



Case For Support:

“INSPIRATION” Theatre

INSPIRATION Theatre delivers compelling productions and crucial theater education to METROPOLIS-area audiences of all ages. But that’s only the beginning. For 42 seasons, the company’s courageous, compassionate work has sparked consciousness, fostering honest dialogue and spurring action. INSPIRATION Theatre is changing people’s perspectives one play at a time. Today, the theatre is poised to capitalize on new growth opportunities to produce bolder and creative works and to engage new audiences.

Why Theatre?

Our community struggles for a safe place to share ideas. It needs a change agent that inspires real dialogue on important public and private issues.

The arts, especially theatre, inspire us to learn; teach us to express ourselves and broach even the most controversial subjects in a safe environment. This exposure helps us to empathize with one another; it nurtures community. In our increasingly impersonal, device-transfixed world, nothing provides kinetic, immersive, personal, transformative engagement like live theatre.

We believe that every vital community needs a premier, conveniently-located theatre where participants are inspired and where playwrights and actors can showcase their art.

Our community’s public schools’ arts programming budgets have been slashed. Our young people need consistent, quality arts education to help them become creative, confident problem-solvers with perseverance, focus, and a perspective on our society. Arts encourage children’s non-verbal communication, enhance their ability to benefit from constructive feedback; and promote empathy, compassion, and collaboration. (Strauss, 2013) The arts also serve as an on-ramp to science and technology, bolstering STEM learning and success (Education Week, 2016).

Why INSPIRATION?

For more than four decades, INSPIRATION Theatre has produced masterful works that not only entertain but spur conversation and change on issues of relevance. Our work truly changes people's lives— one show, one audience at a time.

We are proud of our repertoire that delves into uncharted territory, with a mix of original new works and reinterpreted classics that urge participants in the theatre experience to explore the depth of their humanity. Investing in and producing new works is essential in amplifying traditionally silenced voices, nourishing new talent, and growing American theatre. Showcasing untested pieces is a risky and essential endeavor, one that has been an INSPIRATION commitment since our inception.

Our legacy is one of unflinching artistic courage, provocative with cause. Our work is earnest, bold, and deeply compassionate, providing information and inspiration to discuss issues of great relevance and consequence. While issues may be raw and confrontational, they are always presented with hope and respect, and never are despairing or gratuitous.

We have an artist's heart and an accountant's mind. With scrupulous financial stewardship and entrepreneurial hustle, INSPIRATION is fiscally sharp, presenting bold, big-theatre works with a fraction the budget of larger venues. Virtually every dollar is reinvested directly into the art. We extend that dollar sense to our audiences, providing them with a tremendous value. They enjoy captivating, superior theatre in an intimate space, and produced at a fraction the cost of larger, less conveniently-located venues.

INSPIRATION is a good employer, partner, and neighbor. We are commended for our strong, reasoned, creative, resourceful leadership; our integrity; our transparent management.

Our leadership is inspiring the next generation, with vital arts programming to 4,000 public school students each year in Metropolis area, etc., who otherwise might go without. INSPIRATION Theatre joyfully shares the world of theatre with students; fosters career exploration by revealing an array of potential theatre professions; enriching public speaking, design, acting, writing; and fostering cultural, social and emotional learning opportunities for children. INSPIRATION is THE arts education provider for many schools.

Our deep commitment to audience engagement extends far beyond our own walls through partnerships with schools, social service agencies, cultural institutions, libraries, and social, and community centers.

INSPIRATION At-a-Glance

Changing people's lives one play at a time.

42 seasons

217 productions, including 39 world premieres

32 Chicago Jeff Awards

9 Edgerton Foundation Awards for New American Plays

2015–16 Season

- 6,000 subscribers
 - 55,000 audience members
 - 4,000 students at 30 schools through outreach/education
 - 100 Illinois artists, technicians, and administrators employed
-

In The Beginning

Founded by x, y, and z, we opened in 1974 in Metropolis's decommissioned ABC School. In our first three years, our subscriber base catapulted and we became one of the largest not-for-profit theatre companies in Metropolis!

