DEAR UPAF SUPPORTERS:

How do we define success for our children? Is it becoming a leader amongst their peers? Is it gaining and exhibiting skills that allow them to succeed in their chosen field? Is it watching them become confident and happy adults?

It has been proven time and again that a young person’s participation in the performing arts helps breed all of the attributes of success in our 21st Century world: working as a team, creative thinking, problem solving, leadership, confidence, and the ability to take risks.

Since 1992, the First Stage Theater Academy has imparted these skills to thousands of our region’s young people in an interactive, creative, safe, yet rigorous and challenging environment. This is an opportunity that all young people should be able to take advantage of – but unfortunately there are many obstacles. And that’s exactly where the support from UPAF Notable Women becomes critical.

Our support from UPAF Notable Women, sponsored by BMO Harris Bank, means one thing: you are guaranteeing that achievement is possible. And all of these young people go into the world with the words of our Academy cheer guiding them through life: “I can’t is not in my vocabulary! I take risks! I conquer my fears! I am not afraid to lead!”

From First Stage and the thousands of young people you have helped us serve: thank you for ensuring their success!

BETSY CORRY
Managing Director, First Stage

Ballet teaches me that I can never give up on myself. I just keep trying until I get it right. For The Nutcracker, I’m looking forward to the excitement back stage and the audience cheering when we’re just off of the stage.

NADIA
Milwaukee Ballet Relevé student and soldier in the Nutcracker
ARTS EDUCATION BUILDS A STRONG FOUNDATION.

All dollars raised through UPAF Notable Women are annually awarded to UPAF Member Groups through an Arts Education Grant Program. The programs funded focus on influencing the following student abilities:

- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Problem Identification
- Problem Solving
- Resourcefulness

These are concepts identified as most important to workforce success by members of the UPAF Board of Directors, members of the UPAF Member Group Boards and other key community leaders.

I am honored to be a founding member of UPAF Notable Women, and to serve as an ambassador for the program. UPAF Notable Women plays a significant role in fulfilling the critical need for arts education programming to ensure that our next generation of youth reaches its full potential. Arts education improves our children’s confidence and their ability to succeed. UPAF Notable Women is a great way to join other women who are leading the way to support this essential and worthwhile cause.

MARY DOWELL
Retired Vice President Foundation Affairs & Global Community Relations, Johnson Controls
Collectively UPAF’s 15 Member Groups impact the lives of thousands of children – many of them underserved – by delivering quality arts education in the classroom, through after-school programs and with scholarships.

CORNERSTONE GROUPS

First Stage - Theater Academy, the nation’s largest theater training program for young people, teaches life skills through stage skills to over 2,000 students each year.

Florentine Opera Company - Opera in the Schools fuses operatic music with well-known fairy tales to create an opera for young people, reaching approximately 20,000 students annually.

Milwaukee Ballet - Relevé program directly links the benefits of dance and education for more than 150 grade school students through a partnership with Milwaukee Public Schools.

Milwaukee Repertory Theater - Artistic Internship Program is one of the nation’s preeminent training programs for aspiring theater artists serving as a bridge between academic and professional environments.

Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra - Arts in Community Education (ACE) program serves approximately 8,000 students each year. ACE trains teachers to use the arts and music as tools for teaching daily core subjects.

Skylight Music Theatre - Partner School Initiative (PSI) provides, at no charge, a total package of hands-on music, theater, art, and creative writing activities delivered in school classrooms.

Participating students stood a bit taller and engaged more deeply with not only song but also with movement. We were witness to some of our shyest, quietest students finding their voice and wanting to take leadership roles.

STEVE VANDEZANDE
Bay View Middle/High schools, partner of Skylight Music Theatre’s Enlighten: Partner School Initiative
MEMBER GROUPS

**Bel Canto Chorus** - Boy Choir emphasizes the development of singing skills and musical concepts to broaden the boys’ understanding and acceptance of culture, style and community.

**Danceworks** - Mad Hot Ballroom and Tap (MHBT) teaches life skills by integrating tap and ballroom dance classes into the regular school curriculum for approximately 2,750 students.

**Milwaukee Chamber Theatre** - Young Playwrights Festival provides more than 400 high school students in metro-Milwaukee with free playwriting workshops.

