

# Fullerton News-Tribune

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## COMEDIANS GET SERIOUS ABOUT HELPING KIDS WITH AUTISM

The marquee was bright and the seats full at the 88-year-old Fox Theatre in Fullerton for the third annual Heroes Comedy Show for Autism. The event netted \$20,000 - \$14,000 more than last year - for Fullerton Cares, a nonprofit that serves children in the Fullerton School District with autism spectrum disorders. Nationally known comics Carlos Mencia, George Perez, Adam Ray, Skylar Stone and Brad Williams, a Fullerton resident, performed for the lively crowd on April 3.

It was the first opportunity for most in attendance to see the inside of the theater currently undergoing renovations since being closed and abandoned in 1987.

"I think everyone here is excited to see it," said Jeremy Popoff of Fullerton, owner of Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, which catered food for the VIPs. "Fullerton Cares is a great cause, and this is really a testament to this community, how everyone rallies around."

Other local businesses, including Found Vintage Rentals and the Twisted Vine, pitched in to make the VIP area comfortable with seating, tables, beer and wine.

Larry Houser, the man behind Fullerton Cares, was as big a name as the headliners for the eve-



Comedian Skylar Stone



PHOTOS: DREW A. KELLEY, FOR THE REGISTER

Comedian Carlos Mencia performs during the Fullerton Cares Comedy Show for Autism.

ning, garnering cheers and chants from the audience. "My two mentors are here," he said. "Everyone's excited."

Those mentors - Lisa Ackerman, founder of Talk About Curing Autism, and Matt Asner, Autism Speaks executive director for Southern California - had nothing but compliments for Houser. "I don't think he needs mentoring anymore. He's a magic-maker," Ackerman said.

Comics had fans roaring with local references such as Perez's bit on Foxfire's "cougar" reputation. But they were completely serious about the cause.

"I'm excited to come back for my third year," Perez said before taking the stage. "If you're not helping anyone, what are you doing with your life?"



Bert Moeller and Emily Reed of Fullerton wait to enter the Fullerton Cares Comedy Show for Autism.



From left, Kristine Koontz, George Perez and Marc Millan attend the Fullerton Cares Comedy Show for Autism.