



FOX CITIES
PERFORMING
ARTS CENTER

Where the Arts Come Alive!



BEYOND BOUNDARIES: CONNECTING THROUGH THE ARTS

Community Impact Report Fox Cities Performing Arts Center
2023-24 Season





A MULTICULTURAL GATHERING PLACE FOR THE COMMUNITY

Reflecting on all who've come through the doors of your Fox Cities P.A.C. in the 2023-24 Season, it is a joy to celebrate the highly diverse and inclusive community to which we all belong. The performers in front of you, the patrons next to you, and the people behind the scenes all made up something one-of-a-kind: a collective patchwork of individual perspectives sharing the same moment in time. This opportunity to grow together through experiencing live performance is at the heart of the mission of your Fox Cities Performing Arts Center.

It is a privilege to be the home for so many enriching and engaging multicultural gatherings – a privilege that is not taken for granted. This community deserves even more opportunities to access live experiences, and that's why the work happening here focuses on ways to appeal to and reach even broader audiences. Staff conversations and self-reflections from within have paved the way for exciting new initiatives to come. Before we step into that promising future, let's look back at the fulfilling achievements of the 2023-24 Season.

Community members who are blind or have low vision were able to join in the experience more fully than ever through a touch tour of *Moulin Rouge! The Musical*. And many in the community made connections with one another through participation in community partner events including Mile of Music's education workshops.

Looking ahead, we are seeking more opportunities to become involved in community partnerships, creating more avenues to reach an increasingly diverse range of community members. We aim to provide live arts experiences while simultaneously creating a space where people from different backgrounds can connect and interact with one another.

There is always room for growth, and your insight is what inspires us. The next time we connect at any of the many upcoming community events this year, we invite you to share what you already love and what you want more of.

Thank you for being a vital part of our collective journey.



Maria Van Laanen
President and CEO
Fox Cities Performing Arts Center



Ryan Downs
Chair, Board of Directors
Fox Cities Performing Arts Center

Together, we're making a difference—one performance, one moment, one story at a time.
Scan the code to watch the video now!



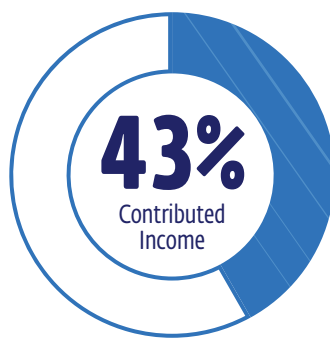


290+

Ticketed and Non-Ticketed Events

173,000+

Ticketed Patrons



296

Community Support Ticket Donations



More than

15%

of visitors from 60+ miles away from the Center

More than

15,000

Fox Cities P.A.C. Mobile App Users

9,600

Community First Credit Union Community Engagement Activity Attendees



32

Community Engagement Series Partners

110

Business Annual Partners

911

Individual Annual Partners

Approximately

2,000

Center Stage High School Musical Theater Program Students



10

Counties

31

Schools

17,600+

Amcor Education Series Attendees

290

Volunteers

19,600

Volunteer Hours

212

participating schools from

22

counties



1,428

Scholarship Tickets Provided



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

EMBRACING NEW AUDIENCES THROUGH STAFF CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Cross-cultural understanding is paramount to fostering our community as one of the best places to live. Having a local space dedicated to facilitating that connection is more than essential; it is invigorating. It is an honor to provide that comfortable and enjoyable multicultural gathering space for community members. To more meaningfully connect with those living in our community, your Fox Cities Performing Arts Center's 2023-24 Season included substantial strides to equip team members with the skills and knowledge that allow meaningful interaction.

Cultural competency training has been a cornerstone of our efforts to better serve and engage with new audiences. Eager to develop a deeper understanding of the diverse backgrounds, abilities and perspectives of our community, Center staff have been engaging in a series of targeted workshops and discussions that include:

Comprehensive Training Program:

Fox Cities P.A.C. employees received training designed to increase awareness and sensitivity to various cultural contexts, from understanding cultural nuances to addressing unconscious biases.

“The cultural competency journey was one of those things that I didn't know I needed. It provided me an opportunity to be a **better leader.**”

Steve Owens, Event Services Manager

Ongoing Reflection and Feedback:

Continuous improvement is at the heart of inclusion and belonging efforts. To ensure we are providing a dynamic environment for all, staff and community members can share experiences, challenges, and successes, thanks to newly established mechanisms for ongoing reflection and feedback.

You can see the impact of this enhanced cultural competency from the moment audiences are welcomed and engaged. Embracing and demonstrating a genuine commitment to understanding various cultural perspectives will expand who we reach, how encouraged they feel to become involved, and the relationships we'll share, more collaboratively, throughout our communities.

