

Kids FROM WISCONSIN

est. 1969

Empowering Wisconsin's youth through
performance and music education.



Annual Report 2022



A LEGACY OF ENTERTAINMENT & EDUCATION

Hundreds of thousands of people know Kids from Wisconsin from our summer tour, which we've been doing for nearly 55 years. We're reaching more than 100,000 audience members in 30 cities across the state. Our mission has been to identify and train up Wisconsin youth in the musical arts, which we do for the 36-member troupe you see on stage. They receive the training of a lifetime that prepares them in a truly unique way for professional performing or whatever career they choose going forward.

But, those three months and that select group of musically-gifted youth just scratches the surface of what the Kids organization does all year round. There are thousands of other musically-oriented youth in our state who would also benefit from some training and performance experiences. But they don't have access due to a lack of availability in schools and after-school programs.

Research shows that arts experiences translate into heaps of goodness for young people, including improving their mental health and overall school performance. Recognizing this gap and seeing the opportunity, the Kids from Wisconsin has been building and delivering year-round music instruction and performance content for underserved youth, starting right in our hometown of Milwaukee. We are now in public schools and after-school programs and receiving rave reviews – just like our summer shows do!

Check out this year's annual report, which continues to pay tribute to the historical mission of the organization as we expand our mission to be for the Kids on stage and the kids in the classroom! Thanks again for your continued support.

- Tim Riesterer, PRESIDENT



A FUTURE BUILT ON TRADITION

Dear Kids From Wisconsin Family
& Friends,

Thank you for your extraordinary commitment to the organization. Every day, the staff, troupe members, teaching artists, students and supporters teach me something new.

Throughout the year, our family has grown. The organization has evolved new positions and added new office space. Our residency program has grown by doubling its size, which will benefit more underserved communities all year round. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are still my driving factors. Your fortitude and dedication to the organization have helped reveal the strong collective character of Kids from Wisconsin.

Our successes have propelled us forward to the next century: a future built on 54 years of tradition and focused on an enduring commitment to excellence and a dedication to expanded access. I am immensely proud of the continued growth and development of this amazing organization.

I have never been prouder to be part of the Kids From Wisconsin and I am more excited for its future.

Once a Kid, always a Kid!

**- Michael D. Sander,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Our 54th Year Made An Impactful ***BIG, BANG, BOOM!***

After all we've been through with the COVID-19 pandemic, what an incredible feeling to have had a typical summer of Kids, consisting once again of indoor and outdoor shows, but this show and these performers were far from typical. Each year I am blown away at the level of commitment and outstanding talent the Kids From Wisconsin attracts. Show after show, there was a consistency in the performance, and the ***BIG, BANG, BOOM*** tour was just what the title sounded like. When it finished, it was evident that all the skillfully challenging work put into it had paid off. Audiences all over Wisconsin were thrilled by one of the best shows of which I have been a part. By reading and listening to the audience's comments, we can live through their experiences to know just what an effect the show had.

After 54 phenomenal years, it is clear that the passion and love that surrounds the Kids organization is at an all-time high. I am positive that our founder, Colonel Mark Azzolina, and those who were there for the inaugural troupe in 1969 would rejoice at where we are today. Hard work and creativity from those involved year after year has brought us to this point; after all, troupe 54 stood on the shoulders of giants.

Moving forward, we are deep into the creative process for the upcoming 55th anniversary show. As always, "keeping our foot on the gas," and creating another incredible experience for the troupe and audience members is our number one goal. I am always excited to see what the next group of Wisconsin musicians will bring us, and rest assured, the legacy of the Kids from Wisconsin lives on as we "Rise Above."

Hmm...that sounds like a theme to me?

- Taras Nahirniak, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



The ***BIG BANG BOOM*** TOUR entertains hundreds in Plover, WI.

Kids *from* WISCONSIN

2022 BY NUMBERS

1,668
ALUMNI
SINCE 1969



33 CITIES
VISITED
ACROSS
THE
STATE



6,381

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MILES
TRAVELED ON OUR SUMMER TOUR

160
COSTUME
CHANGES
PER SHOW



12,080 FOLLOWERS
and growing on social media!

