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Benatar, Giraldo highlight Artpark's 50th anniversary celebration

Pat Benatar & Neil Giraldo were a revelation Wednesday night at Artpark. Despite their having done this – live performance, genuine rock 'n' roll – for a half-century, her vocals were as strong as ever, while his guitar was super crisp. Hit songs and deep cuts sounded as fresh and dynamic as the day they were first released.

It was a dynamic performance, reaffirming the duo's hall of fame status.

Youngstown (Ohio's) The Vindys opened, providing a mix of fun and full-on flare before their set was halted due to a strong, but brief, rainstorm.

The show was part of the multifaceted Artpark & Company 50th anniversary season birthday bash. Inside the Mainstage Theater, there was a fundraising gala dinner, entertainment and an auction. In the amphitheater, there was a prize raffle, snacks courtesy of Paula's Donuts and the Village Bake Shoppe, samples from Giraldo's Three Chord Bourbon, and a fireworks display at the evening's conclusion.

In the photos, local business and elected leaders join Artpark & Company volunteers in saluting 50 years. (See more photos online at www.wnypapers.com)



Artpark 50th anniversary celebration

Pat Benatar & Neil Giraldo find unconventional path to chart-topping success

BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

Forty-plus years ago, the music of Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo struck like a Mike Tyson uppercut, with their words compelling even the most stoic and hardest-hearted rock critics to exclaim "Love

is a battlefield!" Her matchless mezzo-soprano voice paired with his steel-twisting guitar licks ripped a hole in the music industry and opened the door for a sound – and a style – that would help define a decade. The musical duo shook the heavens and rattled the earth with

their powerful 1980s-era prose.

And today, this married force of nature – this thunder and lightning – is hard at work. ...

On a children's book.

"It's true," Benatar said in a phone interview. "Yeah, it's coming out in 2025.

We've been working on it just this past year, and we're in love with it. It's adorable. The artwork is beautiful. It's just about grandparents and music and their grandkids. So, it's really fun."

Wait, what?

SEE PAT & NEIL, continued on Page 9

Welcome to The Chapel: New atrium opens at former Niagara Catholic site



BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

The Chapel's Niagara Falls site is growing – and a brand-new atrium recently opened for congregants and community members to share a snack or join in fellowship.

"It's transforming how people experience a Sunday morning. There's time to just sit and have a coffee and a muffin with somebody after service and chat. We're

The Chapel's Allie Quader and Mark Cushing are shown inside the new atrium at the Niagara Falls campus.

encouraging that community that we're striving for," said Mark Cushing, who took over as campus pastor last year.

When the former Niagara Catholic High School site partially reopened in 2021, the senior hallway served as the entryway, while the former cafeteria became the main meeting and worship center.

Cushing said. "Our campuses ... we're like a community. People like to hang out together like families hang out."

While congregants could do that at the Chapel's Crosspoint (main), Lockport and Cheektowaga sites, churchgoers in Niagara

Falls were limited to just that hallway.

This new gathering area – formerly the NCHS locker room and adjoining workout center – includes a café, several tables and chairs, sofas, couches, TVs, extra bathrooms, and encouraging messages sprawled across the walls.

The atrium also offers "what we call our fireside room, which can also be used as a community group space where there's some couches and chairs," Cushing said. "And we've got our connection area, which, on Sundays, we

SEE THE CHAPEL, on Page 5

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