

Universal FanCon is First Large-Scale Event to Celebrate Diversity and Inclusion of Fans and Fandoms April 27-29, 2018

BALTIMORE, Md., Feb. 1, 2018 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – The inaugural Universal FanCon (FanCon) is the first large-scale, 24-hour, inclusive event that celebrates the diversity of fans, the diversity of fandom and the true needs of those who love pop culture. This year's event will help benefit and promote relevant causes, including Geek Club Books Charity for Autism.



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Hosted in Baltimore, Maryland, April 27-29, 2018, FanCon's mission is to create a sense of belonging by providing authentic connections and experiences through fan-centric parties, programs, panels and partners. As an important part of this mission, FanCon is building accessibility and education into every aspect of the programming to make certain it is a disability- and autism-friendly event.

With its broad range of attendees, celebs, and unique experiences – and its engaging, interactive festival atmosphere – FanCon is the place for everyone

who is a fan!

To purchase tickets, visit <https://www.universalfancon.com/>

Follow on social: <https://twitter.com/UniversalFanCon> and #FanCon

“Universal FanCon is more than just a new Geek convention,” said Co-Founder Robert Butler. “It’s an event where all fans of pop culture are being celebrated, represented and included during every step of the way: through our planning, our attendees, programs, parties, celebrity guests and unique experiences.”

FanCon got its start during a dinner conversation in 2016 between Butler, his partners in the wildly popular The Black Geeks podcast, and Jamie Broadnax, founder of Black Girl Nerds.

“We’re all big geeks and realized, for instance, that people of color have the same complaints as other minority groups and marginalized populations when it came to representation in the celebration of fandoms,” said Butler. “Hispanics, African Americans and Asians make up 38 percent of our population and 49 percent of frequent moviegoers – and they are more likely to see a movie featuring characters to whom they can relate. So, we knew there was a need that we could fill!”

“We wanted to create a safe space that celebrated fandom differently by including the many different faces and voices that truly made up the groups, artists, affiliates, and brands that we all represented, such as women, the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, autistic community, and people of color,” said Jamie Broadnax.

“The inclusion and accessibility mission of FanCon is why Geek Club Books got involved with this inaugural event,” said Jodi Murphy, President of Geek Club Books, an autism nonprofit. “Autistic representation and inclusion in pop culture, media and the community-at-large is what we’ve been advocating for!”

The support from Hollywood, brands, and organizations has been and continues to be amazing: Kristian Nairn, a.k.a. Hodor from “Game of Thrones”; Aydian Dowling (Trans activist), Riyadh Khalaf (YouTube sensation), Yuriko Yamaguchi (Voice Actress / “Seiyuu”); legend Billy Dee Williams; actor and comedian Orlando Jones; Mehcad Brooks (“Supergirl”); comedian, Paralympian and actress Katy Sullivan; Ricky Whittle and Yetide Badaki (“American Gods”); DC Comics and Marvel writer Greg Pak; actors Phil LaMarr, Sumalee Montano and Fryda Wolff; GRAMMY-winner Big Daddy Kane, video game composer for Sega’s “Panzer Dragoon” Saori Kobayashi with TriForce Quartet, rapper Mega Ran, and electronics musician TeddyLoid; Kim Chi (“Rupaul’s Drag Race”); Geek Club Books for Autism, Black Girl Nerds, Blerdgurl, ClexaCon, Disability Visibility Project, FanBros, and more.

“The people and fandoms we are representing, the support we are getting from the city of Baltimore and the committed team we’ve been able to build are all testaments to how important and relevant an event such as FanCon is today,” said Butler. “We can’t wait to see everyone in Baltimore, April 27-29!”

SPECIAL GUESTS INCLUDE (list by alpha order/more to be announced):

Yetide Badaki, Demore Barnes (actor), Steve Blum (voice of "Wolverine"), Big Daddy Kane, Bit Brigade, Mehcad Brooks, Kim Chi, DJ-Jo (DJ), DJ NightCrawler (DJ/musician), Terri Doty (voice actress), Aydian Dowling, Ducky Dynamo (DJ/musical artist), HEAVYGRINDER (DJ/producer/vocal duo), Jamal Igle (comic artist/writer), Orlando Jones, Riyadh Khalaf, Saori Kobayashi, Phil LaMarr, Bruce Langely ("American Gods"), Mega Ran, Mary Elizabeth McGlynn ("Star Wars: Rebels"), Sumalee Montano, Kristian Nairn, Greg Pak, Professor Shy Guy (music artist), SAMMUS (rapper/producer), Regine Sawyer (Women in Comics Collective), Peter Shinkoda ("Falling Skies"), Katy Sullivan, TeddyLoid, Triforce Quartet, Jeffrey Veregge (Native American comic book artist), Voia (producer/singer), Jeremy Whitley (comic series writer), Ricky Whittle, Billy Dee Williams, Fryda Wolff, Yuriko Yamaguchi.

PROGRAMS, PANELS & EVENTS INCLUDE (more to be announced):

Celebrity Meet-and-Greets, Photo/Autograph Opportunities, Lightsaber Dueling Academy, Music Concerts, Comedy Show hosted by Orlando Jones, 24-hour Arcade and eSport Gaming Tournaments, Tabletop Gaming, "American Gods" Show Panel, Kids STEM, and other programming for gaming, comics, anime, movies, TV, music, and all things fandom!



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AFFILIATES & PARTNERS INCLUDE (more to be announced):

Baltimore Convention Center, 3 Black Geeks, Black Girl Nerds, BlerdGurl, ClexaCon, Comic Attack, CrunchyRoll, DC Anime Club, DeAnn Cox Chronicles,

Disability Visibility Project, FanBros, Funimation, Geek Club Books for Autism, Geek Soul Brother, GeekGirlCon, Geeks of Color, Gifted Sounds Network, Graveyard Shift Sisters, Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor, Hyatt Regency Inner Harbor, I Need Diverse Games, LatinxGeeks, Marriott Inner Harbor Camden Yards, MEGASHEEN, Nerds of Color, Nerds of Prey, Pink Banana, Ramp Your Voice, Renaissance Harborplace, Shepard, Sheraton Inner Harbor, The Black Geeks, The Black Tribbles, Visit Baltimore (www.baltimore.org), and more.

MORE INFORMATION:

For more information, to review FanCon's Accessibility information, and to purchase tickets, visit <https://www.universalfancon.com/>.

For more information about Geek Club Books autism nonprofit go to <https://geekclubbooks.com/>.

About Geek Club Books:

Using storytelling, Geek Club Books nonprofit's mission is changing perceptions and putting an end to the stigma surrounding autism, replacing fear with wonder. The nonprofit produces interactive children's comics, curriculum, assemblies, public awareness campaigns, online resources, and educational videos for acceptance in classrooms, on playgrounds and in communities. They mentor and empower autistic individuals to be the storytellers, inspiring empathy, inclusion and acceptance for those who are different. Twitter: <https://twitter.com/geekclubbooks>.

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