



SEASON 55:
OCT. 22 - SEPT. 23

KIDS FROM WISCONSIN IMPACT REPORT



2023
ANNUAL REPORT

FROM THE PRESIDENT

KENT HOFFMANN

As an alumnus of the KIDS, I often reflect on how the successes in my career and life come back to my KIDS experience during my youth. The lessons learned at a young age of exhaustive preparation, consistent precision, and presence, among others, were invaluable. The phrase “Once a KID, always a KID” is so true as it is a life changing experience!

The Board will constantly strive to maintain the high-quality standards and fiscal responsibility the KIDS are known for in all aspects of our organization as we execute the challenges of growth of the program beyond the summer tour. I know what the KIDS experience did for me, and it is exciting to see the positive impact it is having on even more youth today!



Kent front, right in 1984



DID YOU KNOW?

The 1st KIDS button ever was designed for the 1984 show!

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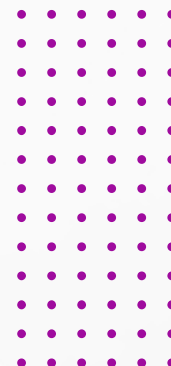
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NEW LEADERSHIP TARA JOHNSON

My journey with this fantastic organization began as a dedicated audience member, eagerly anticipating family drives to a Kids From Wisconsin show each summer. This tradition carried on with my family, leading me to become a parent of a KID, an enthusiastic volunteer, and now serving as Executive Director. The strong community I've experienced as an audience member, Kid Parent, and part of this dynamic team is nothing short of amazing.



Executive Director

Stepping into this role is an honor, and I promise to uphold the rich foundation of 55 years of entertaining audiences while expanding our impact through the Realize Your Dream program, enriching youth with music year-round.

This year our production program continues to face increased transportation costs and the logistical challenges of the 2024 Republican National Convention. Additionally, we're excited that our community enrichment programs have grown from providing free Realize Your Dream workshops at our productions to establishing year-long residencies, enriching underserved communities and schools; however, this growth presents a need for additional staff, tools and resources to sustain these opportunities and uphold our mission.

MISSION

Kids From Wisconsin empowers Wisconsin's youth through performance and music enrichment experiences. Enhancing communities and lives with professional and affordable, performing arts experiences and providing music residencies in underserved communities, KFW uses their popular musical platform as a resource for change.

We are impacting lives and communities, and your support ensures that our production program can continue providing pre-professional opportunities and high-caliber shows to communities across the state AND that our community enrichment programs can continue to deliver music to youth in underserved communities.

Whether a longtime supporter or a recent connection, your contribution matters.

Thank you for being part of this community,
and please join us in securing Kids From Wisconsin's
legacy for years to come. Your support is vital.

FLASHBACK 2023 STAR STRUCK TOUR

BY ALEX KNOEPKER, STAGE BAND DIRECTOR

Another captivating summer with KIDS has once again left our audiences STAR STRUCK!

The Kids From Wisconsin consistently attract some of our state's most remarkable young performers, brimming with talent, artistry, and unwavering dedication to their craft. The 55th rendition of this exceptional troupe upheld this tradition with an impressive display of musicianship. Each year of my involvement with this organization reinforces my pride in the caliber of talent the Kids From Wisconsin draws – an achievement that stands out even within the constraints of a short timeframe!

As the curtain fell on this year's show, audiences were undeniably left "star struck," fulfilling the promise embedded in the show's title. From melodies honoring the late Burt Bacharach to an entire medley dedicated to the hits of Kelly Clarkson, this summer's production resonated with elements from everyone's favorite playlist. Reflecting on our journey, I am confident that the pioneers of the Kids From Wisconsin, who came together in 1969 to form the inaugural troupe, would be beaming with pride at the impressive heights we've reached in our 55th year.

Being part of the continued excellence of the Kids From Wisconsin fills me with immense pride. With numerous alumni worldwide making significant contributions, "Kids From Wisconsin" stands as a well-known name with robust credibility in our industry. As we approach our 56th season, we are on course to craft another edition of the Kids From Wisconsin, offering troupe members an unparalleled experience unique to our state. Our summer experience is truly distinctive, and we wouldn't have it any other way! Your steadfast support is invaluable. Without it, none of this would be possible. Here's to an extraordinary summer – we look forward to seeing you at a KIDS show!

DID YOU KNOW?

It costs the organization \$18,000/performer for artistic training and touring.

