

Sharon Herhager, Village of Collier: The newest neighbor on Inkwood Lane, Sharon Herhager, hosted a Halloween open house Oct. 31.



Sandy Laing, Village Rio Rancho: Members of the Wednesday 8 a.m. aerobics class at La Hacienda Recreation Center dressed for Halloween and showed their muscles. The class leader is Sandy Laing, front right.

It's 'Better Together' When Tenor's Family Joins Him for Performance

Fernando Varela's wife and son participate in pair of concerts at The Sharon.

By **MICHAEL SALERNO**
Daily Sun Senior Writer

All it took was a question from a child.

Tenor Fernando Varela performed two intimate concerts Saturday in The Villages with his wife, Susan, and 8-year-old son, Zeke.

Titled "Better Together," named for the show's opening song made famous by Jack Johnson, the shows came after Zeke saw his father performing in Europe and asked if he could sing with him.

Minutes into the first show at 3 p.m., Varela said Zeke was a little nervous. But he tried to ease his jitters by reminding him that the audience in The Villages is "the best crowd in the world."

Set on a stage at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center designed to resemble the Varelas' living room, "Better Together" featured cover songs such as "You Raise Me Up" by Josh Groban and original songs



Fernando Varela hugs his son, Zeke, after performing the song "Touching Heaven" during "Better Together: An Intimate Evening With Fernando and Susan Varela" on Saturday at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

Varela wrote while on tour and missing his family.

He told the audience he wrote his song "Take the World," which he sang with Susan, in his dressing room

while thinking of her.

His son inspired another song he performed, "Touching Heaven," which he sang with Zeke by his side.

The involvement of Varela's

family delighted the crowd at Saturday's shows.

Linda and Russell Salamone attended one of Varela's performances in The Villages once before and loved it so much,

they had to see him again.

Seeing Susan and Zeke on stage was an added bonus for the Village Rio Grande couple.

"We enjoyed the variation of music, the voices, the band, and most of all, the family singing together," Russell said.

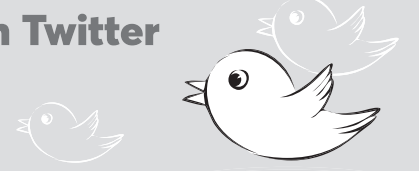
It was a high-quality show the Salamones were grateful to have in The Villages.

"We thought we'd have to go to New York City to see someone that talented like him," Linda said.

Michael Salerno is a senior writer with The Villages Daily Sun. He can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5369, or michael.salerno@thevillagesmedia.com.

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