

Increasing Access to Music, Dance, Song and Theater

Thanks to donors like you, community members impacted by disabilities, aging or other physical and mental considerations are able to enjoy programming and performances tailored to their unique needs through Kasey's Fund, presented by MGIC.

Inspired by a Love for the Arts

In 2020, Kasey's Fund was created to ensure that everyone can experience the magic of the arts by eliminating barriers imposed by disability, special needs, geography and other physical and mental considerations.

Kasey's Fund was inspired by former UPAF President & CEO Deanna Tillisch's middle daughter, Kasey. Kasey was born with a chromosome deletion, 1p36, which resulted in profound cognitive and physical disabilities. Because of the chromosome deletion, Kasey cannot walk, talk, read or write, but music is one of her great joys and one of the main ways she expresses herself.

Kasey's story reinforces why the arts matter. The ability to share in the performing arts opens up new worlds for everyone and can have especially great resonance for those who might be most likely to lack access — either due to disabilities or special needs, trauma or severe illness, or Alzheimer's or dementia.



The Tillisch family at the Broadway Theatre Center.

The Impact of Your Gift

Gifts to Kasey's Fund support grants to UPAF Members for projects that enhance the accessibility of the arts through a variety of avenues.

Sensory-Friendly Performances

- First Stage's Sensory Friendly Performances create a welcoming and judgment-free theater experience for families with children on the autism spectrum and for people with sensory processing disorders. During the 2023-2024 season, First Stage will serve more than 1,000 people with Sensory Friendly Performances.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Skylight Music Theatre will present *Spring Awakening* with a mix of hearing and deaf performers, increasing inclusivity and representation onstage, while celebrating the beauty of American Sign Language and creating an experience that is received equally by hearing and deaf audiences, alike.
- In the 2023-2024 season, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre and Renaissance Theaterworks (RTW) will incorporate ASL interpretation and additionally, RTW will include Open Captioning, Audio Description and Sensory Friendly adaptations.

Tailored Programming

- Danceworks Generations is an intergenerational, inter-arts residency that utilizes collaborative art and dance making to build stronger communities, stimulate the recovery and creation of positive memories, share culture and promote meaningful conversations between individuals in senior and adult day centers with students in elementary schools in the Milwaukee area.
- In partnership with Healing Harmonies, Present Music provides inclusive, interactive music programming to enrich the lives of adults with adaptive needs.
- Black Arts MKE's spoken word event *Free Therapy* will bring the community together and provide awareness of mental health related topics, including trauma, depression, anxiety, grief, etc. By utilizing creativity, passion, hope and faith, the intended goal is to help remove the stigma of mental health, normalize the conversation about mental health issues and barriers to care.
- Next Act Theatre will take play readings and talkbacks to assisted living centers for adults who are unable to physically or affordably come to the theatre to see plays.
- Milwaukee Ballet's *Tour de Force* provides adaptive ballet classes and performance opportunities for students with cognitive, physical, emotional or behavioral disabilities.



Advancing Inclusion in the Arts

Kasey's Fund presents opportunities for all audiences to feel welcomed and participate in the arts. The chance to engage in the magic of the arts can be life changing.



"Our daughter was interested in the program last spring and has been requesting a dance class for many consecutive months now. So, we were really excited about the opportunity! I want to thank you and the staff at Milwaukee Ballet for making her feel welcomed. She really enjoyed this experience and I really enjoyed seeing her so happy. We hope to see you all in the fall. Thank you again."

~ Parent of *Tour de Force* student

Opportunities to Designate to Kasey's Fund

With a gift of \$1,200 or more to the 2024 UPAF Campaign, you may choose to designate 10% of your gift to Kasey's Fund. With a gift of \$5,000 or more, you may designate 20% of your gift to Kasey's Fund and support the continuation and creation of projects by local arts groups that invite **all** to engage with the arts.