300+

NUMBER OF
STUDENTS WHO
HAVE RECEIVED
MUSIC EDUCATION
THROUGH OUR
COMMUNITY
ENRICHMENT
PROGRAMS



8

REALIZE YOUR
DREAMS
WORKSHOPS
INSPIRED
FUTURE
PERFORMERS

11 TEACHING ARTISTS ON STAFF
TO INSPIRE AND EDUCATE YOUTH
FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS





2022: A YEAR OF GROWTH

One simple word describes this year's annual report: growth. While primarily a capitalist goal, it is neither a goal nor a strategy. It is simply a result. It happens because there has been the perfect mix of required elements over time. Most notably, our community enrichment development, mind-blowing production shows and connections with fellow respected art organizations boosted us into another stratosphere.

I have read there are five successful stages of growth: creativity, direction, delegation, coordination and collaboration. In my decade with the organization, I have witnessed all those aspects play out successfully. With that in mind, the goal of ensuring smooth and scalable programming and providing support to all core departments of the organization, I am proud to serve as the Kids from Wisconsin Operations Director.

Not many art organizations can brag about going into their 55th year of operation. I believe the backbone of our lifespan has been honoring the traditions of our founders and continuing the threads of leadership, showmanship and partnership in our brand. Let me extend my appreciation for your continued support!

- Peggy Morgan Strimple, OPERATIONS DIRECTOR



EXPANDING, EDUCATING & INSPIRING

Since the pandemic, the organization has undergone changes and growth in multiple ways. There have been successes and mistakes, but what is most remarkable is that we have used each experience to progress and evolve. In this new era of Kids from Wisconsin I sense an overwhelming desire and ability in the leadership team to create a company that is inclusive, diverse, and focused on community engagement. Personally, it inspires me as the new Education Director the desire to reach for lofty goals.

Expanding existing partnerships while building new relationships and engaging new communities is in the works. In 2023 the Kids organization will introduce additional educational programs to enhance and provide access to music education in more communities: a five-session themed program at a Milwaukee community center, an Early-Childhood residency for underserved communities, a partnership with the Milwaukee Symphony and their renowned ACE program, bringing hands-on music experiences to the classroom and an expanded troupe-led workshop across the state.

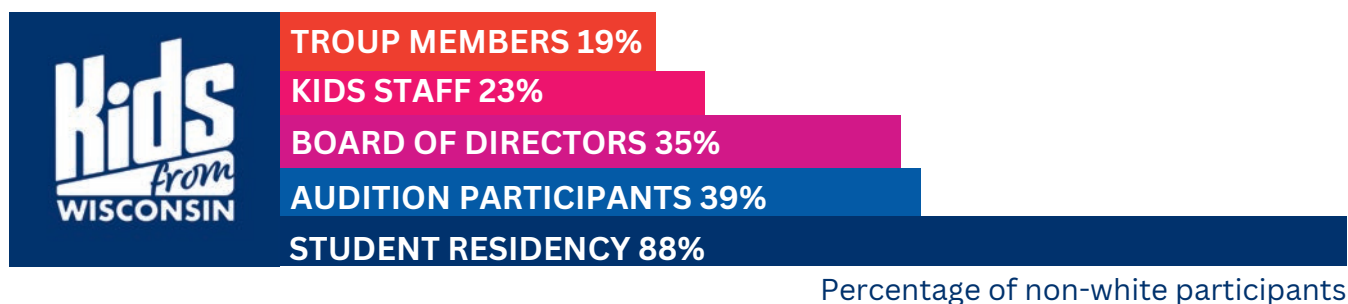
As our education program continues to grow so will our presence in Milwaukee and the new communities we engage. We have come far as an organization in our 55 years, and endless possibilities are on the horizon.

- Ashley Patin, COMMUNITY EDUCATION DIRECTOR



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION at KIDS

A goal early on was to make sure the organization reflected the diversity of Wisconsin, which is currently 13% people of color. In 2022 the Kids from Wisconsin celebrate some distinct D.E.I achievements.