Want to become a HOMETOWN SPONSOR?

email: info@kidsfromwisconsin.org

Subject: Hometown Sponsor



HOMETOWN SPONSORS
Supporting the young performers of their communities
with opportunity and pride.



CELEBRATING 55 YEARS

55th Alumni Reunion



Tim Riesterer finishes his 2nd term as president of the board and proclaimed an "Honorary KID"!



Tim Blotz puts on his old costume. It fits!!



Star Struck Tour



2023 Forward Together From Stage to Table

The Kids From Wisconsin's popular musical platform brought awareness of "food insecurity" this summer by partnering with food pantries in each community they performed. 8267 pounds of food was collected to benefit the citizens of that community who were in need. Thousands of dollars were also donated directly to pantries across the state on the Kids From Wisconsin's musical tour.

TARAS NAHIRNIAK ORCHESTRATED A JINGLE SPECIFICALLY TO HIGHLIGHT THE CAMPAIGN ACROSS WISCONSIN



“It helped our pantry become more visible in the community, and that's important public relations.”



We Share Food Pantry, Rice Lake, WI

KIDS FROM WISCONSIN

REALIZE YOUR Dream

BY PEGGY MORGAN STRIMPLE

Celebrating my 10th year at Kids From Wisconsin, I reflect with pride on the remarkable evolution of this unique organization. It has grown into a highly respected nonprofit not just in Milwaukee but throughout our entire state. Looking ahead to the next decade, I envision the small ripple that began ten years ago now possessing the foundations and tools to surpass our expectations, with a plethora of Realize Your Dream programming.

What lies in our future? With your continued support, we have the full potential to become a nationally recognized model, demonstrating how the performing arts can genuinely engage, inspire, and motivate youth in areas that still lack access. This summer of 2024 marks a decade of our FREE Realize Your Dream (RYD) performing arts workshops. Back then, Executive Director Tina Weiss astutely recognized the missing piece essential to ignite this structure. It became the cornerstone of our outward focus, reaching both urban and rural communities we visit. What began as troupe members mentoring young hopeful performers and adding Sensory Friendly shows has evolved into a tour community connection staple.

As the years passed, RYD transformed into a collection of year-round programs available to youth of all ages. Underserved schools and after-school youth organizations, led by our Community Enrichment Director and our growing staff of RYD teaching artists, can now choose from various exciting and engaging programs that best fit their students' schedules. They wholeheartedly believe that every child deserves access and exposure to all things related to music. Thanks to the support of Milwaukee-focused grantors, Foundations, and YOU, these golden opportunities further our mission into 2024.



I encourage you to explore the Community Enrichment section of our website and follow RYD on social media throughout 2024. Stay informed about how the light and passion of our Kids From Wisconsin's mission continue to illuminate hearts throughout Milwaukee and across Wisconsin.

Peggy Morgan Strimple, Programming Operations Director

REGULAR SURVEYS IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY CENTERS INDICATE:

- 100% OF RESPONSES CONCLUDED TEACHING ARTISTS DEMONSTRATED ENTHUSIASM, PROFESSIONALISM AND KNOWLEDGE
- 98% OF STUDENTS SHOWED INTEREST, PARTICIPATED, RESPONDED AND SHOWED COMFORT IN PERFORMING
- 93% WERE STUDENTS OF COLOR
- 67% OF STUDENTS SHOWED A NOTICEABLY DIFFERENT SOCIAL ROLE AND EXCELLED IN CREATIVE LEARNING STYLES



"THIS WAS AN AWESOME EXPERIENCE THAT BENEFITED OUR STUDENTS IN SO MANY WAYS. I HAVE SEEN [THEM] COME OUT OF THEIR SHELLS AND CONFIDENTLY STEP INTO NEW ROLES WHILE GAINING KNOWLEDGE OF MUSIC NOTES AND SELF. KIDS FROM WISCONSIN'S TEACHING ARTISTS MADE LEARNING FUN AND SIMPLE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY." SITE MANAGER

89% of Wisconsin elementary students receive music curriculum in their schools whereas only 5% of Milwaukee urban youth receive the same.



MKE Arts Showcase



NeuLife - Black History Event

The Realize Your Dream community enrichment program by Kids From Wisconsin is a targeted and transformative initiative centered on providing comprehensive music residencies to youth in Milwaukee.

Designed for students aged 7-15, the program directly addresses disparities in music education, particularly in economically challenged neighborhoods. This initiative is strategically crafted to break down barriers by bringing music residencies directly to these neighborhoods, eliminating transportation challenges and associated costs. Through inclusive and engaging programs, participants experience hands-on learning, mentorship, and exposure to various musical activities, fostering both skill development and a genuine passion for the arts.

