

# EX TRA ORD IN ARY





# It Was Extraordinary

I am choosing the word **extraordinary** to describe the Kids from Wisconsin's 2021 season and fiscal year. (Especially since the word "unprecedented" has been overused to describe everything happening the last 20 months.)

Here are some **extraordinary** highlights from my perspective:

**It was extraordinary** that we were able to conduct a safe rehearsal camp and full season without a single case of Covid among the troupe and staff.

**It was extraordinary** that our young performers selflessly put themselves in a "bubble" for three months to protect audience members, family and each other.

**It was extraordinary** that we were able to adjust the entire tour to be outdoor only venues in partnership with our host cities who were so gracious and accommodating.

**It was extraordinary** that some of the biggest crowds ever in these cities came out to enjoy live entertainment again – "Live in Living Color" to be more specific.

**It was extraordinary** that we increased the number of individual donors and donations so significantly that we generated a surplus in a season with fewer shows.

**It was extraordinary** that we were able to expand our music programming to underserved youth throughout our hometown of Milwaukee – with more to come!

**It was extraordinary** that we were able to navigate the last 20 months of craziness while our extra-extraordinary executive director, Tina Weiss flawlessly transitioned the organizations leadership to our new executive director, Michael Sander.

You see what I mean –  
e x t r a o r d i n a r y !

Thank you all for making this happen.



**TIM RIESTERER**

## Beach Boys Are Seen Across Wisconsin

Local sources confirm Beach Boys sightings at more than five different venues in one week.





# For the Love of a Live Show

TARAS NAHIRNIAK

I'm thinking back to that first show this past summer - premiere at the Rotary Performance Pavilion at Hart Park in Wauwatosa. Great location, beautiful summer day, amazing audience, and what else...oh yeah, the first live performance in almost two years for The Kids From Wisconsin. I teared up (what else is new) when the singers erupted with their first phrase, "LIVE IN LIVING COLOR!" Yes, we were live, in front of an audience, and it felt AMAZING! In a way it felt normal. After all, KIDS have been performing for audiences for 53 years, but this was special. We were back, and the smiles from the audience members and the troupe on stage told the story.

Let's back up a bit. This was going to be a different kind of summer; every show outside, show setups different at each site, band behind, band in front, band split, etc. How would the troupe react to all the changes? Well, this was no ordinary troupe. Thanks to the decision of the board, the age limit was raised for one year to accommodate to those who would have aged out during COVID. This was a seasoned and talented troupe that had time to prepare, and they did.

Starting last October, we had weekly vocal zoom rehearsals, with dance sprinkled in here and there, then we hit the road running with camp kicking off mid-June. With all the adapting that would happen out on the road, we really needed to be ready to go. Hard work and intense planning by everyone involved made that happen.

## We couldn't have asked for a better summer after all that occurred.

One of my favorite aspects of this past summer's tour was being able to see, in the light of day, the reactions from audience members who attended the KIDS shows. Their joy and excitement were contagious, and just what Wisconsin needed. The Kids From Wisconsin were one of only a handful of groups who even attempted to perform live; we did it safely, and we did it the "KIDS" way, by showing off Wisconsin talent with a high-powered entertaining show.

Thank you to all who contributed to the continued success of The Kids From Wisconsin.



2021 Kids band wows Wisconsin State Fair audiences

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Producer, Kids From Wisconsin

### MICHAEL D. SANDER EX OFFICIO

Executive Director, Kids From Wisconsin



# Goodbye and Hello

TINA WEISS

As I say goodbye to my directorship, I feel confident after working alongside my predecessor, Michael Sander. KIDS are in great, capable hands.

I can't help but reflect on the organizations journey and where we've come in a mere 8 years. Highlights that come to mind contributing to the purpose and strength are the additional community enrichment programs led by Peggy Strimple. These educational programs are providing year-round activities in underserved communities and workshops have expanded the summer tour experience. These programs have opened Kids up to a whole new audience and future opportunities.

An active board and president with focus on the pillars of the Kids mission has developed strategic plans to include a diversity and inclusion committee which will assist in equity and equality of programming.

I continue to feel honored as I say hello to my new role as Director of Development. I will work to enhance our donor relations and seek new opportunities for growth through business and foundation support. Through the expanded community enrichment and continued success of the iconic production, we can offer unique ways to build financial support through grants and sponsorship of year-round programming.

