



NEWS RELEASE

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The Verve Pipe heads entertainment line-up at Sandbox Party convention Aug. 26 *Admission is free to convention highlighting importance of maintaining state's investment in early childhood*

LANSING – Michigan families are encouraged to pack up the kids and head over to the Aug. 26 Sandbox Party Convention at Michigan State University's Breslin Center, which will feature a family-oriented performance by The Verve Pipe.

The convention is open to the public and admission is free.

With sales of 3 million albums worldwide and a reputation for spectacular live performances, The Verve Pipe has gained a regional following for its textured rock songs, including inventive arrangements, soul-searching lyrics and layered vocals. The group's recent album, "A Family Album," features family-oriented songs with fun, inventive lyrics set to the band's memorable melodies.

"We're excited to have a band of this caliber help lead the festivities at our convention, which will also include the serious business of making sure Michigan's leaders are listening to the people of this state who are demanding that young children be considered a high priority," said Judy Y. Samelson, CEO of the Early Childhood Investment Corp. (ECIC), a nonprofit public corporation that is implementing a comprehensive early childhood system in Michigan.

"Michigan voters know that Michigan's economic future will be determined by the resources it puts into infants and young children today," Samelson said. "Now, especially in this election year, it's time for Michigan's leaders to pay attention."

The nonpartisan, nonpolitical Sandbox Party for Michigan's Youngest Learners represents the interests of Michigan's youngest residents, from birth to age 5. The convention is designed to tap into the growing sentiment among Michigan voters that investing in kids is a key component of Michigan's economic turnaround.

The party was launched July 1 and supporters include parents, teachers, child care providers, and representatives from leading early childhood organizations including Michigan's Children, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Michigan, Children's Trust Fund, Michigan League for Human Services, Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children, Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health, Michigan Association of United Ways and Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health. It is also backed by state officials including Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan.

The Sandbox Party Convention, which will run from 1 – 4 p.m. on Aug. 26, will include family entertainment, exhibitors and special appearances by popular Michigan sports and news personalities. The gubernatorial candidates have been invited to speak and bring their families.

“Polling shows an overwhelming majority of Michigan voters believe early childhood development and education programs are a necessity for their communities and should be spared from state budget cuts,” Samelson said. “We want to encourage voters to let candidates and elected officials know what they're thinking. The convention gives them the chance to be heard.”

For more information see www.michigansandboxparty.com

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