5 music residencies available for schools and community centers



“When I walked in, to my surprise, every student was up and participating and the mood was one of joy. The instructors exemplified the true essence of letting the mood, the arts, and music navigate the group. I remember recording it and sending it to my regional superintendent to share the magic with the rest of the team of my MS principal colleagues.

I wanted to bottle up the strategies used by Kids From Wisconsin to use with the teaching staff at my Middle School. If we could have more learning by doing, and engagement as a replacement for redirection, teaching would be a breeze. I just want to say what a difference you made at Roosevelt M.S.” - Tiffany H. Fisher, Principal

Other Realize Your Dream enrichment programs include free Sensory Friendly productions by the renowned Kids From Wisconsin show troupe, mini performances at the Ronald McDonald House, professional audition workshops across the state and several free Kids From Wisconsin performances in the Milwaukee area.



REALIZE YOUR DREAM - MILWAUKEE FOCUS PARTNERS



CURRENT CHALLENGES

CREATE AWARENESS, EMPOWER YOUTH, FOSTER DIVERSITY, SUSTAIN IMPACT

1. Create Awareness Beyond Summer Shows:

Challenge:

Kids From Wisconsin is more than it's popular summer production. Our challenge is ensuring our donors are aware of the impactful year-round programs that are part of the organization. The dynamic Production and the transformative Community Enrichment Programs in greater Milwaukee.

Initiatives:

Knowing the year-round impact is crucial. The Production engages in events, concerts, and music enrichment initiatives. Realize Your Dream Community Enrichment reaches urban youth, fostering diversity in our Production and inspires inclusive audiences.

2. Empower Youth through Realize Your Dream Community Enrichment:

Challenge:

In urban communities, many talented kids lack access to performing arts. Realize Your Dream Community Enrichment addresses this, providing a vital step toward diversity in our Production Program and audiences.

Initiative:

Realize Your Dream Community Enrichment introduces youth to the joy of performing arts, fostering creativity and building confidence. By supporting Realize Your Dream Community Enrichment, we ensure a diverse and vibrant future for our Production Program and audiences alike.

3. Sustain Year-Round Impact:

Challenge:

Secure consistent year-round financial support is crucial for sustaining our impactful programs—support that ensures captivating productions and ongoing opportunities for ALL youth.

Initiative:

A steady year-round cash flow will support our Production and the Realize Your Dream Community Enrichment Programs, building a more diverse and inclusive community.

Join us in sustaining this impacts.

Call to Action:

Consider making a lasting impact by becoming a recurring donor. Your ongoing support ensures Kids From Wisconsin continues to inspire, empower, and enrich lives year-round EVERYDAY.

Join us in creating a vibrant future for performing arts in Wisconsin.



FUNDRAISING 2024 IMPACT & OUTLOOK

Impact of the Republican National Convention:

The upcoming hosting of the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee presents both opportunities and challenges for the Kids From Wisconsin.



- **Visibility and Engagement:**

The convention provides an unprecedented opportunity for heightened visibility.

Our performances can serve as a cultural highlight, showcasing the artistic talent and vibrant cultural scene of Wisconsin.

- **Accommodation Constraints:**

Due to the increased demand for accommodations during the convention, our traditional in-kind housing options will be limited. This poses a challenge to our usual tour logistics and budget. Our in-kind housing will be allocated to accommodate convention security not only during the convention but in the days leading up to and following the event.

Hometown/Sponsor Program

Recognizing the rising costs of touring, particularly in travel and housing, the Kids From Wisconsin proactively implemented a Hometown Sponsor Program before the tour commenced. Anticipating budgetary challenges, we took swift action to address potential shortfalls.

Purpose:

The Hometown Sponsor Program was designed to alleviate the financial strain on our budget caused by increased touring costs.

Execution:

Prior to the tour, each performer sought and acquired a Hometown Sponsor from their respective hometowns. These sponsors took pride in supporting and representing their hometown through the talented individuals in our troupe.

Impact:

The Hometown Sponsor Program had a significant impact on our ability to meet the increased costs of touring. This grassroots approach not only provided crucial financial support but also enriched the touring experience for both performers and sponsors.