## 2021 Charlie Krause Leadership Award Winners Announced

Awarded to a leader or leaders who actively modeled at camp and on tour, all three (3) elements of the Kids mission - Showmanship, Leadership, Partnership:



Tyler Jung (left) and Brett Fredrickson (right)

"Brett was always there when you needed him, for any concern whether it be related or not to our performing life. He would always praise our hard work but also reminded us that there is more ahead and that we must keep up that hard work in order to achieve our full potential."

"Tyler is a BEAST. His work ethic is like no other. He shows a deep passion for his work, both as a performer and a leader every single day. He inspires ME to show up ready to work, with a smile on my face and love in my heart."

## The Best Is Yet To Come

MICHAEL D. SANDER



2021 has been an amazing year for the organization. My goal is and will continue to be enacting change in the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Recognizing the imperative for these values have helped us create actionable strategies as well as gain the awareness and sensitivity to remove structural and social barriers.

Access to the arts is of vital importance and by continuing our

free music program in underserved neighborhoods, will only allow our organization to be leaders in the effort to change the narrative in our education system. In addition, we will build on our Arts Spotlights, partnering with our host cities as well as being the leader in our hometown of Milwaukee.

## Change and growth are essential in our adapting society.

I am very proud to be part of the both the growth and change of the Kids From Wisconsin. In 2022 we will continue to expand the work that we have initiated this year. The best is yet to come.

*Michael D. Sander*



# Going Above and Beyond What is Expected

PEGGY MORGAN STRIMPLE

That is what our audiences and donors have recognized - in not just our production shows but also our board, staff, performers and now teaching artists. We are currently welcoming all performing arts disciplines to integrate their perspectives and skills to enhance our community enrichment programming.

As the interest of our Music In Me and Music With My Friends residencies continue to grow, this teaching artist opportunity supplements an income for many community educators and artists.

Since our last report, four teaching artists were trained and successfully launched seven residencies at various schools and centers. These residencies prove to be an integral component, to



*Music With My Friends at Lighthouse Youth Center*

either enhance curriculum in a classroom or an extracurricular setting. Youth have and will continue to find their purpose and importance; whether to become a music appreciator or spark them to further their discoveries in performing arts.

On a sad note, a summer not being able to offer our Realize Your Dream workshops was a huge void. Many returning 2021 Kids commented on

missing that experience of mentoring. Next year it will be a pleasure to report on all the communities and youth the troupe connected with. It has proven to be a highlight of everyone's summer since 2014.

We strive to go beyond the extraordinary, delivering free performing arts programming to enrich any age and ability level.



*Four young performers hold a final pose at the MKE Arts Spotlight.*



# Residencies, Master Classes, Arts Spotlight and More

Realize Your Dream is a collaboration of experiential programming that uses performing arts to spark and enrich inspiration-built upon the traditions and legacy of the Kids From Wisconsin. This is a constant evolution and intersection for teachers and learners, where workshops, residences and classroom sessions are designed for all age groups and ability levels.

# REALIZE YOUR Dream

*Sponsored by the Potato and Vegetable Growers Association*



## Free residency programs which offer high energy and interactive sessions for all ages.

Residencies have proven to be an integral component, to either supplement or enhance, a curriculum in a classroom or extracurricular setting. Our trained professional teaching artists assist students to find their purpose and importance; whether to become an appreciator or spark them to further their discoveries in performing arts.



*Workshop in Kenosha, WI*

## Arts Spotlight

Arts Spotlight was created to showcase community art organizations and their offerings. These Arts Spotlights give opportunities to change the narrative, and interface with creation of perceptions of community. This allows more families opportunity to gain information on how to become more involved with the arts in their city at a one stop arts experience.

## Master Classes

Ranging from performance tips and industry insights to creating your brand and building a resume, our Master Classes have something for everyone.

Right now, you are able to attend these free learning opportunities from the comfort of your own home via Zoom. Our teachers are excited and ready to share their wealth of knowledge.

## Workshops

During this 1-hour session, participants have a choice to hang with the band to create their own music composition or learn portions of the choreography from the show with the singers and dancers.

After a showcase of their work, the troupe engages a reflection and inspirational talkback session where everyone shares and celebrates their love of performing.

In the 2021 season we provided 8 free collaborative community Arts Spotlights. We will continue to work with other arts organizations, providing demonstrations and performances throughout the 2022 season. We are all better together!