A BOLD VISION: MUSIC EDUCATION FOR ALL

The 2019 *National Arts Education Status Report* estimates that **in Wisconsin alone there are more than two million students without access to any arts education in their elementary, middle or high schools.**

Kids from Wisconsin's goal will continue to be enacting change in diversity, equity and inclusion. Recognizing the imperative for these values has helped us create actionable strategies as well as gain awareness and sensitivity to remove structural and social barriers.

Urban Milwaukee Public Schools have gone decades without music education. The educational objectives of the Kids organization include restoring music programming through free music residencies in these neighborhoods. KFW's MKE MUSIC FOCUS is making a difference in communities that struggle with equity and inclusion. KFW's music residencies titled "Music in Me" and "Music with My Friends" are built on Wisconsin's standards in music education and are free to children at youth centers after school and during the day at MPS schools. The program is growing with an expectation to triple by the end of 2024.

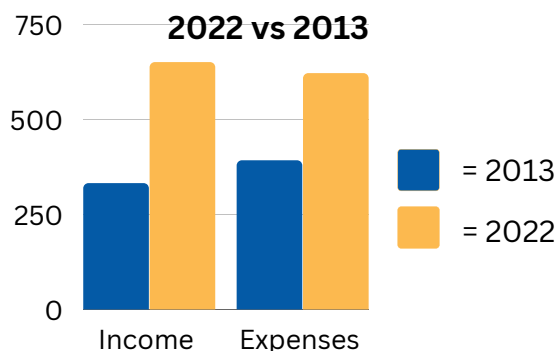
These programs are made possible by:



KIDS FROM WISCONSIN FINANCIALS

Acquisitions of grants have slowed in 2022 as foundations continue to diversify and focus attention on health, housing, and employment concerns of COVID. The cost of the 2022 show skyrocketed as food, housing and fuel costs increased to record highs.

Funding partnerships are strong, especially around education and community engagement. Expectations are to double opportunities for Milwaukee's most underserved youth by the end of 2023.

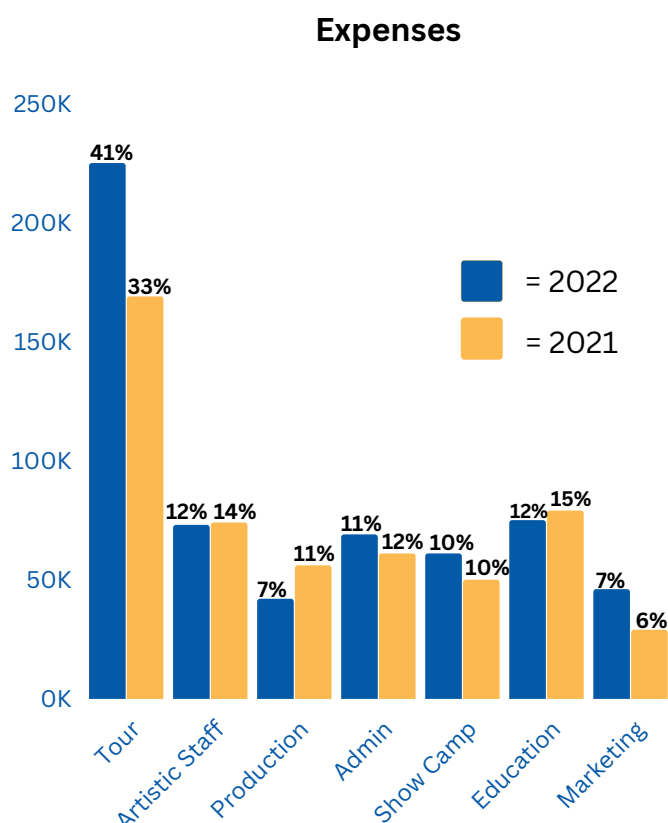
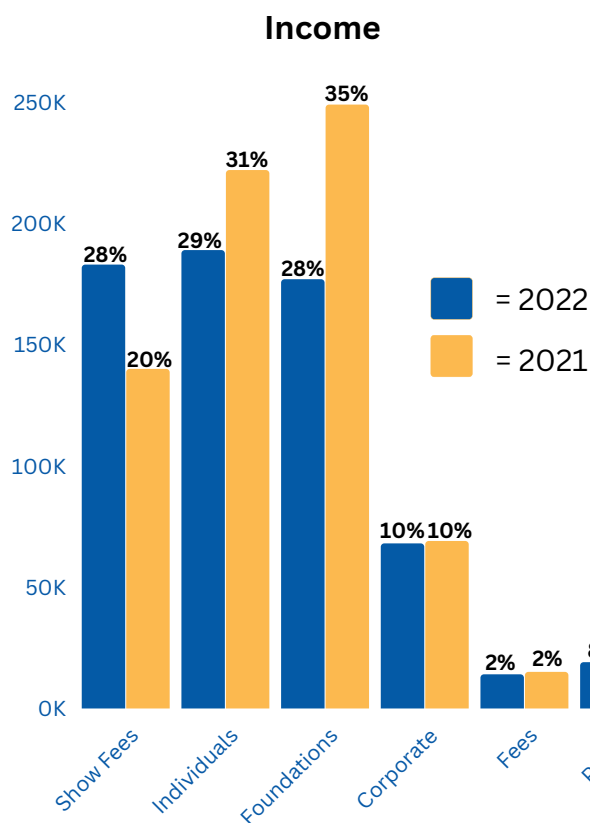


