

Transformative Arts Education for Eastern Wisconsin's Children

Because of the generous support of community members like you, UPAF Member Groups provide diverse and innovative arts education programs, delivered in the classroom, after school and in the summer. These important programs provide a creative and safe outlet for our community's children. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, UPAF Member Groups are providing vital support to teachers and students through primarily virtual programming that reaches nearly 84,000 children. Specific programs supported by UPAF Bright Minds, presented by We Energies Foundation, include:

Cornerstone Programs

- **First Stage Theater Academy and Education Programming** are virtual and safe in-person outlets for youth that engage minds, spark creativity and provide hope in this trying time. One of the nation's leading theater training programs for youth, First Stage's Theater Academy provides need-based financial aid and offers a variety of classes to engage all types of learners — including Next Steps, theater classes specifically designed for youth on the autism spectrum. First Stage education programming enriches core curriculum through highly subsidized, arts-integrated lessons that are linked to academic standards, promote character development and improve literacy and 21st century workforce skills.
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- **Florentine Opera Company's Opera in Schools Tour and Residency** provides Milwaukee schoolchildren with age-appropriate opera. Florentine Opera's student version of *La Boheme* is streaming for thousands of students from January through May 2021. Based on Puccini's *La Boheme*, the production is set in Milwaukee's Bronzeville Neighborhood during its heyday in the 1940s, and curriculum focuses on the history and vibrancy of Bronzeville as students learn about this unique era in their city's history.
 - **Milwaukee Ballet's Relevé** program directly links the benefits of dance and education for grade school students through a partnership with three Milwaukee Public Schools. Relevé provides free year-long ballet classes to 280 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students at partner schools. During the school year, students receive lessons, ballet attire and shoes and transportation to the Ballet's Baumgartner Center for Dance at no cost to their families or schools (though virtual classes are being held this year). Additional free classes are offered through a summer program and dedicated students are offered full Milwaukee Ballet School and Academy scholarships upon completion of the program through age 18.
 - **Milwaukee Repertory Theater's Emerging Professional Resident (EPR)** program is unlike any other training program in Southeastern Wisconsin, by design and results. The EPR program is the country's premier training pipeline designed to identify diverse talent at a young age, cultivate that talent through workshops and professional practice and launch the careers of emerging artists to enhance and diversify Milwaukee's local talent pool. The process begins by nurturing local talent through the Rep's Professional Training Institute for high-schoolers, preparing them for acceptance into collegiate theater programs, and culminates in a career-launching residency for post-collegiate and early-career professionals.

- **Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra's Arts in Community Education (ACE)** program serves approximately 5,300 students in Eastern Wisconsin each year, and the digital programming developed to continue serving students during COVID-19 has expanded the reach of the program to even more students. ACE is a nationally-recognized education model for arts integration that trains classroom teachers to use all art forms as tools for teaching daily core subjects such as math, science, reading and language arts. The goal is the advancement of a student's overall learning and development — using music and all the arts to teach children to think comprehensively and creatively.
- **Skylight Music Theatre's Enlighten** performing arts education program responds to the need for high-quality arts programming in Milwaukee schools by providing free, in-school (and this year, virtual where safe in-person is not possible) musical theater activities and performances. Programming includes KidsWrites storytelling workshops, student matinee experiences, two educational touring shows and an ongoing partnership delivering all of these activities and more to eight under-resourced Milwaukee Public Schools. Skylight commits to an ongoing presence at partner schools delivering a free, sequential package of musical theater education through multi-year partnerships.

Member Group Programs

- **Danceworks Mad Hot Rhythm** teaches life skills by integrating dance classes into the regular school curriculum. Mad Hot Rhythm accommodates social distancing as students explore diverse styles of non-partnered rhythmic dance like Hip Hop, Jazz, Stepping and Salsa or Bachata. The program reaches 2,000 students from over 50 schools and positively impacts academic performance and school attendance (especially critical as attendance is challenged by virtual learning).
- **Milwaukee Chamber Theatre (MCT) Young Playwrights Festival (YPF)** challenges 331 teens to create new work for live theater and up-and-coming local artists to bring those scripts to life onstage. Program activities are threefold: an annual cycle of playwriting residencies at local high schools, an annual one-act playwriting competition for high school students and a biennial showcase of winning plays fully produced by MCT with emerging local directors, designers and actors. All three program branches have been redesigned for a virtual platform.
- **Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra (MYSO) Community Partnership Programs** include an array of music training and education programs. These programs include 10 music education programs, including strings, jazz and steel pan options created to bring the life-changing benefits of music study to students with barriers to equitable access, and are focused specifically on urban youth with limited financial means. Approximately 450 annual Community Partnership participants are retained and advance through MYSO's programs with staff support and financial assistance for up to 10 years.
- **Next Act Theatre's Next Actors: Summer Theatre for Teens** is a program for teenage students who are aspiring actors and playwrights. The five-week playwriting and performance program (held virtually in 2020) is an immersive and collaborative experience in which students write a play, tour to community and senior centers and present a public performance at Next Act Theatre. Next Act's *Shakespeare-in-Schools* is an in-classroom program, provided virtually and when possible, safely in-person in which students explore history, language and relevance across the centuries, offering new insights by comparing Shakespeare's vernacular with the way teens communicate today.



Thank You to Our 2020 Sponsors (\$5,000 plus) of UPAF Bright Minds, presented by We Energies Foundation

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All dollars raised through 2020 Notable Women Affinity Group memberships were awarded to the UPAF Member Groups listed above for their Bright Minds programming.

With a gift of \$1,000 or more to the 2021 UPAF Campaign, you may choose to designate 10% of your gift to Bright Minds. With a gift of \$5,000 or more, you may designate 20% of your gift to Bright Minds and support transformative arts education for our region's children.