

# Cast Members Perform 10th Encore Show for Charity

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla., July 16, 2012 – In 2002, a few Walt Disney World Cast Members sharing a passion for artistic expression and a desire to help local charities came together to create magic in a special way — producing cabaret-style productions of Broadway standards.

Today, this group of Cast Members, aptly named Encore! Cast Performing Arts, has morphed into one of the largest Cast clubs, boasting more than 500 performers from a variety of backgrounds and from all areas of the Walt Disney World Resort. In addition, more than 50,000 volunteer hours are spent annually to prepare for an Encore! production.

Cast Members from diverse backgrounds and work areas participate in Encore!'s productions.

To kick off its 10th anniversary, the group has geared up to deliver its grandest production to date, "Finding Wonderland." This story follows the journey of self-discovery as seen through one girl's eyes. Along the way, she stumbles upon friends, foes, triumphs and defeats as she finds a way to the place she always dreamed of.

"'Finding Wonderland' takes a fresh take on many of our [productions] from the past 10 years," said Clay Price, 15-year Cast Member and artistic director for Encore! Cast Performing Arts. "Most importantly, this show has heart. It is going to be emotional and energetic. 'Finding Wonderland' has a message that we all can relate to."

Some show participants find that being a part of Encore!'s annual performance is the only chance they have to express themselves artistically on stage. Whether they are from Finance and Accounting, Merchandise or Food & Beverage, each volunteer plays an integral role in the show.

"What I love most about Encore! is that it gives us a time where both Entertainment and non-Entertainment Cast Members can perform together," said Kenny Cottrell, a tenor in the choir and a Front Desk Cast Member at Disney's Yacht & Beach Club Resort.

For Hannah Laird, who performs in various shows throughout the Walt Disney World Resort, volunteering time to perform in Encore! is her passion.

"We are all here because we want to be here," she said. "Encore! started out as a dream, and it is exciting to see this dream unfold for the tenth anniversary. And, this production is for a wonderful cause."

Hannah Laird performs in "Finding Nemo – The Musical" and has been a part of Encore! for four years.

All proceeds from "Finding Wonderland" will be donated to A Better Life – Pet Rescue, an organization founded by Disney Cast Members that helps to promote pet adoption in Central Florida. A Better Life's mission is to save all unwanted companion animals and to give them a second chance through rehabilitation.

"That this performance is a way that we can give back to our community as Disney Cast Members is amazing," said Kristin Hunt, an eight-year Encore! veteran and a Guest Service manager at the Emporium at Magic Kingdom Park. "The community involvement aspect is a huge part of why I continue to play [the violin], and it drives my passion for being included in Encore!'s performances."

“Finding Wonderland” is not solely aimed to dazzle audiences with music, acting and dancing, but it is to also remind all Cast Members of our Disney heritage.

“We can all have these grand ideas, but it takes people to get it done,” said Bruce Light, producer for the group. “Aside from having great music and a great story, these Cast Members are volunteering their time, and they have set the bar at excellent. Why not save the animals along the way?”

“Finding Wonderland” performances will be held July 15-16 and July 19-22 at 7:30 p.m. at Premier Theater at Disney’s Hollywood Studios. To purchase tickets, visit [www.encorecentral.org](http://www.encorecentral.org).

Written by Lena Bertrand