In 1990, we moved to XYZ Theatre for four years, and from 1994-1997, INSPIRATION produced in various spaces in Metropolis. During this time, our production of *A Great Play* won the prestigious Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays Award. In 1997, INSPIRATION became the resident theatre company at Performing Arts Center which fostered a new era of growth. That same year, current artistic director x joined our team. Current Executive Director y came to INSPIRATION in 2007.

In our 42 seasons, we have mounted more than 200 productions including more than 43 world premieres. We are honored to reach more than 50,000 participants in the theatre experience each season.

INSPIRATION is the proud recipient of eight Edgerton Foundation for New American Plays awards and of 194 nominations and 32 awards from the Joseph Jefferson Committee. Of course, we cherish recognition for a job well done, but even more important to us is our role as an arts leader and change agent, reflecting and reacting to our society's changes.

INSPIRATION's Vision

INSPIRATION Theatre seeks to continue to provide intensely entertaining experiences.

Through courageous works that are artistically excellent and relevant, we strive to encourage compassion; to captivate, enlighten, and electrify audiences well beyond the final curtain. It is our passion and responsibility to offer performances that open eyes and drop jaws—to captivate and entertain, while also fostering open and informed dialogue that spurs social change.

We are fearless in our commitment to champion new work and to provide a nurturing home for artists.

INSPIRATION Theatre reflects our community to the world and the world to our community.

What INSPIRATION Needs

As we continue to push the boundaries of art, our space and location has begun to hamper our reputation and growth. To flourish, to fulfill our mission, we must:

- Continue to enrich our high quality programming.
- Improve our space to one that is more fully functional so we may pursue work that is more creative, compassionate, and aligns with our mission.
 - Work in a flexible facility that supports experimental new work, ideally, one that includes backstage area, wing areas, traps, a “black box” stage for research and development of new works, and a “public square” space for community engagement.
 - Gain the opportunity to present shows year-round.
 - Secure control over our own box office, lobby, brand, and patron experience.
- Provide a safe and enriching “third space” separate from work and home where people can engage with one another, learn, and grow.
 - Reach new audiences, including diversity of ages, ethnicities, socioeconomic levels, and races.
 - Secure theatre space proximate to public transportation and in a community representing diversity of age, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status.
 - Reside in a culturally-rich, vibrant community that not only is receptive to the arts, but yearns for it.
 - Secure location rich in intellectual curiosity with an energized business community; one abundant with potential audience members, artists, board members, and donors.
- Ensure our Future
 - Encourage our patrons to become our partners. INSPIRATION’s renewal rate is a coveted 85%, but ticket sales only meet 50% of production costs.
 - Engage community philanthropists and arts patrons in our vision.



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What METROPOLIS Needs

Metropolis is revitalizing, and deserves a world-class theatre. INSPIRATION is the perfect theatre to fulfill that role.

- INSPIRATION will enhance and stretch the fabric of community. In a Metropolis home, we will be able to shift our programming in exciting new directions, in ways that are more challenging and crucial to contemporary issues.
- We will energize the city’s economic health and growth—driving new customers to commercial, storefront, and “second-story” businesses. In addition to drawing current neighbors to these existing businesses, a thriving theatre like INSPIRATION also will attract new businesses, residents, and employees to Metropolis.
- We will serve as Metropolis’s new arts community resource. INSPIRATION has a legacy of providing exceptional, pioneering theatre despite our current insufficient physical space, lack of oversight of day-to-day operations, and lean financial resources. For nearly 20 years, we’ve been doing more with less. Imagine what we will accomplish with more!
- We envision not only a new building for INSPIRATION, we plan to become an arts collaborator: a public square and arts hub, serving as a community cultural resource for unparalleled theatre for Metropolis’s residents, school children, artists, and university students.

Metropolis deserves INSPIRATION as its world-class theatre. INSPIRATION deserves to thrive in a culturally-rich, intellectually engaged, diverse community. The time is now, the place is Metropolis. Home is calling us.

It’s time to bring INSPIRATION Theatre home to Metropolis.
