseph's House of Hospitality bluegrass benefit concert at Synod Hall in Oakland on Friday, April 28.

The Jakob's Ferry Stragglers, an ever-popular band with a strong regional following, will appear for the first time at the 7 p.m. concert, which is considered to be the kick-off of the area's bluegrass festival season. Complementing the bill are longtime bluegrass fan-favorites Brush Creek and Fern Hollow.

Concert tickets are only \$20 and festivities include a complimentary pre-concert craft ale tasting hosted by the hometown Rivertowne Brewing Co.

The concert benefits St. Joseph House of Hospitality, a program of Catholic Charities that serves as a residence for men 50 years and older who were formerly homeless (half of the residents are veterans). Located in Pittsburgh's Hill District for 80 years, St. Joe's provides lodgings, hot meals, and housing assistance and other support services for 60 residents age 50 and older.

Bruce Mountjoy, the esteemed host of the Bluegrass Jam Session heard Sunday evenings on WYEP (91.3 FM), speaks highly of the two new members of the Allegheny Drifters, one of the region's most highly-regarded bluegrass bands.

"The husband-wife team of Radford Vance and Michele Birkby-Vance are veteran musicians who are an ideal addition to the Allegheny Drifters," he says. "Michele's sweet fiddle adds to the Drifters' sound and contributes an additional lead instrument, while Radford's banjo picking is textbook definition bluegrass banjo. Radford's baritone and Michele's high tenor voices add to the band's already formidable vocal abilities."

Echo Valley, seven siblings of the Anderson family who range in age from 8 to 22, made their first appearance at the benefit concert last year, shortly before the release of their inaugural CD. The band, which hails from New Galilee (Beaver County), started in 2008 and performs a blend of bluegrass and gospel music.

Mountjoy says of Echo Valley, “They work very hard at every aspect of their performance, from the instrumental and vocal arrangements to their on-stage presentation. It’s easy to say that they will be delighting audiences for some time to come. The sky’s the limit for these young people, and I am very happy that they are returning.”

The Rivertowne ale tasting included in the admission will be held from 5:45 to 6:45 p.m. Light snacks will be provided.

Tickets for the concert (a \$20 donation) will be available at the door or online at [www.ccpgh.org]. The music is scheduled to start at 7 p.m. Synod Hall is located at 125 N. Craig St., in Pittsburgh’s Oakland neighborhood.

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