See Page 3

Future Outlook:

While the challenges posed by the Republican National Convention and rising cost of travel expenses are acknowledged, the Kids From Wisconsin remains resilient and adaptable. The organization is committed to leveraging this unique opportunity for increased visibility and engagement. To navigate these challenges, we are actively exploring innovative solutions and partnerships to ensure the continuation of our mission.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

The Kids From Wisconsin takes pride in maintaining a robust **Endowment Fund**, currently valued at \$2.5 million. This financial resource serves as a cornerstone for the organization, ensuring its continuity for years to come. The earnings from the invested assets play a crucial role in providing each performer who completes a successful season with a scholarship, contributing to their educational and artistic pursuits.



Scholarship Impact:

The Endowment Fund's earnings directly contribute to the Kids From Wisconsin Scholarship Program. This initiative empowers young performers, recognizing their dedication and talent by supporting their educational journeys. These scholarships not only foster artistic development but also contribute to building a pool of skilled artists who will continue to enrich the cultural landscape of Wisconsin.

Legacy Giving for a Lasting Impact:

As we celebrate our rich history, we invite supporters to consider legacy gifts that will leave a lasting impact on the lives of young Wisconsin performers. Becoming a Legacy Donor by contributing to the Endowment Fund ensures vibrant futures for the performing arts right here in Wisconsin.

Benefits of Legacy Giving:

Becoming a Legacy Donor by contributing to the Kids From Wisconsin Endowment Fund comes with several meaningful benefits:

- **Lasting Impact:**

Your legacy gift ensures that the Kids From Wisconsin continues to inspire and empower generations of performers.

- **Scholarship Support:**

Contribute to the educational and artistic pursuits of young performers through scholarship programs funded by the Endowment Fund.

- **Recognition:**

Legacy Donors will be recognized for their generosity and commitment to the arts in Wisconsin.

- **Tax Benefits:**

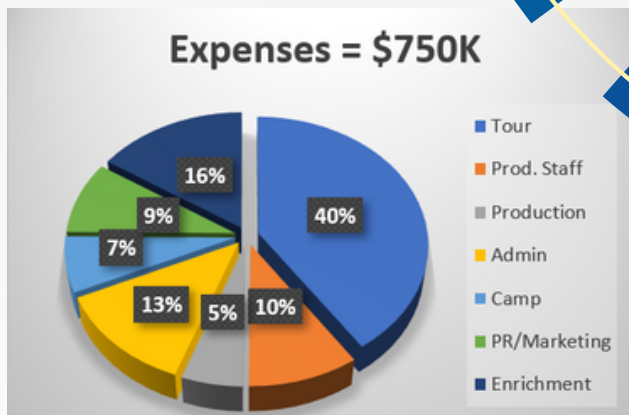
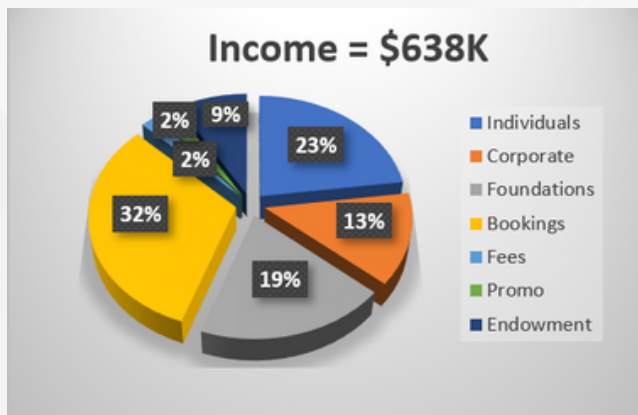
Your contribution to the Kids From Wisconsin Endowment Fund may also offer valuable tax benefits. Please consult with your financial advisor to explore potential tax advantages associated with your donation.

WE CAN BE GREATER TOGETHER



Join our Legacy Donors

KEY FINANCIAL DATA 2023



Executive Summary:

Fiscal year 2023 marked a period of significant growth and increased impact for the Kids From Wisconsin. While the organization faced challenges with expenses exceeding income by 15%, this can be attributed to post-COVID increases in touring-related costs (travel, food, housing) and the expansion of our Realize Your Dream programming in urban Milwaukee.

1. Income Overview:

- **Booking** 32% of income

The Production Program continues to be a vital source of funding, contributing 32% to the organization's overall income. Their consistent success in booking solid shows remains a cornerstone of our financial stability.

- **Individual Support:** 23%

The dedication of our audience is evident, with individuals contributing 23% of our total income. Their generous support, both in attendance and financial contributions, plays a crucial role in sustaining our mission.