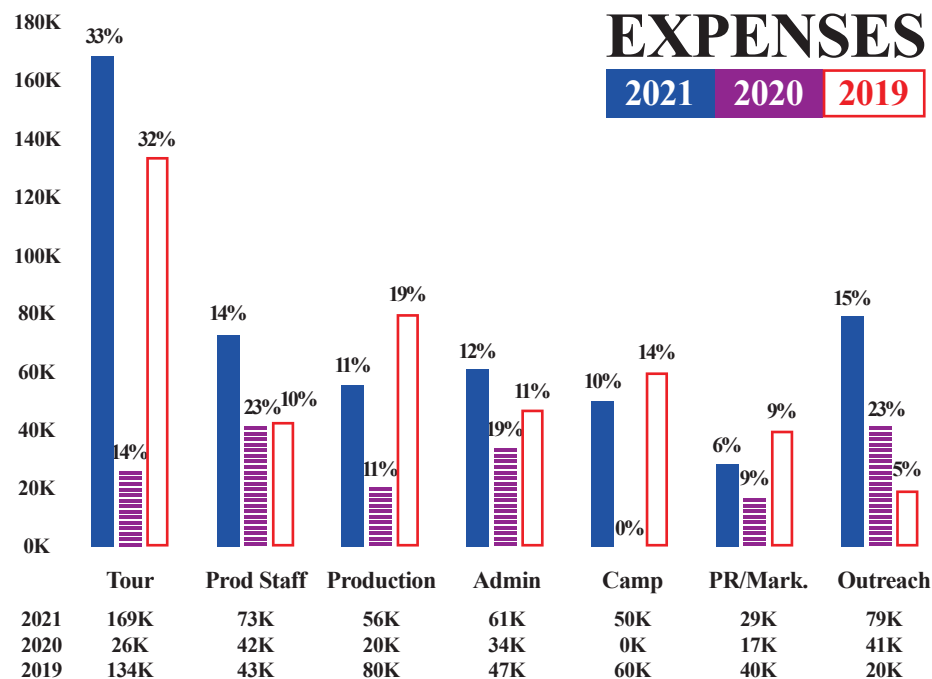
*Walter Street Dance Company at MKE Arts Spotlight*



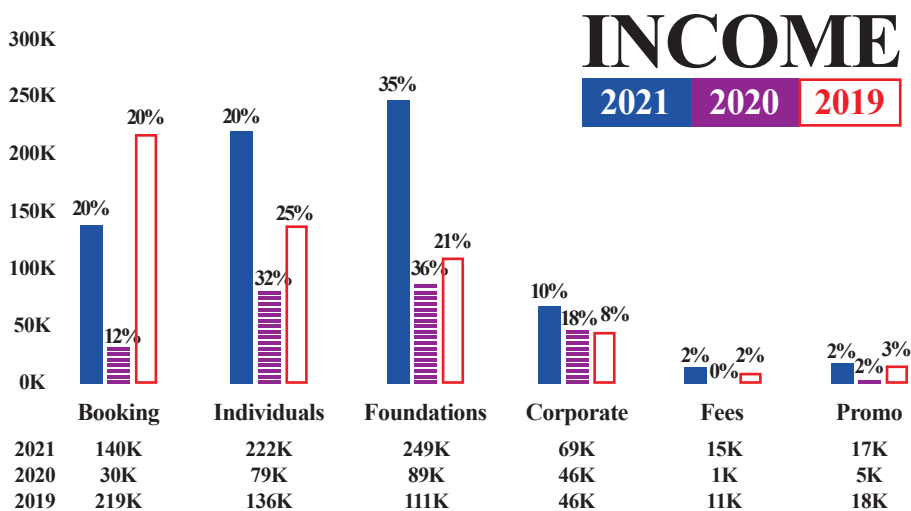
# 2021 Financials Present a Great Story...

The 2021 financials presented a great story, considering the adaptation required as a result of COVID and the uncertain effect those changes would have on the organization financially. These changes included a shorter, all outdoor tour. Over a \$100,000 was received from 205 new donors in 2021, many of whom responded well to donation buckets at performances.

The addition of daily summer long programs at 3 Lighthouse Youth Centers was a welcome expense we chose to take on which exceeded budget. Tour expenses were comparatively higher in 2021 to assist in keeping our troupe members and staff safe during COVID.



*Chase Bucheger wows audience.*



## A Legacy Gift | Mary Jo Kratochvil

We would like to thank the Estate of Mary Jo Kratochvil for their most recent legacy gift! Mary Jo was a longtime fan and donor since 1998, of the Kids From Wisconsin.

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation is home to the Kids From Wisconsin's Endowment Fund and more than 1,300

charitable funds ranging in asset size from \$25,000 to more than \$20 million. Each fund has its own unique goal and its own interesting story, but they all work in the same basic way. Over time, investment proceeds increase both the value of our fund and the impact on the Kids From Wisconsin for years to come.



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**inpro.**

JERE & ANNE  
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