

WATERFIRE PROVIDENCE

– CREATIVELY TRANSFORMING OUR CITY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, August 24, 2023

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WaterFire Providence Announces the 7th Annual FireBall Gala

Honoring Barbara Papitto, David N. Cicilline, Dr. Silas O. R. Pinto,
and Umberto Crenca



Providence, RI WaterFire Providence announces the 7th Annual FireBall Gala on Thursday, October 19, 2023 from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the WaterFire Arts Center. This year, WaterFire will be honoring four extraordinary Rhode Islanders with WaterFire Impact Awards who exemplify exceptional dedication to community service, innovation, and a relentless commitment to positive change. These individuals have made significant contributions in their respective fields, inspiring others to follow their lead in making a lasting impact on the lives of fellow citizens and the overall betterment of the City of Providence and the State of Rhode Island.

WATERFIRE PROVIDENCE

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WATERFIRE PROVIDENCE IS A 501(C)3 NON-PROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATION AND ALL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

"Honoring these four visionary leaders at our 7th Annual FireBall Gala is a testament to their remarkable impact as change-makers in our communities. Their unwavering dedication to community service, innovation, and driving positive change has left an enduring mark on the City of Providence and the State of Rhode Island and inspired countless others to follow in their footsteps. As we gather to honor them, it's a night filled with excitement, especially because we're raising funds for our community programs," says Barnaby Evans, Creator, Executive Artistic Director + coCEO of WaterFire Providence, "We are thrilled to recognize their exceptional contributions and continue our commitment to empowering our community through programs like WaterFire Accelerate and ArtLab@WaterFire. Together, we look forward to an evening that not only celebrates their achievements but also strengthens our resolve to make a difference in the lives of our fellow citizens."

Philanthropic Leadership, Barbara Papitto is the visionary founder and trustee of the Papitto Opportunity Connection (POC), a non-profit private foundation committed to supporting organizations committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in Rhode Island through education, job skills training, and entrepreneurial support. Her philanthropic leadership has been transformative, as she actively listens to and works to create individual success stories and combat systemic injustice. POC's core focus on supporting children impacted by inequality demonstrates Barbara's dedication to fostering a more equitable future. Her unwavering commitment to making a difference has solidified her as a transformative leader, leaving a lasting impact on Rhode Island's philanthropic landscape and inspiring generations to come.

Civic Leadership, The Honorable David N. Cicilline's remarkable career in public service embodies a profound commitment to Rhode Island's betterment. From his early days in the Rhode Island House of Representatives to his impactful tenure as Mayor of Providence, he consistently displayed strong leadership and dedication to fostering economic and social progress. Under his innovative leadership, Providence was coined the Creative Capital, a testament to his profound impact on the arts in the city. While representing Rhode Island's 1st Congressional District, he passionately advocated for progressive policies, championing affordable health care, education, environmental protection, gun violence prevention, and LGBTQ+ rights. Now, as President and CEO of the Rhode Island Foundation, David's transition reflects his unwavering devotion to serving the state and to empowering its diverse communities. Widely respected and supported, David Cicilline's tireless efforts in promoting inclusive values have left an enduring impact on Rhode Island's future.

Cultural Impact, Dr. Silas Otniel Rodrigues Pinto's versatile career is a testament to his dedication to our communities and to justice. Dr. Pinto is currently the inaugural Director of the Department for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging in the City of Providence where he works across departments to further integrate principles of fairness and justice in the City's practices, procedures, and policies. His career spans several fields, including serving as a school psychologist at the Met High School, researcher and treatment provider at Brown University, Faculty and Director of multiple graduate programs at Tufts University, and more recently as faculty at College Unbound. Dr. Pinto is often known as "Mestre Tigri," the visionary founder of the only Capoeira group in Rhode Island, *Grupo Ondas*, and serves to this day as the only Capoeira Mestre of Cape Verdean descent. At New Wave Martial Arts and Fitness he focuses on wellness and

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addressing the impacts of colonial and intergenerational trauma through capoeira and other martial arts. Dr. Pinto/Mestre Tigri has been a wonderful partner bringing Capoeira to WaterFire for over twenty years. His commitment to activism, education, youth and cultural enrichment has made a profound impact and has garnered widespread recognition and respect in our communities. His multifaceted contributions continue to foster positive change throughout Rhode Island by working to address systemic barriers, so that people can exercise their inherent cultural wealth and power.

