

# I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

**One page only.** This page will be shared electronically with Grant Committee Members & Fund Advisors.

Note: If Philanthropy Network of Greater Philadelphia's Common Grant Application is used, the Community Foundation's

**Summary Sheet MUST accompany application.**

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit [www.chescocf.org](http://www.chescocf.org)

**Date: 4-8-19**

## Contact Information

Organization Name: **Theatre Horizon**

Address: **401 Dekalb Street, Norristown PA 19401**

Phone: **610-283-2230**

Website: [www.theatrehorizon.org](http://www.theatrehorizon.org)

Year Incorporated: **2005**

FEIN: **20 – 3708656**

Executive Director Name: **Jennifer Pratt Johnson**

Executive Director E-mail:

**jenny@theatrehorizon.org**

Board of Directors Chair Name: **Teresa Wallace**

Primary Contact Name: **Jennifer Pratt Johnson**

Primary Contact E-mail: **jenny@theatrehorizon.org**

Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation? Yes \_\_\_ No X Not Sure \_\_\_

Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation? Yes \_\_\_ No X Not Sure \_\_\_

## Field/s of Interest:

X Arts, Culture & Humanities

\_\_\_ Environment/Animal Welfare

X Education

\_\_\_ Health

\_\_\_ Human Services

\_\_\_ Religion

## Organization Information:

**Geographic Area Served** (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): Audience members and students come to us from Chester, Montgomery, Delaware and Bucks counties and from Philadelphia.

**Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served:** Our rapidly evolving audience currently includes subscribers and single-ticket buyers, long-time theatre-goers and those who have had their first connections to theatre more recently through engagement with our company. This season, we anticipate bringing over 7,000 patrons through our doors and reaching over 1,000 students. We program plays and musicals that bridge the generational gap and reflect a diversity of voices in a deliberate effort to serve audience members from a wide range of ethnicities, economic backgrounds, and ages. Going forward, our work will continue building on a diversity of voices, a focus on social justice, and a commitment to help change the story for the most vulnerable among us.

**Mission:** Our mission states: through theatre, we create a community of artists, students and audiences in which each member is encouraged to grow. In carrying out our mission, we stage stories that illuminate the full range of human experience, bring people together, educate area students, and contribute to the revitalization of our underserved town.

## Proposal Summary:

**A gift of \$3,000 would cover the cost of the primary Teaching Artist's salary for our Willow School classes.** Theatre Horizon offers our neighbors at The Willow School a once-a-week, literature-focused drama curriculum for 40 preschool students, 99% of whom live at or below the poverty line. Students are introduced to new concepts around language, helping to improve their skills in alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, and oral language. Kym Ramsey, Founder and Executive Director of The Willow  
8-2016

School, says of the program, “through fun and creative story-telling and drama, our students can recognize their letters and numbers, have improved their reading and reasoning skills, and more importantly developed a healthy sense of self-confidence, self-worth and love - all important fundamentals required for success in school and in life.” Your support would pay for the salary of our Teaching Artist, ensuring the continuation of the program for another season.

**A gift of \$5,000 would support Theatre Horizon's Autism Drama Program**, a program that helps students on the autism spectrum develop social skills, verbal expression, empathy for others, and a sense of self-worth and accomplishment. Theatre Horizon remains the only organization in our region to offer this unique Autism Drama Program which reaches students in five counties, including Chester County. This program includes two classes to serve two different age cohorts: Youth Drama for ages 10 to 16, and Playwriting and the Art of Storytelling for ages 17 to 30. We are proud to meet the needs of people with special needs in our community and understand the unique challenges their families face, including financial challenges. The average lifetime cost of caring for an individual with autism spectrum disorder can exceed \$2 million above the cost of raising a neurotypical child. While the true cost of our program is \$200 per student for a 6-week session, we offer sliding scale tuition to keep the program affordable for those who need it most and allow families to pay only what they can afford. We rely on the generosity of donors like you to make this subsidized rate possible.

**A gift of \$7,500 provides Theatre Horizon the opportunity to offer ACCESS Card Holders \$2 tickets to every production.** For some, a major barrier to theatre attendance is cost. Beginning this season, we have begun offering subsidized tickets to anyone who holds an ACCESS Card. An ACCESS Card is given by the state to Pennsylvania residents who monitor their government-issued cash, food, or medical benefits with an EBT card. We have been a pioneer in arts accessibility in the Philadelphia community, and are a recipient of Art-Reach’s Cultural Access Arts Partner Award. We offer ACCESS card holders discounted tickets to any production at the deeply discounted rate of \$2 per person. This modest fee covers the ticket processing fees, and Theatre Horizon subsidizes the rest. Your support helps to ensure the long-term sustainability of this program, while making it possible for thousands of people to share in the transformative power of theatre at an accessible ticket price.

