

Increasing Access to Music, Dance and Theater

Thanks to donors like you, community members with special needs, disability, illness or other challenges in accessing the arts are able to enjoy programming and performances tailored to their unique needs through Kasey's Fund.

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

In 2020, gifts to Kasey's Fund supported grants to 13 UPAF Member Groups for projects that enhance the accessibility of the arts through a variety of avenues.

Sensory-Friendly Performances

- Milwaukee Ballet's sensory-friendly adaptation of *The Nutcracker*, allowing those with autism and other special needs to enjoy the holiday classic in comfort
- Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra's relaxed concerts, tailored to those with special needs

Making Spaces Accessible to All

- Physical accessibility plan for the Florentine Opera's Lueders Opera Center
- Assisted listening system in Skylight Music Theatre's Cabot Theatre to ensure accessibility for the hard of hearing

Tailored Programming

- Present Music's collaborative music creation program for those with special needs, in partnership with Alverno College and Healing Harmonies
- Danceworks' Artist in Residence program with St. Ann Center for Intergenerational Care, engaging children and seniors through dance

Building on a Strong Legacy

The inauguration of Kasey’s Fund demonstrated the high demand for accessible performing arts programming as well as the wealth of opportunity and innovation in development of new initiatives to expand access to the arts. Seeing a significant opportunity for continued impact, UPAF will carry on the initiative to provide accessible arts programming to the region. UPAF is proud to continue the legacy of Deanna, Kasey and the Tillisch family to ensure that all can experience the arts in a meaningful way.

*With a gift of \$1,000 or more to the 2021 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.*



A patron enjoys a sensory-friendly performance of Milwaukee Ballet’s *The Nutcracker*.



Danceworks at St. Ann Center.



Sensory-friendly performance of Skylight Music Theatre’s *Newsies*.

Thank You To Our Generous 2020 Kasey's Fund Donors

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And all others who generously contributed to Kasey’s Fund