Great Cake Walk: Celebs take walk on sweet side to narrow achievement gap

The Great Cake Walk, Sacramento’s sweetest fundraiser, is a chance to have your cake – and other tempting confections – and help high school students fulfill their college dreams.

The second annual walk, presented by the nonprofit Closing the Gap, will be 5-8 p.m. Thursday, March 14, at the Sacramento State Alumni Center. Tickets are $65.

“Closing the academic achievement gap in the Sacramento region is imperative to maintaining a competitive workforce, attracting high-paying jobs and enabling Sacramento’s economy to thrive,” says Cheryl Miles, president of Closing the Gap’s board of directors. “Having so many talented business owners, educators, students and volunteers support the Great Cake Walk is testament that this is a mission that directly affects every school, every community and every child in our area.”

Sweets for the event will be provided by top area patisseries, including Above & Beyond Cakes, the Art Institute of California, Brita’s Confections, Cake Castle Bakery, Nothing Bundt Cakes, Ettore’s European Bakery, San Juan High School’s culinary arts program and Rick’s Dessert Diner. All will offer dessert samples and provide beautifully decorated cakes for a lively, old-fashioned cake walk.

Actor, producer and humanitarian Danny Glover is scheduled to attend as a celebrity walker, ready to step in for those who choose not to walk the cake walk themselves. Glover is best known for his memorable performances in such films as Dreamgirls, Beloved and The Color Purple.

Other celebrity walkers include the event’s emcee, News10 anchor Cristina Mendonsa, Sacramento Police Chief Sam Somers Jr., Roseville Police Chief Daniel Hahn (all three are Sac State alums), West Sacramento Police Chief Dan Drummond and Petry Hawkins-Byrd, the bailiff on Judge Judy.

In addition, News10 sports anchor Ryan Yamamoto, radio personalities Lee Perkins and Andrea Gomez, former news anchor Sharon Ito and former TV news reporter Karen Massie are ready to walk.
Entertainment will be provided by jazz bands from Christian Brothers and Rio Americano high schools, along with the mascots for Inderkum and McClatchy high schools. Everything from cake-decorating lessons to diamond jewelry will be auctioned.

Great Cake Walk proceeds go to Sacramento-based Closing the Gap, which funds programs that help students achieve their potential and narrow the ever-widening achievement gap.

Statistics show that two of every three high school graduates in the region don’t complete the coursework necessary to apply to the California State University or other institutions of higher learning. That number rises dramatically – to nearly four of five – for African American, Latino, Southeast Asian and low-income white high school graduates.

Community sponsors of the Great Cake Walk are Sacramento State, AT&T, eRepublic, Delegata and News10. Event sponsors are Sacramento State’s College of Education, Student Affairs and University Library.

“We are very pleased to again support Closing the Gap’s Great Cake Walk,” says Vanessa Sheared, dean of Sac State’s College of Education. “Too many of our bright and talented youth are being lost between the gaps in our education system. However, it doesn’t have to remain that way.

“It’s said that it takes a village to ensure our children’s success. It’s through organizations such as Closing the Gap that we in education, business and community organizations come together to guarantee that our young people are not left behind. Closing the Gap provides funding and resources for youth, offers them hope and gives them the chance to be all that they can be. It is a great model for initiating change, and as long as there are children falling through the gap, we in the College of Education want to play a role in shaping their pathway to success,” she says.

To purchase tickets for the Great Cake Walk and to learn more about Closing the Gap, go to www.closingthegapusa.org. For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Office of Public Affairs at (916) 278-6156.

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