**A gift of \$10,000 would allow Theatre Horizon to “say yes” to new educational opportunities**, while maintaining the programs we already have in place. We currently reach over 1,000 students annually, and even with grant support, it costs Theatre Horizon approximately \$150 per student we educate. Once we have fully funded the programs we already offer, we plan to continue expanding the program further, but can only do so incrementally as new funding is secured. We try to never say no when approached by a community partner with a new idea, but with the incredible expansion of our education program over the last few seasons, that strategy will need to be altered somewhat in order for us to remain sustainable. A contribution of this size would allow us to test new theories in how to make arts education more accessible to more students, as well as fund new educational programs at our theatre and in our community.

<b>Annual Budget</b> \$	___\$966,347___	___10___	# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
___75___	% of budget for program expenses	___16___	# of Board Volunteers
___18___	% of budget for administrative expenses	___75___	# of Active Non-Board Volunteers
___7___	% of budget for fundraising expenses	___300___	# of Volunteer Hours

*100 % total*

**Top 3-5 funding sources:**

William Penn Foundation. \$50,000. GOS. Part of multi-year grant (\$150,000 over 3 years).

PNC Arts Alive. \$35,000. Our production of *The Color Purple*.

Wyncote Foundation. \$30,000. GOS.

Barra Foundation. \$25,000. GOS. Part of multi-year grant (\$50,000 over 2 years).

**Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation:** Your gift of any amount is greatly appreciated. Please see "Proposal Summary" section which begins at the bottom of page 2.

## **II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

*Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.*

### **1. Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness**

#### **History:**

Founded in 2005, Theatre Horizon has become a lauded and award-winning leader in the local arts community. In October 2012 we opened our permanent home: a 123-seat blackbox theatre in the heart of Norristown's Arts Hill District. Since then, our services have attracted over 38,000 people to Norristown, making us an anchor of revitalization and contributing to the growth of the downtown area. Former County Commissioner Leslie Richards credits Theatre Horizon with "fueling the downtown revitalization of our county seat."

In the last 13 years, Theatre Horizon's annual budget has grown from \$14,000 to over \$900,000. Our work addresses the relative lack of cultural opportunities in the suburbs, and also frequently tackles pressing social issues. *Time Out Philadelphia* describes us as, "high on the list of significant local companies. One hallmark is the company's focus on social and political activism; another is its commitment to support local writers, directors and actors." Theatre Horizon uses the transformative power of storytelling to foster empathy and provide an inclusive home for artists, audiences, and students alike.

#### **Goals:**

Our goal is to operate as both a premier professional theater and a civic center in the region, delivering theatrical and educational experiences that demonstrate our unwavering commitment to artistic excellence and the power of theatre to create change and foster empathy in our community. We bring Philadelphia's finest actors to our stage and serve as a springboard where emerging actors, designers and directors can hone their craft and take artistic risks. Each year we offer a full season of professional productions that showcase and nurture the talent of our region's best artists.

We are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion on stage and off and strive to serve a diverse audience base, and use theatre to address our community's most pressing concerns. Our offerings provide opportunities to understand unfamiliar perspectives, discuss common struggles, and simply enjoy a good story together. Subsequently, Theatre Horizon has become a space for unlikely encounters between individuals from different backgrounds and a place to build bridges to new ideas and perspectives.

#### **Achievements:**

Theatre Horizon has a long, successful history of engaging in mission-driven programs that open up meaningful conversations about our productions. It is notable that over the last six years, four of our productions have been finalists or won the prestigious Virginia Brown Martin Philadelphia Award, which

recognizes a standout production which fosters understanding and acceptance for members of marginalized groups. Last year we received the American Theatre Wing's National Theatre Company Award - one of only twelve companies in the nation to be honored with this prestigious award from the organization that presents the Tonys each year. This \$10,000 award was given to Theatre Horizon because of our distinctive mission, audience cultivation, and ability to nurture a community of artists in ways that strengthen and demonstrate the quality, diversity, and dynamism of American theatre.

Last summer, we received an Educational Access Grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to further our efforts to create a welcoming space for students and audiences alike. For two years in a row, The National Endowment for the Arts has supported our artistic efforts, such as our production of *Hero School*, the first professional, immersive theater experience for very young children in this region.

The Barrymore Awards recognize professional Philadelphia area theatres and artists for excellence and innovation. In the last decade, we've been nominated for over 70 awards. Our 2014/15 production of *Into the Woods* won four, including Outstanding Overall Production of a Musical and Outstanding Ensemble in a Musical, and our 2015/16 production of *Black Nativity* was nominated for eight and won three, including Outstanding Ensemble in a Musical.

### **Distinctiveness:**

Theatre Horizon brings Philadelphia's finest professional artists to Norristown to present compelling, contemporary theatre. "Top-quality Theater is no longer confined to Center City," proclaimed *The Philadelphia Inquirer* when we opened our new venue in 2012. We have maintained artistic excellence through a rich variety of artistic and educational programming.

