



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Building a New Playground, One Laugh at a Time**

Yonkers Rotary Hosts Comedy Night Gala to Raise Funds to Provide Local School Children  
with the Playground They've Always Wanted

**March 25, 2014**— Many schools have no playground facilities at all and little hope of getting one. **School 9**, a Yonkers elementary school for nearly 460 grade pre-K-9 students, has been no exception. The lack of outdoor play opportunities directly contributes to high rates of childhood obesity, diabetes, asthma and other health problems. But the 460 lucky students at Yonkers School 9 found some angels in a local community organization that is coming to their rescue.

The Rotary Club of Yonkers-East Yonkers ("the Rotary") is a small but determined group of civic-minded residents who are committed to building the students of School 9 a brand new playground by this summer. To do that, they need to raise a significant amount of money.

To raise these much-needed funds, the Rotary has organized a Comedy Night Gala at Empire City Casino that will take place on **Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup>** from **6:30pm – 11:30pm**. The event will kick off with a cocktail hour, followed by a buffet dinner, music, dancing, a Rock n' Roll Memorabilia silent auction and more. But the real stars of the night will be the award-winning comedians that will take the stage.

Emmy Award-winning comedian **Kevin Meaney**, one of the country's most popular stand up comedians for more than 25 years, will headline the event. Kevin's first HBO special in 1986 catapulted him to the forefront of the comedy scene and was quickly followed by dozens of appearances on *The Tonight Show with Jonny Carson*, *The Late Show with David Letterman*, *Saturday Night Live*, *Regis*, *Oprah*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, and many more. He starred in the CBS sitcom *Uncle Buck*, and had a featured role in the movie *Big* with Tom Hanks, among numerous other guest appearances on both sitcoms and dramas. Kevin is also a successful writer and producer. He wrote, produced and starred in a one-man autobiographical play titled *Wedding Vows in Vegas*, which Steve Martin called, "The most innovative, heart-rendering and funny show I've seen in a long, long time." Kevin moved home to New York from Los Angeles where he began working on Broadway in the hit musical *Hairspray*. He continues to perform across the country.

**Melvin George** will be the featured comedian of the evening. This veteran humorist was a Boston native before moving to New York where he quickly became successful. He has appeared in concert with such celebrated artists as Chaka Khan, Gladys Knight and the Pips, Roberta Flack, Patti LaBelle, and many more. Melvin held roles in the films *Mo' Better Blues* and *Meteor Man* and appeared on Fox's *Comic Strip Live*, A & E's *An Evening at the Improv*, *Caroline's Comedy Hour*, and HBO's *Def Comedy Jam*.

Comedian **John "J2" Iavarone** will MC the evening. John was Bronx born before becoming a Westchester resident and has been a successful stand-up comedian for more than a decade with regular appearances at Dangerfields, Comic Strip Live, Carolines, Stand-Up NY, Wisecrackers, Bananas and more.

The Rotary Club applied for and won a grant through KaBOOM!, a national non-profit that helps create play spaces through community participation. Morgan Stanley has generously pledged nearly \$100,000 towards the effort.

March 24, 2014

## Building a New Playground, One Laugh at a Time

The Yonkers Board of Education and the Yonkers Public School District are also onboard with efforts to rebuild the decrepit elementary school playground located at 53 Fairview Street, Yonkers, New York. For nearly 120 years, School 9 has tirelessly educated Yonkers' children, serving many of the same families for generations, in a school facility that has received few upgrades over the years. A new playground with up-to-date equipment and a safe play surface will inspire the much needed building modernizations at School 9 as well as provide a recreation space for the entire community.

The Comedy Night Gala will take place **Saturday, March 29, 2014** from 6:30pm-11:30pm in the Good Time Room (3<sup>rd</sup> floor) at Empire City Casino located at 810 Yonkers Avenue, Yonkers, NY. Tickets are \$95 online and \$100 at the door and can be purchased at [www.EastYonkersRotary.org](http://www.EastYonkersRotary.org) or by contacting Steve Castellano at 914-447-7163 or [scastellano07@gmail.com](mailto:scastellano07@gmail.com). All proceeds will go towards the playground equipment and the reconstruction of the play surfaces which has a projected cost of \$150,000.

The event would not be possible without the generosity of Empire City Casino who will be donating the space to host the event and X-Quisite Events who will be donating a nightclub-like sitting area for guest to mingle during the cocktail hour.

### ***About KaBOOM!:***

KaBOOM! is the national non-profit dedicated to the bold goal of ensuring that all children, particularly the 16 million American children living in poverty, get the active play they need to become healthy and successful adults. KaBOOM! has been a powerful champion for play since its founding in 1996, working with partners to build, improve, and open more than 15,000 playgrounds, engage more than 1,000,000 volunteers and serve more than 6,600,000 children. KaBOOM! creates and catalyzes great places to play; inspires, empowers and leads play advocates; and elevates the societal conversation about the importance of play in children's lives. For more information, visit [www.kaboom.org/act](http://www.kaboom.org/act) or follow the conversation on why #PlayMatters at [www.twitter.com/kaboom](http://www.twitter.com/kaboom) or [www.facebook.com/kaboom](http://www.facebook.com/kaboom).

### ***About X-Quisite Events:***

X-Quisite Events is a full service event production company. We offer custom lounge furniture and bars, draping, lighting, logo dance floors, flowers, props and all types of decor. We can create your entire event or you can work with our rental division, X-Quisite Rentals and pick and choose from our 350+ unique pieces. Either way we will make your event look X-Quisite!

### ***About Empire City Casino at Yonkers Raceway:***

Empire City Casino, one of the largest entertainment and gaming destinations in the country, features 5,300 of the hottest slots, electronic craps, roulette, baccarat and sic bo; year-round harness racing & International simulcasting from North America's leading harness and thoroughbred venues; nightly live entertainment including the best party, country, tribute and Latin bands, comedy, karaoke & more. A plethora of dining options will satisfy even the most discerning palate: enjoy authentic Italian cuisine at Nonno's Trattoria; dine trackside with live betting at Empire Terrace Restaurant; convenient delicious options at the International Food Court or Grab 'n Go. A new \$50 million expansion added Dan Rooney's, a high-energy sports bar which boasts creations by Michelin-starred Chef Christopher Lee; Pinch, in collaboration with Ducasse Studios, not only whets the appetite but also features 100 New York craft beers; and Alley 810, a craft cocktail lounge rounds out the entertainment options with retro bowling lanes. Empire City Casino at Yonkers Raceway is located at 810 Yonkers Avenue (at Central Avenue) in Yonkers, New York, Westchester County (I-87 to Exit 2), open seven days a week from 9:00am to 4:00am. Connect with us on [facebook.com/empirecity](http://facebook.com/empirecity), follow us on [twitter.com/EmpireCity\\_C](http://twitter.com/EmpireCity_C), visit [www.empirecitycasino.com](http://www.empirecitycasino.com) or call 914.968.4200 for more information.

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