Moving forward, cultural competency will remain a central focus. We will continue to welcome and entertain audiences by building on successes, refining approaches, and striving for excellence. Everyone deserves to feel valued and understood, paving the way for even greater connections and community impact. By investing in growth and embracing diversity internally, a meaningful impact can be made externally, in the lives of all whom this multicultural gathering place serves.



WELCOMING DIVERSE GROUPS WITH DIVERSE INTERESTS

During the 2023-24 Season, recognizing the importance of strengthening community connection meant more than physical access alone. The community also joined together for social, intellectual and conceptual expansion.

This desire for ideological inclusivity is the impetus behind the Viewpoint Speaker Series, which offers a platform for voices from unique backgrounds and fields. The speakers in this series foster a rich dialogue within our community, at times even awakening unrealized intrigue in attendees.

“I didn’t realize how interested I would be in space when we saw [former astronaut Terry Virts],” said Tawana Hanamann, a community member who attended every show in the Viewpoint Speaker Series in the 2023-24 Season. “To have all of these experiences close to home, it’s amazing that I don’t have to go far.”

The Viewpoint Speaker Series provides a form of entertainment distinct from the enrichment of programming offered in our other series, and that is a result of staff emphasis on reaching individuals with different interests and needs. This bridges gaps, builds stronger connections in our community, and makes the Center more welcoming for all.



IMPROVING ACCESS TO LIVE OPPORTUNITIES

As we work to make meaningful progress to be more inclusive and accessible, a dedicated focus has been on breaking down barriers and creating opportunities for all individuals, including those with accessibility challenges.

One of the initiatives introduced during *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* was a touch tour, engaging visually impaired visitors by providing a tactile exploration of costumes and set pieces. This experience was then bolstered by audio descriptions occurring during live performances, allowing participants a holistic incorporation of details. Touch tour participant Lexi Galarowicz has low vision, and she said she found the experience to be a great opportunity to better appreciate the details of what took place during the show.

“I have always been interested in the arts, and so, having that experience to help understand more what’s happening on stage excited me,” she said. “One of the biggest things is

sometimes the small little things that are happening onstage... you don’t really see that in the audience, but going through that touch tour, I knew what was happening even though I couldn’t see it.”

The inclusion of audio description technology – offered through GalaPro – allows for a well-rounded experience. Patrons who participated were able to include the information they’d gathered from physical touch when they later experienced descriptions of the action onstage.

Additionally, award-winning performer and respected academic Kevin Spencer partnered with the Center to host specialized workshops focusing on important themes, including mental health and trauma, sensory inclusivity, and using magic as a form of therapy. These workshops were designed to create an inclusive environment that supports and values participants’ unique needs and perspectives, including people on the autism spectrum, people with anxiety disorders, military veterans with PTSD, adults with dementia, anyone with Parkinson’s disease, and stroke patients, to name just a few.

“Making the arts accessible to everyone creates better communities, improves the lives of people, and not only raises awareness of people with disabilities, but advocates for their acceptance,” said Spencer.

A workshop with San Jose Taiko in partnership with the Fond du Lac School District also helped make the arts more accessible for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. While the Center already offers American Sign Language interpretation, open captioning, and GalaPro for Broadway shows, the San Jose Taiko workshop bolstered the Center’s overall efforts to ensure that all participants and patrons may fully engage with available programs and resources.

Accessibility efforts will continue to receive dedicated focus going forward, naturally leading to continued growth for intersectional participation and edification for a larger portion of our community. Learn more about the services offered by visiting foxcitiespac.com/accessibility.



expanding PARTNERSHIPS, creating COLLABORATIONS



ENHANCING PARTNERSHIPS FOR RICHER EXPERIENCES

Community partnerships allow us to dive deeper into the quality of programming available to all. Connecting with local organizations and nonprofits creates a bridge that interlaces the many dynamic, community-focused missions of our region and brings a fuller overall slate of options, experiences and opportunities to a wider swath of our community.

Expanded partnerships and collaborations also leverage the expertise and resources of the Center with those of valued partners, strengthening current and future experiences from all angles. The 2023-24 Season was host to many exciting and innovative collaborations thanks to inter-organizational coordination and relationship building.

For example, in the past year, collaborations with community partners to support the Amcor Education Series led to the induction of the Make a Day of It program, which engaged students from the Fox Cities area and beyond.

