

Village Theatre

Mainstage + New Works + Youth Education

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Village Theatre Receives \$3 Million Donation to Help Emerge from Pandemic Closure

“Investments in the performing arts are a powerful means of fostering inclusion, healing, and inspiration. Village Theatre provides a place for people from different cultures, ideas, and walks of life to unite through beautiful imagery, music, movement, and compelling stories.” -Anonymous Donor

ISSAQUAH, WA (MARCH 10, 2021) – After one year to the week with its doors shuttered, Village Theatre is humbled to announce that it has received a sustaining gift of \$3 million from an anonymous local donor. This deeply meaningful and critical donation comes as the organization plots out its strategic return to the stage from administrative, operational, and artistic standpoints, and significantly helps to ensure that Village Theatre will be able to return to regular operations in the post-pandemic world to carry forward its 42-year legacy of producing premium musical theatre. While this generous gift goes a long way to ensure Village Theatre’s successful return to the stage, the donor made this gift in the hope of inspiring others to make an additional investment in Village Theatre’s future, and to provide for financial contingencies due to COVID-19.

When the mandated government closure required that all in-person events be canceled immediately, the result was the instantaneous drying up of nearly all Village Theatre’s earned revenue streams. On March 12, 2020, Village Theatre held its last Mainstage production of the 2019-2020 season and shortly thereafter all 2020 Village Originals new musical beta productions and the Annual Festival of New Musicals were canceled. While Village Theatre was able to move their youth education programs to a virtual format, participation and thus revenue dropped by 39% in 2020. In true nonprofit business modeling, the organization began to focus primarily on the financial support of the community to gameplan through the uncertainty. Due to the extraordinary support of the Theatre’s annual donors, corporate support, foundation grants, and local, state, and federal grants, Village Theatre has been able to survive over this past year, but not without making some harsh changes.

With the Theatre’s closure and subsequent widespread programming cancellations came an 80% loss in earned revenues. To mitigate the impact of these cancellations, by July 2020 the organization had laid off or furloughed more than 170 employees, inclusive of year-round staff, performers, musicians, and crew. The remaining staff members have taken a 10-30% decrease in pay and hourly staff are on a reduced hours schedule.

Village Theatre operates its three core programs from its two locations: one in Issaquah, WA - 15 miles east of Seattle - and the other in Everett, WA--roughly 30 miles north of Seattle. Village Theatre is one of the largest, fully producing theatres in the Pacific Northwest, and prior to the pandemic, had an annual operating budget of more than \$14.4 million; more than 18,000

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subscribers and 110,000 single ticket holders; 210,000 annual patron visits; and youth education programs that served 57,000 young people and their families annually. According to the Washington Arts Commission (ArtsWA) prior to the pandemic, the creative economy made up about 8 percent of Washington's GDP (\$28.9 billion). Village Theatre's estimated annual economic impact, between both its King County (Issaquah) and Snohomish County (Everett) locations, is an estimated \$135 million.

The anonymous donor we honor today has shown philanthropic leadership in the performing arts at large for more than 30 years, contributing to the artistic and economic vibrancy of the region. They believe in the arts, commenting that "Investments in the performing arts are a powerful means of fostering inclusion, healing, and inspiration. Village Theatre provides a place for people from different cultures, ideas, and walks of life to unite through beautiful imagery, music, movement, and compelling stories."

"This gift is transformative, and it coupled with the continued support of our community enables the theatre to be in a position of strength as we continue to navigate the new terrain of our industry -- there is still much risk for event-based business," Village Theatre's Executive Producer Robb Hunt said. "With this incredible gift, we are on a path to thrive as we emerge from this pandemic. Along with additional support we will be able to fully thrive, maintaining our reputation for high quality productions, and able to return as a leader in the performing arts post-pandemic."

Musical theatre is highly collaborative and complex and, as such, is one of the most expensive and demanding of performing art forms. Productions require the expertise and contributions of professional stage and music directors, actors, dancers, musicians, choreographers, stage managers, crew, and a whole host of designers responsible for sets, lighting, sound, stage automation, props, costumes, and wigs, as well as administrative and front of house staff.

The \$3 million dollar gift and others that join in support will contribute to Village Theatre's:

- return to regular operations on the Mainstage, working toward pandemic-aware productions in 2022, and a full five-show season in 2022/2023;
- current virtual youth education classes and productions, and a slow return to in-person programming beginning Spring 2021;
- development of new works through the nationally-renowned Village Originals program and the hopeful 20th anniversary celebration and production of the Festival of New Musicals in late 2021;
- tiered restoration of the production, artistic, education, marketing, and development staff and systems;
- development of artistic goals and priorities, program implementation, and crucial casting, artistic hiring, and long-range planning;
- organizational work to ensure DEIA goals are forefront in all of the above.

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Village Theatre's Artistic Director Jerry Dixon said, "this gift allows us to reignite conversations and collaborations with incredible artists, to deliver on our artistic mission, and to emerge strong from this shutdown, continuing our legacy of producing premium theatre. Our artistic team is eager to once again create impactful stories for the stage that inspire audiences throughout the Northwest, and this humbling gift brings us much closer to that day."

Village Theatre's mission is:

To be a regionally recognized and nationally influential center of excellence in family theatre:

- To promote a season of top quality productions
- To commission and produce new musicals that achieve national exposure
- To train young people in theatre skills for career opportunities and enriched lives
- To develop a broad-based appreciation for live theatre
- To promote positive values through art

ABOUT VILLAGE THEATRE

Based in Issaquah, WA, with operations in Everett, WA, Village Theatre is a leading producer of musical theatre in the Pacific Northwest. Producing entertaining, quality productions since 1979, Village Theatre has grown into one of the region's best-attended theatres, with just over 18,000 Mainstage season subscribers and 220,000 projected total attendance each season. Through its Village Originals program, Village Theatre is nationally recognized for its contribution to the development of new musicals, having supported the creation of over 175 new works to date. Village Theatre also takes pride in nurturing tomorrow's audiences through its Youth Education programs, serving over 56,000 young people and their families annually.

PHOTOS/VIDEO

For available photos and video, please visit [Village Theatre's press room here >>](#)
(Password: village)

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