



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***The nsoro Foundation Honors Steve Smith and Elizabeth Allen,  
As King and Queen at 2018 Starfish Mardi Gras Ball***

**Atlanta, Georgia (September 26, 2017)** The nsoro Foundation Honors Steve Smith and Elizabeth Allen as the King and Queen of the 2018 Starfish Mardi Gras Ball which takes place Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at the St. Regis, Atlanta. The mission of The nsoro Educational Foundation is to provide access to postsecondary education for youth in foster care, wards of the state and youth who have aged out of the foster care system. Our name is derived from the Ghanan term nsoromma, meaning ‘children of the heavens.’ We believe that youth in foster care – with so few blood ties they can claim – are part of a more divine family. Our name is always spelled with a lowercase “n” as a constant reminder that what matters most is our accountability to these “children of the heavens”.

As two of Atlanta’s most esteemed philanthropists, Steve Smith and Elizabeth Allen will be crowned King & Queen at the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Starfish Ball and reign over the masked Mardi Gras festivities. New at this year’s gala will be a Mardi Gras parade entrance, performers and surprise special guests in addition to a silent auction and powerful live auction punctuated with the success stories of nsoro Scholars. Guests are encouraged to bring their masks for an enchanting evening.

While 70% of youth in foster care plan to pursue postsecondary education, only 10% will enroll and a mere 3% will graduate, largely due to the overwhelming financial burden of exiting the foster care system.

Children in foster care first learn of nsoro through College Bound, a weeklong college immersion program featuring an enriching curriculum of S.T.E.A.M. (science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics) instruction, self-advocacy practice, financial literacy education, and health and wellness exposure. College Bound is currently hosted on eight university campuses across the country.

Since 2005, nsoro has awarded more than 700 scholarships for postsecondary education. Currently serving 293 scholars at 193 universities in 37 states, nsoro is creating a population of thriving former foster youth determined to beat the odds. 89% of nsoro scholars have graduated or are still enrolled in school, while 65% of them are pursuing an advanced degree. 98% of alumni have not been incarcerated, 78% have not been homeless, and 96% have not abused drugs or alcohol.

The nsoro Foundation gives youth in foster care a vision of life beyond their current circumstances, and then empowers them to realize their dreams. To buy tickets for the 2018 Starfish Ball, click the link: <https://www.501auctions.com/nsorostarfishball> Donations can be made to: nsoro Educational Foundation, 1720 Peachtree St., Suite 629, Atlanta, GA 30309 or online at [www.nsoro.foundation](http://www.nsoro.foundation)

# # #