- **Foundation Support:** 19%-Growing Influence

Foundations have shown a strong interest in supporting our activities, recognizing the impact we make. Their contributions are fundamental to the success of our organization, particularly in funding our year-round Realize Your Dream Focus in Milwaukee.

- **Corporate Sponsorship:** 13%-Inpro Corporation's Steadfast Support

Among our corporate supporters, Inpro Corporation of Muskego, Wisconsin stands out as a steadfast partner for over 30 years, exemplifying unwavering support for our mission. Their corporate sponsorship remains a cornerstone of our financial stability.

2. Expense Overview:

- **Touring Expenses:** 40%-Post-COVID Adjustments

Post-COVID, touring expenses saw a great unexpected increase, reflecting adjustments in travel, food, and housing costs. These investments are essential for expanding our reach and impact.

- **Enrichment (Realize Your Dream Programming):** 16%-Urban Milwaukee Expansion

The increased programming offered through Realize Your Dream in urban Milwaukee contributed to the rise in expenses. This initiative aligns with our commitment to community engagement and youth development.

3. Future Outlook:

- **Strategic Planning for Financial Sustainability:**

The organization is committed to addressing the imbalance between income and expenses through strategic planning. Initiatives are underway to optimize touring costs and explore diversified revenue streams.

2023 DONORS

January 1 thru December 31

We extend our sincere gratitude to our dedicated audience, generous donors, supportive foundations, and committed corporate sponsors. Your unwavering support empowers us to continue our mission of inspiring and empowering young performers and audiences across Wisconsin.

* Designates Alumni or Alumni Parents

Legacy - ALL TIME Endowment Fund

Brockman Family Trust
Jere and Anne Fluno
The Nannette M. Gardetto Charitable Trust
Mark Juds*
Mary Jo Kratochvil
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Visionary \$10,000+

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Mark Juds *

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*In Memory of: Leo and Celesta Busch, David Dansart, Mary Lucille Haines, Taylor Hawkins,
Kenneth A. Morgan, "Marvelous" Marv Szymanski, John Waldron*

In Honor of: Kent Hoffmann

In-Kind Sponsors



WISCONSIN
LUTHERAN COLLEGE

LAMERS
The Passenger Professionals®

RECENT MILESTONES

● 2020

- The pandemic slashed one of the busiest tour seasons on record. 42% of annual income was lost. Remaining funds from tour expenses enabled staff to build core music residencies for youth, based on the state's core music standards.
- Virtual performances and classes kept the organization out front during a difficult time for everyone.

● 2021

- One of the first groups to travel and perform after COVID with ALL free-outdoor shows. Policies and procedures kept all safe and healthy.
- We collected more in cash contributions at shows than any year in history of the Kids from Wisconsin, for a total of \$25,000+.
- Realize Your Dream Residencies began in classrooms.

