
Superheroes Bearing Gifts

Article

ANAHEIM, California (Achieve3000, April 15, 2019). The last time they battled their way across multiplex screens, a villain called Thanos set in motion a grave course of events that wiped out half the universe. In 2019—for the last time ever—the fractured group of superheroes known as the Avengers banded together for a showdown to end all showdowns. The drama unfolded in *Avengers: Endgame*. The movie marked the 22nd and final installment of the Marvel Cinematic Universe franchise.

But when Iron Man, Captain Marvel, Black Widow, Hawkeye, Ant-Man, and Thor aren't saving what's left of the universe, they are Hollywood actors Robert Downey, Jr., Brie Larson, Scarlett Johansson, Jeremy Renner, Paul Rudd, and Chris Hemsworth. In April 2019, they banded together at Disney California Adventure Park for another global cause. This one, however, was based firmly in reality: They were there to announce the donation of money and toys to benefit seriously ill children.

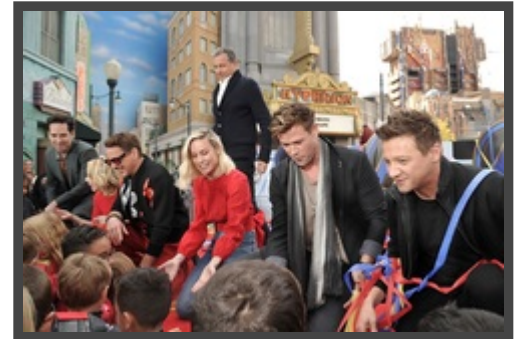


Photo credit: AP/Richard Shotwell/Invision

Celebrities lend their star power to a charity giveaway at Disney California Adventure Park.

Even in real life, the Avengers do things big. The charitable contributions they were there to announce came to more than a cool \$5 million. The event was the latest philanthropic effort of the Avengers Universe Unites campaign.

The Walt Disney Company, which owns Marvel, donated \$1 million to the Starlight Children's Foundation. This organization brings entertainment and education to children facing life-threatening conditions in several countries, including the U.S. and Great Britain. The LEGO group, Hasbro, Funko, and Amazon also joined forces as super-corporations. They donated more than \$4 million to children's hospitals around the U.S.

"More than any time, it's a time to give back to these courageous kids who inspire us," said Downey, Jr. He has played Tony Stark/Iron Man for more than a decade.

After the announcement, several of the *Avengers: Endgame* stars—including Johansson, Renner, Rudd, and Hemsworth—visited with kids from local Boys & Girls Clubs as they played at the LEGO store in Disneyland's Downtown Disney. The store unveiled toys with their characters' likenesses.

"It's not a bad day in the office when you get to come to Disneyland," gushed Johansson. She plays Black Widow in *Avengers: Endgame*. "I've been a huge fan of Disney for, like, forever. I come from a big, Disney-loving family. To be here with my fellow Avengers and all these kids, it's just great. It's such a great way to spend the day."

"I'm grateful and touched to be a part of this group," Rudd said. He plays Ant-Man in the movie. "I work with a lot of kids and families. It's not just the kids. It's the entire family—the parents, the brothers, the sisters. This is a real honor to give back."

By lending their fame and support to this charitable event, Rudd, Downey, Jr., Johansson, and their costars were continuing a long tradition of "giving back" in the entertainment community. And what they give can come in many forms: visiting schools and hospitals, hosting charity events, and making donations.

Media mogul Oprah Winfrey, for example, has directed hundreds of millions of dollars to charities and organizations that support girls' schools in Africa and babies who are rescued from abandonment and abuse. J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter books, has contributed a whopping \$160 million to her favorite charity groups. And Chance the Rapper has raised over \$3.2 million for Chicago public schools.

Some celebrities give of their hearts and their time as well as their money. Taylor Swift, Jennifer Lopez, and John Boyega, for example, have been known to drop by unexpectedly at hospital rooms to surprise fans who are ill. Other celebrities become spokespersons for good causes. John Legend and Beyoncé stand behind organizations that provide disaster relief funds. And actors Matt Damon and Leonardo DiCaprio lend their support to environmental issues.

So, it's really no surprise that the Avengers wanted to pitch in. Yes, they're superheroes and superstars. But many of showbiz's finest are super-philanthropists as well.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

Dictionary

cinematic (*adjective*) having to do with movies

franchise (*noun*) a series of fictional movies or books that have the same or related characters and settings

philanthropic (*adjective*) having to do with charitable work

Activity

PART 1

Question 1

According to the Article, what is one reason why the actors from *Avengers: Endgame* banded together to make an announcement in April 2019?