Two shows in Make a Day of It connected to programming at partnering venue The History Museum at the Castle. Those shows were Literature to Life's *The Latehomecomer* and *The University of Wonder and Imagination*. Additionally, Kennedy Center for Young Audiences on Tour's *Show Way the Musical* and MOMIX ALICE were two shows that integrated the A in STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math – highlighting educational benefits of integrated arts through a partnership with Atlas Science Center.

"Some of [the students] were from out of town, so they had never been to either of our venues before. And the teachers were really excited that they were able to learn things at Atlas and at the [Fox Cities] Performing Arts Center that they could take back to the classroom and teach," said Atlas Science Center Executive Director Carol Couillard.



“ A couple times we heard the kids, kind of see them nudge each other and say, 'we learned about that!' And as an educator that is something that you really **can't put a price on.**”

Carol Couillard
Atlas Science Center Executive Director

The Make a Day of It program also proved crucial for schools like DC Everest. "As a project-based school in the Wausau area, the collaboration of the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center and the Atlas Science Center made our day wonderful. We were able to spend an entire day learning and getting ideas for awesome projects that our kids pursued as the year went on. It made the experience not only enjoyable but super valuable for our students," said DC Everest Educator Jacques DuVair.

Overall, three of the four Make a Day of It venue collaborations exceeded reach and capacity goals, meaning you can expect to see an expanded program in the coming years.

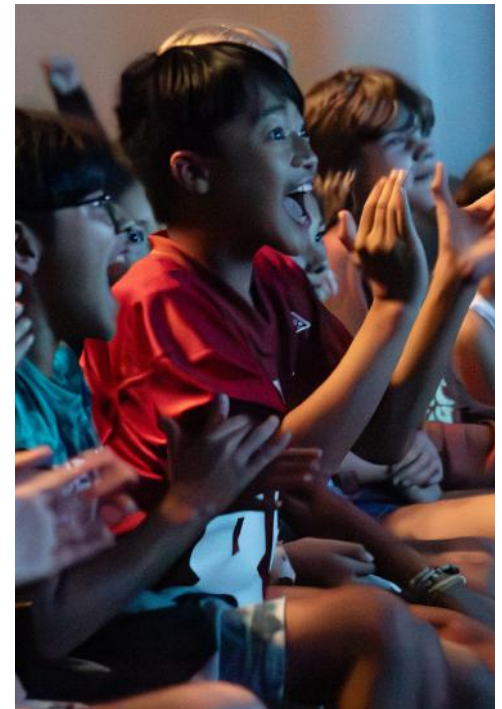
Programs that integrate learning with entertainment are part of a broader effort to provide meaningful experiences that are both informative and enjoyable for a wide range of interests.



Mile of Music's mission to create musical inclusivity is another the Center supports. This has led to collaboration on education workshops that complement the festival's vibrant music performances. Our partnership contributes to the festival's educational component, enriching the overall experience for attendees of all ages and fostering a deeper appreciation for music.

Mile of Music's Music Education Curator Leila Ramagopal Pertl said she's seen many community members undergo significant personal growth after experiencing the workshops hosted at the Center.

"It's really amazing that we have seen people walk onto [the Thrivent Hall] stage and feel really vulnerable at first, but as soon as they start making music with the community, they walked out saying, "I belong here... I was the music at The Mile," Pertl said.



expanding access to

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

Recent events, including Literature to Life's *The Latehomecomer* and Parampik/Sufiyana concert, are further examples of the impact of partnerships within nonprofit organizations in our community. *The Latehomecomer*, a poignant exploration of identity and culture, boasted insights and support from a diverse network of collaborators, including NEW Hmong Professionals. Similarly, the Parampik/Sufiyana concert, celebrating cultural heritage through music, showcased a rich partnership with IndUS of Fox Valley, offering attendees an immersive and impactful experience.

"When you see yourself represented on stage for the first time, your whole world expands," said Gaosong Heu, actress and member of the Hmong community, who performed 2023-24 Season's one-person production of *The Latehomecomer*. "The things that you thought were never possible become possible because of art and storytelling and connection and human, real-life experiences being reflected back to you from the stage."

Through these expanded partnerships and collaborations, community members receive enhanced programming and a stronger interconnectedness. Working together allows supported community missions, as well as a diverse range of individual experiences, interests and needs, to be both heard and met.

Your Fox Cities P.A.C. will continue to build and nurture these relationships, and we look forward to creating even more opportunities for collaboration and community engagement in the future.





“A lot of the population in our community have language barriers. There’s two things [that] can break those barriers. One is food, and **the other is art.**”

Fanni Xie
Executive Director, NEWCA



IMPACT OF THE TICKET DONATION PROGRAM

In an ongoing effort to foster community engagement and support diverse groups, a Ticket Donation Program was launched in the second half of the 2023-24 Season. This initiative allows patrons to donate tickets back to the Center if they are unable to use them. These tickets are redistributed to various nonprofit organizations, enhancing access to cultural and artistic experiences.