Of the more than 50 Equity theaters in the Philadelphia area, we are one of only eight that regularly produces musicals, setting us apart from other companies of our age and size. Our commitment to musical theatre provides opportunities for performers, choreographers, music directors and emerging musical actors. Additionally, we are committed to paying artists a livable wage and as such, continually increase artist salaries.

Inclusion is a key value of our education work, which has led to the expansion of our Autism Drama Program, the only one of its kind in the region, which inspires imagination and social development in individuals on the autism spectrum. We have also added Relaxed Performances to our productions, which are adjusted, sensory-friendly shows, designed to create a theatre experience that is welcoming, judgment-free, and inclusive of children and families with a wide range of sensory, learning, and communication differences.

## **2. Funding request**

### **• Description of key initiatives**

We are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion on stage and off. We choose work that tell the stories of individuals from many different backgrounds, communities and experiences, ensuring often underrepresented audiences are able to see themselves represented on our stage. In 2015, we began our *IMAGINE...* series, which, alongside specific productions, filled a stated need in our community for public dialogues about critical issues. As part of our commitment to the community we serve, we provide \$2 tickets to local residents and ACCESS card holders. We are proud that our audience engagement efforts for the underserved are proving so successful.

Connecting children with theatre artists is central to our mission and Theatre Horizon is committed to education programs that nurture each child's unique voice. We reach over 1,000 students in the region

each year through our in-house Theatre School and outreach programs. These programs, which reach students in Chester, Montgomery, Delaware, Bucks and Philadelphia counties, are the building blocks of our Theatre Horizon community in which all participants are encouraged to grow.

- **Specific needs and issues to be addressed**

In a recent study, *The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth*, the NEA tracked the level of arts engagement that students receive in and out of school, finding that students who have access to the arts tend to have better academic results, better workforce opportunities and more civic engagement. Through our educational programming, we are looking to provide our students with exposure to the arts that inspires valuable social skills, life skills, and feelings of personal merit through theater. Additionally, the National Early Literacy Panel found that the years from birth to age 5 are critical in a child's development and learning, especially in literacy. Our early literacy drama classes, provided in multiple locations at no-cost to participants, offer skills which support formal school readiness, and build a foundation for future academic success and overall achievement.

Providing area students with all of our educational programs is central to our mission, and we offer tuition subsidies to low-income families and free educational programming in our community in order to reach as many students possible. However, even with current foundation support, these programs cost Theatre Horizon roughly \$150 per student, limiting us in this effort and making it impossible to say “yes” to every opportunity to reach more students.

- **Why it is important to fund this now**

We have spent the last 13 years - through education programs, community forums, post-show discussions, and productions of the highest artistic caliber - building a space where our audiences and students can be brave and feel understood. This is an important time for Theatre Horizon. Our 2018/19 season boasts a brand-new model, one in which four limited engagement theatrical events are presented alongside two longer runs of celebrated works. By doubling the number of offerings in our season, we continue to move towards our goal of including a wider range of voices in our art - so patrons can encounter the unexpected and build bridges to new ideas and new people. We are committing ourselves to further investing in our artistry and community engagement efforts so we can sustain the excellent productions our audiences have come to expect, and continue to use theater to educate the next generation of creative citizens. We have recently finalized a new strategic plan which sets our path for the next three years. Support for our continued mission, as well as this new model would enable Theatre Horizon to significantly expand on what we do best: take considered risks for the purpose of furthering our positive impact on our community.

### **3. How impact and results will be demonstrated**

We measure impact of programming through qualitative email surveys requesting reactions to the productions, which have proven to be a very effective way to gather feedback. To ensure we are reaching as many people as possible, we track audience diversity via surveys and demographic reports on ticket buyers. Our board committees include a great many external stakeholders, which allow us to hear and respond to community needs. The education department seeks feedback from parents, Teaching Artists, and schools. If a comment or suggestion appears frequently, we consider what changes to the program need to be made.

Markers of organizational success include positive feedback indicating an engaged audience and invested students, rising annual contributed income pointing to a committed support base, Barrymore nominations and reviews that evidence artistic excellence, and a healthy positive cash flow and cash reserve indicative of a healthy business model.

### III. ATTACHMENTS

*E-mail or mail this support information*

1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter
2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations
3. Most recent annual report and financial statement, audited if available
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year and current fiscal year to date
5. If capacity building initiative, itemized budget (including external consultant's proposal, if applicable)
6. Current strategic plan. If your nonprofit does not have a current strategic plan, explain why.

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E-mail completed proposals to [grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org)

Please contact Kevin Baffa or Beth Harper Briglia at (610) 696-8211 or [grants@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org) if you have any questions. Thank you.

*Chester County*  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
*Connecting people who care with causes that matter,  
so their legacies make a difference.*