

Increasing Access to Music, Dance, Song 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, 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

- Expanded availability of First Stage's sensory-friendly adaptations, with a sensory-friendly option for each production of the season
- Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra's relaxed concerts, tailored to those with special needs

Making Performances Accessible to All

- American Sign Language-interpreted performances at groups like Milwaukee Chamber Theatre

Tailored Programming

- Milwaukee Ballet's Tour de Force program in partnership with Children's Wisconsin, using dance instruction to advance the health of children with physical disabilities
- Danceworks' Artist in Residence program with St. Ann Center for Intergenerational Care, engaging children and seniors through dance

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.

"I'll never forget this one performance. There was this young person who came in completely dressed up — full suit, and jacket and hat — completely just ecstatic to be in the theater and as they're walking out their guardian comes up to me and grabs me by my hands and shakes them and says, 'thank you.' To see the enthusiasm to be in the space and to have such a sincere thank you from a member of the community, it really made it clear to me that these [performances] aren't just fun nights on the town, or just better versions of the production that are more accessible. For many, these [performances] are incredibly special and incredibly necessary for them to be able to engage in the art form."

-Coltyn Giltner, First Stage Education Director



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*.

Opportunities to Designate to Kasey's Fund

With a gift of \$1,000 or more to the 2022 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.