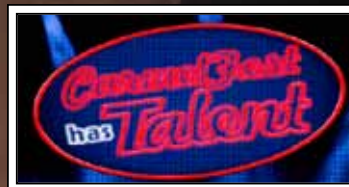


CHS PRINCIPAL
HAS TO PLAY IT
BY THE BOOK / P4



CARMEFEST
HAS TALENT
SEEKING JUDGES,
SINGERS / P6



116TH AND
KEYSTONE
INTERSECTION TO
CLOSE / P6

CURRENT CARMEL

Tuesday
March 2, 2010
FREE



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

*Legendary performer Ben Vereen
will share his tales and talents when
he comes to Carmel March 7 / P2*

Submitted Photo

Free heart seminar.

See back for more details.

 Clarian North Cardiovascular

UP CLOSE *AND* PERSONAL

By Kevin Kane

Current in Carmel

Ben Vereen said he doesn't know how to describe his upcoming show at Carmel High School, because he doesn't quite know what exactly will happen.

The Legendary, Tony Award-winning performer is perhaps best known for his roles in "Pippin," "Jesus Christ Superstar," "Wicked" and "Roots" among many others. He has entertained millions during a career spanning decades, and when he comes to Carmel March 7, he's going to share his stories of show business and a life within it.

The show isn't just a musical recount of Vereen's success on the stage and screen, though. He said he takes the opportunity to candidly discuss both the triumphs he's overcome and his ongoing difficulties, including his current struggles with diabetes and the 1992 accident in which he was struck by a car. For Vereen, the session is very much therapeutic. He said he has to "tell it to heal it," but added that he also hopes some in attendance can benefit from this openness as much as he will.

"I hope it brings some inspiration," Vereen said. "Maybe, just by chance, it will help someone in a similar situation. I'm not saying I have the answers, but at least my story will help people find something there."

"We need our arts now more than ever. That's what's going to keep people singing and dancing."

- Ben Vereen

"An Evening with Ben Vereen" will include much more than the details of one man's adversity. Vereen said the performance may be emotional at times but will also contain a great deal of energy and excitement coming from a man who's never short of it in supply. He's bringing along his accompanist Nelson Kole and said there will likely be some singing and dancing. How much and which numbers might be performed, however, Vereen couldn't say for sure.

Legendary performer Ben Vereen will share his tales and talents when he comes to Carmel March 7



'AN EVENING WITH BEN VEREEN'

When: 7 p.m., March 7

Where: Carmel High School, 520 E. Main St., Carmel

Tickets: \$34 to \$69, purchased by calling (317) 815-9387. March 3 is the final day for a ticket giveaway presented by Carmel Community Players and Current Publishing. To register, go to www.currentincarmel.com and click on the link on the right of the page.

"I don't know, but I'm going to have a good time," he said. "It just depends on where the evening takes us."

Vereen said the mood and energy of the 1,400-plus in attendance will essentially determine what happens during the show. He said the audience is free to ask anything, and he'll adjust the performance to appeal to the interests

"I hope it brings some inspiration. Maybe, just by chance, it will help someone in a similar situation."

- Ben Vereen

of the people. That level of showmanship is one of the many reasons why Carmel Community Players' Brian Koning worked to bring Vereen to Carmel. The relationship between the two goes back several years, and having seen similar shows from Vereen in the past, Koning said he knew it would be something the crowd here would enjoy.

"He's had a great career but he's a very down-to-earth person who's gone through the same life experiences," Koning said. "His job is different but he is one of us."

On March 7, Vereen's job will be not only to entertain but also to raise money for CCP. Proceeds from the event will go to the community theater, and Vereen said that being able to give back to the arts community was important to him.

"We need our arts now more than ever," he said. "That's what's going to keep people singing and dancing."

Vereen said any singing and dancing he'll be doing March 7 will be in celebration of life. He invited all to come celebrate with him on that evening, to get up close and personal and see a side of him that most fans haven't experienced. But he doesn't want the show to be completely one-sided.

"I want to hear about Carmel," he said. "So many people in Carmel prayed for me in '92. This is my chance to come to them and say 'thank you' because their prayers worked."

Submitted Photo