**Milwaukee Children’s Choir** - Harmony Program brings free music instruction and performance experiences to roughly 400 children who attend Milwaukee schools.

**Milwaukee Public Theatre** - Cultivating Community Healthy Choices Program works with local agencies to provide arts programming dealing with literacy, physical and mental health, and safety.

**Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra** - Community Partnership Programs include music-training and education programs targeted at more than 350 urban, minority and underserved youth.

**Next Act Theatre** - Next Actors is a program for teenagers who are aspiring actors and playwrights. The summer-long, free program educates the teens on the “science” behind creating and performing a play.

**Present Music** - Creation Project is a one-of-a-kind program where students work with local composers to write and perform an original piece of music and results in a premiere performance.

**Renaissance Theaterworks** - Community Poetry Project partners local organizations, arts educators, poets and spoken-word artists for an initiative using the themes of poetry to teach life skills.
ARTS EDUCATION RESULTS ARE PROVEN.

A survey, developed by Reinders Research, was given to a diverse sample of Milwaukee area students, ages 9 – 18, before and after participating in arts education programs from one of the 15 UPAF Cornerstone and Member Groups. Results were derived from 500 completed surveys and illustrate the enrichment that arts education can provide.

- On average, 40% of the students experienced growth across all of the workforce development skills being measured. These gains were a direct result of participating in Member Groups’ arts education programming.

- Students who experienced overall gains were those that began their programs with the lowest skill levels. This finding illustrates that kids who made gains were the ones most likely in need of enriching and skill-building programming.

The results indicate that UPAF Member Group arts education programs do far more than provide sophisticated art instruction to students most in need of enriching programming. Through their involvement, students are gaining life and character skills that will prepare them for success inside and outside the classroom.

88,960
Students directly served by Arts Education Programs supported by UPAF Notable Women.

79%
Percent of students who come from households at or below poverty level.

A CHAT WITH MALIK JOHNSON, A MEMBER OF MILWAUKEE YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (MYSO).

Q: How did you become involved with MYSO?

A: My second grade teacher asked if I wanted to check out the Progressions Program. I went to the orientation and was placed in the cello section because the bass section (which I originally wanted to play) ran out of spots.

Q: What do you love about making music?

A: I love that when I’m making music, I feel like I’m not on Earth. It’s so fun and relaxing for me. Even if I’m having a bad day, I can play music and my whole day turns around. It truly is therapeutic for me.
Q: How has MYSO affected your life?

A: MYSO has given me opportunities that I wouldn’t otherwise have. I’ve received music scholarships to attend camps around the country and for private lessons. I even composed a piece for an orchestra! This past summer, I was blessed to go on tour in Vienna and Budapest. As an 8-year-old starting an instrument, I never imagined going overseas to play in world-renowned concert halls. I also never imagined that just nine years later I would accept an award in the White House on behalf of MYSO from Michelle Obama.

Q: Anything else you’d like to share with us?

A: I would like to add how appreciative I am for MYSO and the people who support this program. It has really helped mold who I am and has been extremely instrumental in changing my life. Thank you so much!

AVERY OF FIRST STAGE’S NEXT STEPS PROGRAM

First Stage’s Next Steps classes are designed to help students with autism take their next steps as a person and an artist. Next Steps carries out First Stage’s philosophy of teaching life skills through stage skills in a safe space where students can be creative without judgement or fear.

Avery is a 12-year-old beginning his third year with Next Steps. Avery’s favorite part of Next Steps is improving his singing, which he says makes him feel “great and really proud.” Avery is full of praise for the kindness of his teachers and says he’s made lots of friends at First Stage.

Avery’s mother shared her experience with Next Steps as well: “I’ve seen Avery become more confident thanks to his time at First Stage. Next Steps allows Avery to come to a place where he can be successful, with the guidance of patient and understanding teachers.”
As vital as food is to our children’s health, the arts are just as vital to their soul. With the significant budget cuts in our schools regarding arts education, it is incumbent on the private sector to provide such services. That’s why UPAF’s art education outreach is so vital to our community. Through UPAF supported member groups, hundreds of thousands of children were exposed to the arts last year and the dream the arts create. Can you think of a better return on your investment?

CURT CULVER
Chairman, MGIC

UPAF thanks BMO Harris Bank for its generous, longstanding sponsorship of UPAF Notable Women.