- (A) The actors wanted to lend their fame and support to an effort that helps children facing life-threatening conditions.
- (B) The actors wanted to provide additional money to children helped by the disaster relief organizations supported by John Legend and Beyoncé.
- (C) The actors were hoping to have the opportunity to work directly with Oprah Winfrey, J.K. Rowling, and Chance the Rapper.
- (D) The actors were aware that other celebrities had become known for dropping by unexpectedly at children's hospitals, and they wanted to be able to do the same.

Question 2

Which of these is **most** important to include in a summary of this Article?

- (A) Superstars from the *Avengers: Endgame* movie announced the donation of money and toys to benefit seriously ill children.
- (B) J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter books, donated \$160 million to her favorite charity organizations.
- (C) Paul Rudd, who plays Ant-Man in the *Avengers: Endgame* movie, feels it is an honor to give back to entire families.
- (D) Celebrities Taylor Swift, Jennifer Lopez, and John Boyega have been visiting sick and injured children in hospitals.

Question 3

Which is the closest **antonym** for the word *philanthropic*, as it is used in the Article?

- (A) Miserly
- (B) Magnificent
- (C) Massive
- (D) Mischievous

Question 4

Which of these is a statement of opinion?

- (A) The actors who play Marvel characters Iron Man, Captain Marvel, Black Widow, Hawkeye, Ant-Man, and Thor announced contributions to charities that totaled more than \$5 million.
- (B) The Walt Disney Company gave \$1 million to an organization that brings entertainment and education to children facing life-threatening conditions.
- (C) Various celebrities have donated their money or time to lend support to charity groups, schools, and other organizations.
- (D) Stars from the *Avengers* movie would have made a better impression if they had spent more time with the children at the LEGO store in Disneyland's Downtown Disney.

Question 5

The reader can infer from the Article that _____.

- (A) Celebrities who lend their support to causes that help children tend to become more famous than celebrities who support other worthy causes.
- (B) The Walt Disney Company's top executives are probably concerned that the Starlight Children's Foundation will misuse the donations it receives from various companies.
- (C) Many famous people who make a great deal of money find satisfaction in assisting with efforts that bring joy to others.
- (D) Chance the Rapper probably thinks that donating toys and money to children's hospitals is the best way to help kids.

Question 6

Look at the following passage from the Article:

Taylor Swift, Jennifer Lopez, and John Boyega, for example, have been known to drop by unexpectedly at hospital rooms to surprise fans who are ill. Other celebrities become spokespersons for good causes. John Legend and Beyoncé stand behind organizations that provide disaster relief funds. And actors Matt Damon and Leonardo DiCaprio lend their support to environmental issues.

Why did the author include this information?

- (A) To demonstrate that John Legend is making a bigger difference in the world than most celebrities have time for
- (B) To emphasize that celebrities don't necessarily need to donate money to make a difference in the world
- (C) To suggest that the Avengers Universe Unites campaign was the idea of Taylor Swift, Jennifer Lopez, and John Boyega
- (D) To persuade readers to do their part to help raise awareness about environmental issues and disaster relief efforts

Question 7

Which two words are the closest **synonyms**, as they're used in the Article?

- (A) Charity and campaign
- (B) Donation and contribution
- (C) Education and entertainment
- (D) Mogul and villain

Question 8

Which passage from the Article best supports the idea that many celebrities look for ways to help those who are less fortunate?

- Ⓐ In 2019—for the last time ever—the fractured group of superheroes known as the Avengers banded together for a showdown to end all showdowns. The drama unfolded in *Avengers: Endgame*. The movie marked the 22nd and final installment of the Marvel Cinematic Universe franchise.
- Ⓑ But when Iron Man, Captain Marvel, Black Widow, Hawkeye, Ant-Man, and Thor aren't saving what's left of the universe, they are Hollywood actors Robert Downey, Jr., Brie Larson, Scarlett Johansson, Jeremy Renner, Paul Rudd, and Chris Hemsworth.
- Ⓒ "It's not a bad day in the office when you get to come to Disneyland," gushed Johansson. She plays Black Widow in *Avengers: Endgame*. "I've been a huge fan of Disney for, like, forever. I come from a big, Disney-loving family. To be here with my fellow Avengers and all these kids, it's just great. It's such a great way to spend the day."
- Ⓓ By lending their fame and support to this charitable event, Rudd, Downey, Jr., Johansson, and their costars were continuing a long tradition of "giving back" in the entertainment community. And what they give can come in many forms: visiting schools and hospitals, hosting charity events, and making donations.