

Red Nose Day raises smiles and money



Montclair Film Executive Director Tom Hall and board member Luke Parker Bowles. KATE ALBRIGHT/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

Red Nose Day
Thursday, May 23

Businesses involved include
The Little Daisy Bake Shop, Montclair Bread Company,
Egan & Sons, Jonathan's Balloons

rednoseday.org

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Luke Parker Bowles was sleepy. There was a yawn in his voice.

On Monday, May 20, he was deep into a 24-hour movie marathon.

Montclair Film Executive Director Tom Hall was also doing a movie marathon; he will begin his on Wednesday.

They're not screening films for another festival, though Parker Bowles is on the board of directors of [Montclair Film](#).

The two men are raising money for children, in preparation for Red Nose Day, which is today, May 23.

Red Nose Day is part of [Comic Relief](#), an organization founded in 1985 by screenwriter/director Richard Curtis ("Notting Hill," "Love, Actually") and comedian Lenny Henry, to aid people experiencing famine in Ethiopia. Poverty, as defined by Red Nose Day, is living on less than \$1.90 a day; 385 million children live in extreme poverty worldwide.

In England, Red Nose Day is a telethon. In America, NBC holds [a two-hour special on Red Nose Day](#) at 8 p.m.

Curtis came to Montclair in 2016 as a special guest of the Montclair Film Festival, and Parker Bowles and Hall immediately joined the effort to raise money for kids. Both men are fathers and the need hit them immediately.

Today, Montclair schools are involved too. Students at all of the elementary schools are wearing red noses and red clothing, decorating trees with donated red noses (that's at Hillside), holding a joke-athon (Bradford), and doing other activities to raise money.

At the middle schools, activities include Buzz Aldrin's "guess how many noses are in the jar" for 50 cents a guess; Glenfield had a similar event at its art fair last week, and Renaissance students will tell jokes for \$1 at lunch and is holding a poster contest to raise awareness of child poverty.

Pastor Greg Horn at Presbyterian Church of Upper Montclair gave a sermon on Red Nose Day this past Sunday, May 19.

Local businesses involved include the Little Daisy Bake Shop, 622 Valley Road, making Red Nose cookies; Montclair Bread Company, 16 Label St., making Red Nose doughnuts; and at Egan & Sons, 118 Walnut St., Sharon Egan has designed a Red Nose cocktail. Portions of proceeds go to Red Nose Day. Jonathan of Jonathan's Balloons, 242A Bellevue Ave., will cover part of town with red balloons.

Stephen Colbert is [playing Dungeons & Dragons online on May 23](#), and until voting ended, fans could choose his character's traits if they contributed. They can continue to contribute to his cause.

Montclair's town-wide involvement has become a case study for the organization, which now provides a downloadable teacher curriculum pack on its website.

Why are so many people doing so much?

Especially Parker Bowles and Hall: you'd think after the hectic 10 days of the Montclair Film Festival both men would be off the grid, not on Facebook Live. After all, MFF just ended on May 12, and there is always work to do to wrap up and debrief. Parker Bowles runs four companies, and is one of a team negotiating to reopen the Bellevue Theatre.

But instead, Parker Bowles and Hall have their red noses on.

Literally. They are wearing red noses.



Luke Parker Bowles' car, parked outside the offices of Scoundrel Films, wears a red nose. KATE ALBRIGHT/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

"It's inarguable why we would do this," Parker Bowles said. "Just raising \$50 would educate a child for a year. Five dollars would take them off the street and put them in a home."

His three children are 10, 7 and 3; Hall's children are 10 and 6. "And 100 percent of the money goes to the kids. None of it goes to corporate or CEOs." There is no overhead because Curtis is able to subsidize the organization, Hall said.

Half of the money raised by Red Nose Day USA goes to poor children in the United States, and the other half to poor children around the world.

MOVIE MONEY

“I literally couldn’t run 10 blocks if I tried, but I’m really good at watching movies,” Hall said with a laugh in the lobby of Scoundrel Films last week, where he and Parker Bowles described their projects. Just as with a biking or 10k marathon, people can pledge money by segment (mile, movie) or in a lump sum.

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The duo Facebook Live while they watch – Parker Bowles watches in his offices at Scoundrel Films, and Hall at home – so people can see that they aren’t falling asleep. “We take it very seriously,” Parker Bowles said. Although “at 5 o’clock in the morning you might forget and pick your nose.”

Holding a fundraising movie marathon was their idea; now there are teams all over the country that watch movies for Red Nose Day. There’s a team in Kansas City, one in California, a couple in New York City, Hall said. Parker Bowles and Hall’s team page is tinyurl.com/yyegw7gj.

Every year, they’ve organized their movie-watching around themes.

The theme of this year’s Red Nose Day is “Everyday Heroes,” so Hall and Parker Bowles decided to choose their cinema heroes.

Hall’s theme is “(S)heroes,” or women moviemakers, and Parker Bowles is watching Bond films. “Because of the similarities,

obviously,” said Parker Bowles in his plummy British accent. “I will be wearing a tuxedo.”

Parker Bowles and Hall have been the top two fundraisers in America for Red Nose Day. As of Monday, they had already raised more than \$14,000. In addition to small pledges, there are a few people who always give large donations that help, Parker Bowles said. “Miss Emma Thompson. Miss Renee Zellweger has been very generous. Emma has constantly been so supportive.” Hall also hosted a Karaoke party for Red Nose Day on Monday night in New York City.

Parker Bowles and Hall each expect to watch 12 or 13 films in their 24-hour stints. In the future, Hall would like to open it up and show movies in movie theaters, and invite people to fundraise with them.

The money goes to existing nonprofits that work with children, such as Covenant House. “You can have a local impact and global impact with the same dollar,” Hall said. Poverty is an intersectional problem that begins when you’re born, he said, and trying to lift people out of it should be an objective of society. “That’s a value I want to instill in my own children.”