

BACKSTAGE BULLETIN

A NOTE FROM THE CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER



Dear Friends,

What an amazing year it's been. Your support this year has allowed us to continue building a thriving, vibrant cultural destination we all call home. You know Paramount is more than just a theatre – it's the heartbeat of our community.

With you, Paramount is accessible to all. This year, more children experienced the arts for the first time by attending one of our Broadway and Beyond student matinees. And, when they couldn't come to Paramount, Paramount went to them with a touring production and our Theatre for Young Audiences program.

With you, Paramount is expanding imaginations. Student enrollment continues to grow at Paramount School of the Arts, making the creative dreams of so many talented young people a reality – providing space to build resilience, form friendships, and learn lifelong skills.

With you, Paramount is focused on the future. We are on pace to host an astounding 700 performances this year. Performances that enrich the cultural fabric of our community, R.E.A.C.H. new audiences, and boost the local economy. And, the fun part is, there's so much more to come!

You are the muse that inspires Paramount to create world-class productions, educational opportunities and enriching experiences for ALL.

With you, Paramount is possible.

Gratefully,

Jonathan Jensen

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

OCT. 30 – JAN. 19

Disney's Frozen
at Paramount Theatre

NOV. 21 – DEC. 23

The Second City's *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly Sweater*
at Copley Theatre

NOV. 22 – DEC. 24

Christkindlmarket Aurora
at RiverEdge Park

DECEMBER 3

Giving Tuesday

NOW THROUGH JUNE 2025

Million Dollar Quartet
at Stolp Island Theatre



PARAMOUNT
THEATRE

2024
PARAMOUNT GALA
BROADWAY MAGIC AND PHILANTHROPY



ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, we held our annual gala and fundraising concert, *An Evening with Matthew Morrison*. This annual event is a big part of our continued effort to bring Broadway to Aurora in support of our theatre’s mission. Morrison is a versatile actor who is recognized for his work on-stage and on-screen. He’s been nominated for Tony, Emmy and Golden Globe Awards and gained international fame on the hit TV show *Glee* where he portrayed the glee club director, Mr. Schuester.

The evening began with our gala in the Grand Gallery of Paramount Theatre—a departure from last year’s venue in the Meyer Ballroom. Our guests enjoyed award-winning food from True Cuisine, jazz stylings from Aurora’s own The Braden Smith Quartet, mind-bending magic from Kevin Kapinos and live painting from the incredible painter, Lewis Achenbach—all alongside the great company of everyone else in the room.

Thanks to the generosity of our guests at the gala and concert patrons, we raised over \$309,000 in support of Paramount Theatre’s general operations through our paddle raise and donations.

Our guests were inspired by a moving video message from Sophia Manera, a Paramount patron and Paramount School of Arts student, who spoke about her journey at Paramount and the impact it had on her life.

We owe a huge thank you to Sophia for sharing her story with all of us, as well as to everyone who generously donated and joined us to help celebrate Paramount and our mission during our fundraising gala and concert.



Making an **IMPACT** through DAF giving

AS WE APPROACH THE END OF THE YEAR, we invite you to consider the impact of Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs) in your charitable giving. DAF giving has grown over 31% in 2023 from the previous fiscal year, offering a unique opportunity for donors to maximize their philanthropy while enjoying significant tax benefits.

For donors like our Board Member, Kevin Fitzpatrick, using a Donor Advised Fund allows him to streamline his charitable giving while maximizing his impact. Kevin says, “The tax advantages enable me to contribute more upfront, and I can take my time deciding which causes to support. ***It makes my philanthropy more intentional and meaningful.*** When I contribute cash, securities, or other assets, I can take an immediate tax deduction, and those funds can grow tax-free until I’m ready to recommend grants.”

With a DAF, you have the flexibility to recommend grants to your favorite organizations over time, ensuring your contributions make a lasting impact. As you reflect on your giving this season, consider the benefits of a DAF.

Together, we can make a difference and make the arts accessible in our community!

PARAMOUNT SPOTLIGHT

SAVE THE DATE! This year's Giving Tuesday—international day of giving—will take place on Tuesday, December 3. Here at Paramount during Giving Tuesday, we focus on raising funds for the Paramount School of the Arts (PSA). In particular, the funds raised will be applied to the scholarship fund which allows our students to receive a top-quality arts education for free or at a significantly reduced cost, regardless of need.

So far this year, PSA awarded 87 scholarships to students, one of the students being Sora Williams. Sora was the first ever recipient of the Ben Olson Scholarship, established in honor of our Paramount colleague Ben Olson who passed away last year. Sora let us know that, ***“being the first ever student to be given this scholarship was a great honor,”*** and it allowed her to participate in the youth summer camp program.

Sora is a high school sophomore and has been a PSA student for the last 2.5 years. She was most recently seen in our summer production of *Mean Girls Jr.* as Janice Sarkisian, and is currently enrolled in PSA's Acting Institute.

For Sora, the people at PSA are the heart of the school.

“These are the people that greet you at the door, say hello to you every time you walk through. They are the people who smile at you every time you see them. These are the people who teach you new skills in the arts.”



We hope you will join us on Giving Tuesday in support of Paramount School of the Arts and students like Sora by making a gift to the PSA Scholarship fund!

SAVE THE DATE!

GI  **INGTUESDAY**
is December 3

DURING THE 2024 EQUITY JEFF AWARDS Paramount received 9 nominations, with our BOLD Series shows leading the way. The award ceremony took place on Monday, September 30 and was widely attended by Chicago's theater community. Paramount took home one award for Best Lighting Design of a Large Production for *A Streetcar Named Desire*. That honor was received by the lighting designer Cat Wilson. We'd like to give a huge congratulations to Cat for taking home the award!

JEFFAWARDS



Cat Wilson

Lighting Designer

A Streetcar Named Desire



PARAMOUNT
THEATRE