Creative Impact, Umberto Crenca is a multi-talented artist, musician, and founder of AS220, a groundbreaking all-ages arts space in Providence, Rhode Island. His creative pursuits as a painter, sculptor, and performer have garnered recognition both locally and internationally. However, his most significant impact lies in AS220, which serves as an unjuried, uncensored home for the arts. This community-driven space houses art galleries, performance venues, fabrication, print, and media labs, as well as a dance studio, bar, restaurant, and youth program. Additionally, AS220 provides affordable housing for over 50 artists, fostering an inclusive and vibrant artistic community. Through his dedication to fostering creativity, artistic freedom, and community engagement, Umberto has helped transform Providence into a haven for the arts. His legacy will forever be intertwined with the flourishing cultural landscape of the city, inspiring generations of artists to fearlessly pursue their passions and contribute to the rich tapestry of arts and culture in Rhode Island and beyond.

This year's gala will raise funds for WaterFire's workforce development and education programs [WaterFire Accelerate](#) and [ArtLab@WaterFire](#). Tickets can be purchased at waterfire.org/fireball.

Tickets are on sale right now and can be purchased on [FireBall's Humanitix page](#). Prices range from \$150-\$300 and includes a champagne toast, access to the entire night, a catered dinner by Russell Morin Catering and Events, live performances, and a silent auction. Black Tie Optional preferred.

2023 FireBall Sponsors

High Output

Russell Morin Catering and Events

Parsons Capital Management

United Parking LLC

Rhode Island Monthly

Honorary Co-Chairs

Mayor Brett P. Smiley and James DeRentis, Dr. Joseph A. Chazan, M.D. and Vicki Veh, Arnell and Alicia Millhouse, Barnaby Evans

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Hosts

Kristen Adamo and Joe Wilson Jr.

Committee

Kristen Adamo, Candy Adriance, Kate and Andrew Bramson, Melissa and Bobby Cord, Angie DiMeo, Ashley Erling, Travis Escobar and Marcela Betancur, Will Farrell, Erin Hanson, Sean Holley, Stephen Hourahan, Matt Jerzyk, Andrea LaFazia, Wendy MacGaw, Christopher Marcella, Damaris Messina, Rosie Ortiz, Kyla Pecchia, Kibbe and Tom Reilly, Ruby Shalansky, Barbara Sokoloff and Herb Rakatansky, Bob Walsh, Joe Wilson Jr.

Media Resources

[FireBall Graphics & Photo Collection](#)

More information about FireBall can be found on our website: <https://waterfire.org/fireball>

Tickets can be purchased here: <https://events.humanitix.com/fireballgala>

The latest developments and the complete 2023 WaterFire Season Schedule can be found at <https://waterfire.org/schedule>.

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About WaterFire Providence

WaterFire Providence® is an independent, 501(c)3 non-profit arts organization whose mission is to inspire Providence and its visitors by revitalizing the urban experience, fostering community engagement, and creatively transforming the city by presenting WaterFire for all to enjoy. Each year nearly 1 million people come to downtown Providence to experience WaterFire contributing over \$149,000,000 to the local economy, generating over \$9,000,000 of direct tax revenue for the State of Rhode Island and supporting 1,294 jobs for community residents and strengthening Providence's Creative Capital and Rhode Island's State for the Arts brands. For information about WaterFire Providence and the WaterFire Arts Center visit <https://waterfire.org/>

About the WaterFire Arts Center

WaterFire Providence purchased the Art Center in 2012 and began rehabilitation for the vacant, historic, industrial building in the underserved Olneyville/Valley neighborhood of

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Providence. The 37,000 sq. ft. multi-use arts center has become WaterFire's first permanent home in the community and serves as its headquarters, production complex, and a multi-purpose arts venue as well as a social enterprise platform strengthening the organization's long-term financial sustainability. Exhibitions presented at WaterFire Arts Center will further the organization's agenda of providing arts and culture opportunities and experiences for all, regardless of social, cultural, or economic background. For more information about the WaterFire Arts Center including rental inquiries, please visit:

<https://waterfire.org/wfac>