The Ticket Donation Program was designed to bridge the gap between performances and underserved communities. Since its inception, we’ve seen encouraging early participation. As we work to continue to establish partnerships for the program and refine the ticket distribution process, broader promotion of this option will help raise awareness

and grow involvement so that even more community members may be positively impacted and connected.

One notable organization that helped coordinate recipients of the Ticket Donation Program in 2024 was NEWCA, or the Northeast Wisconsin Chinese Association, an organization dedicated to embracing community members’ Chinese history and identities as Chinese/Asian Americans, and empowering Chinese/Asian American culture, traditions, languages, businesses and charities within the region. Executive Director Fanni Xie shared that sometimes, ticket purchasing is difficult for community members because of a language barrier.

“These tickets actually serve as a bridge,” said Xie, “first of all to break the language barrier, and second of all is that it breaks the intergenerational barrier. Because some of the parents actually born in China... did not have the chance to appreciate the Western art

or the theater art that happens here [in the United States], but all the kids growing up here learn how to appreciate both cultures. So, the parents and kids coming over to see the show actually helps them, through the intercultural and intergenerational connection.”

As a donor, Bill Henry has assisted in fostering those connections among his fellow community members. Henry is an enthusiastic supporter of the Ticket Donation Program and a longtime patron of the Center.

“I know from experience that attending a [Fox Cities] P.A.C. event is most pleasurable, if not thrilling to be a part of, and so it’s a really good feeling to know that someone else is going to have that same feeling, that same pleasure, by my donation,” said Henry.

Ticket donation is a simple process that you can do with a few taps on your Fox Cities P.A.C. app or visit foxcitiespac.com.

THANK YOU

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Encore Singers perform at Volunteer Appreciation event



Deaf and hard of hearing workshop with students from Fond du Lac School District and members of San Jose Taiko

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“ The Fox Cities Performing Arts Center is a place where creativity thrives. **It captivates all who enter,** igniting passion and inspiring connection. ”

– Jordan A., Fond du Lac

Directing Cont. (\$500-\$749)

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2023-24 SEASON



- *Pretty Woman: The Musical* (Oct. 24-29, 2023)
- *Beetlejuice: The Musical* (Dec. 5-10, 2023)
- *Les Misérables* (Feb. 20-25, 2024)
- *Clue* (March 19-24, 2024)
- *TINA: The Tina Turner Musical* (April 16-21, 2024)
- *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* (June 11-23, 2024)



- *The Rodney Marsalis Philadelphia Big Brass with Fox Valley Symphony Orchestra* (Sep. 23, 2023)
- *Step Afrika!* (Oct. 3, 2023)
- *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* (Nov. 25, 2023)
- *Jessica Vosk* (Feb. 17, 2024)
- *San Jose Taiko* (March 14, 2023)
- *MOMIX Alice* (April 9, 2024)
- *Mariachi Herencia De México* (April 13, 2024)

SPOTLIGHT SERIES

- *The Magic of Kevin Spencer* (Feb. 10, 2024)
- *Makin' Cake with Dasha Kelly Hamilton* (Feb. 27, 2024)
- *Adam Pascal* (March 8, 2024)



Center Stage High School Musical Theater Showcase

VIEWPOINT SPEAKER SERIES

inspire • connect • grow

- *Through the Lens: Creating a Ripple with Photographer Annie Griffiths* (Nov. 14, 2023)
- *How to Astronaut with Astronaut Terry Virts* (Jan. 23, 2024)
- *Into the Canyon: Exploring a Natural Treasure with Photographer and Filmmaker Pete McBride and Adventure Author Kevin Fedarko* (April 30, 2024)



- *Step Afrika!* (Oct. 3, 2023)
- Literature to Life's *The Latehomecomer* (Jan. 30 & 31, 2024)
- TheaterWorksUSA production of *Dot, Dot, Dot: A New Musical* (Feb. 9, 2024)
- *The University of Wonder and Imagination* (Feb. 15, 2024)
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show* (Feb. 29, 2024)
- Kennedy Center for Young Audiences on Tour Presents *Show Way The Musical* (April 5, 2024)
- *MOMIX Alice* (April 9, 2024)
- *Mariachi Herencia de México* (April 12, 2024)
- *Into the Canyon: Between River and Rim* (April 30, 2024)
- TheaterWorksUSA production of *Dog Man: The Musical* (May 3, 2024)



- *Center Stage High School Musical Theater Showcase* (May 18, 2024)



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