Historical financial data proves a steady increase in revenue and expenses with more resources earmarked for educational programming. A continued focus on budgeting results in the investment of educational opportunities for our young performers and the experience the audience receives. Increased funding continues as demand for bookings is already in play for next summer.

The endowment established by our forward-thinking legacy leaders continues to supply necessary financial stability and commitment to the organization's mission. Moving into the 55th year, your annual investment is sound, and great work is being done with an eye toward mission and purpose.

Because you have read this far into the annual report, we know you care. You care about the captivating performances provided across our state for more than 50 years. You care about the 1000 youth each summer receiving first-time performing arts experiences. You also care about the hundreds of underserved youth in Milwaukee, receiving a music education through the Kids from Wisconsin programming. And it is because of you that the program is thriving. We count on your contribution each year as we plan and continue to grow outward in the communities we touch.

-Tina Weiss, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR



Kids FROM WISCONSIN

MAJOR SUPPORTERS



IN KIND PARTNER:



STAFF

Michael D. Sander*
Executive Director

Tina Weiss
Development Director

Peggy Morgan Strimple*
Operations Director

Ashley Patin*
Community Education Director

Taras Nahirniak
Artistic Director & Chief Orchestrator

Meg Strobel
Marketing Director

Keven Riggle
Administrative Assistant & Librarian

* Indicates Kids from Wisconsin Alumni



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tim Riesterer

President
Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer-
Corporate Visions

Dr. James Maney, Jr.

Vice President
Medical Dir., Anesthesia Services
Aurora Medical Center – Summit

Kent Hoffmann*

Secretary
Judge – Sheboygan County

Tina Weiss

Treasurer
Director of Development - Kids from Wisconsin

Thomas J. Nolte

Member/Advisor
Director - Madison Investments

Phillip J. Azzolina

Senior Systems Engineer- US Government

Gabrielle Deyi

Lead Storyteller, Host - Logitech

Scott Girmscheid

Buyer/Sr. Specialist, Retired - Global Industrial

Anita Guerrero

Vice President Corporate Communications
Brand Management - Goodwill Industries

Michelle Hiteman

Strategic Planning Facilitator Education & Youth
Development

Mark A. Juds*

Principal Engineer, Retired - Eaton Corporation

Charlie Krause IV

Policy Committee, President - Krause Family
Foundation Investment

Richard Mannisto

VP of Development & Strategic Initiatives -
Wisconsin Lutheran College

Tony Maze*

Director of Benefits - Milwaukee County

Robert Radke

R2 Communications, LLC

Kofi Short*

Director of Prevention Services - Diverse &
Resilient

Louis Williams

Event Manager - Pritzlaff Events

Michael D. Sander*

Ex Officio

Executive Director-Kids from Wisconsin

Taras Nahirniak

Ex Officio

Artistic Director-Kids from Wisconsin

Barbara Dorn

Ex Officio

Executive Director Emerita

* Indicates Kids from Wisconsin Alumni

Your support helps us thrive.



Scan now to make your tax-deductible contribution, or visit www.kidsfromwisconsin.org and click "donate"



Kids from Wisconsin is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.