● 2022

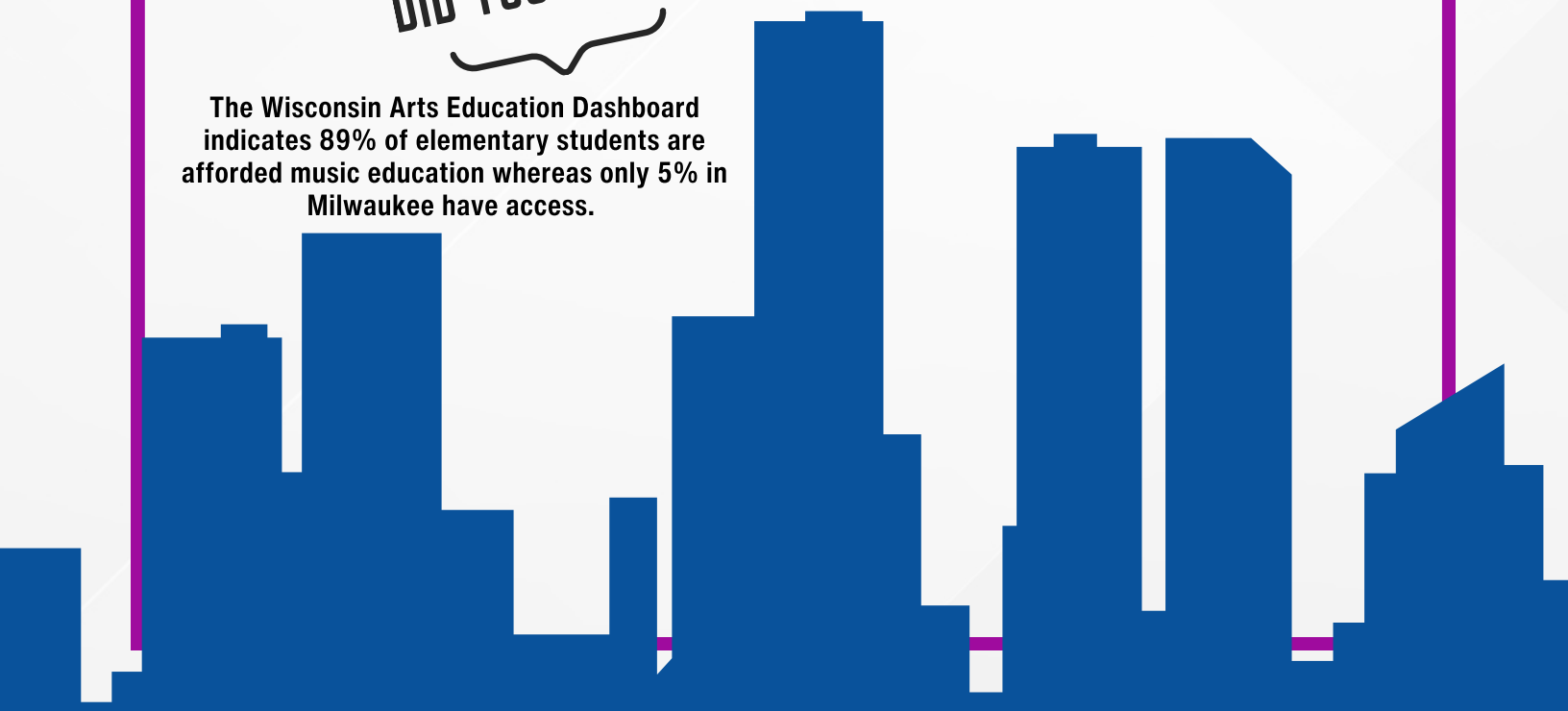
- A funding campaign for the Realize Your Dream residencies was successful as we brought programs to more urban Milwaukee neighborhoods.

● 2023

- Residencies have grown and include: Milwaukee Public School Partnerships: Sherman Elementary, Roosevelt Middle School, and Riley Elementary.
- Year-round residencies at Shechem at Hope Street Ministries, Lighthouse Youth Ctrs., Neulife Ctrs., and the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee.
- Partnership with ACE; *Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra Arts in Community Education*.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Wisconsin Arts Education Dashboard indicates 89% of elementary students are afforded music education whereas only 5% in Milwaukee have access.



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info@kidsfromwisconsin.org

kidsfromwi.org

@kidsfromwi



Taras Nahirniak
Artistic Director/Chief
Orchestrator

1993 was my first experience of a Kids From Wisconsin reunion year. At that time, 25 years was a big deal. I could feel the energy and excitement, and even though I had only been involved with KIDS for a few years, I was a part of it. That incredible feeling convinced me that I wanted to be with the KFW as long as they'd have me. Fast forward thirty years, and I'm still here.

This past summer, KIDS celebrated another milestone reunion; 55 summers of entertainment, and 55 summers of engaging audiences from all over Wisconsin with 36 of the most talented youth from the state.

I've now been a part of seven reunion summers, and it never gets old (even though I might be...getting old). The smiles, the laughter, the reconnections, and the stories- hearing the stories from "back in the day" is my favorite part. I even had a few to tell. For the current members, it's always a special time. And sometimes, they may even find themselves "star struck." STAR STRUCK, KIDS 55 was a fabulous show this year.

While celebrating award-winning performers and music, this past summer's troupe put their hearts and souls into the production. I may find myself saying this each and every year, but it was the best show to date in my opinion.

With a mixture of seasoned returning members, and some incredible new talent, the crowd was worked into a frenzy by the end of each show. The troupe was rewarded with instant standing ovations, and the audience practically sat on the edge of their seats, waiting to jump up and cheer. This summer saw KFW return to Michigan for the Charlevoix Venetian Festival, along with our yearly visit to Dubuque, Iowa. It's amazing to see audience reactions from outside of our state. There really is nothing like the Kids From Wisconsin anywhere else in the country, and I love getting to share what we do with new audiences.

Looking forward, we are working hard on next summer's show with the title "Larger Than Life." We'll have a detailed description of the show coming out soon, but I can assure you it'll be another crowd favorite. As always, I want to thank all of you for your support of the Kids From Wisconsin; with it, we are in a perfect position to continue this phenomenal program for another 55 years.