

Fall 2021

BACKSTAGE bulletin

Big things are happening because of donors like you

A NOTE FROM THE CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER



Dear Friends,

Fall has officially arrived! Since the summer issue of the Backstage Bulletin, a lot has happened. Paramount is back in action, in-person classes at the School of Arts are in full swing, and Broadway theatres have reopened with triumphant return in New York.

Over the course of the past year, I have been blown away by the generosity and dedication of donors like you. You continue to reinforce the importance of the arts in our community and the role we have to play in helping bring folks together following the past year and a half.

Thank you for believing in Paramount. Thank you for sticking with us. Thank you for your support.

This past October 7th was our annual Thank-A-Donor Day. I had the pleasure of speaking to a few of you throughout the day and was inspired by the conversations I had with your fellow donors.

“This place helps make my life and my community what I want it to be,” said one donor. “When I donate here, I feel that I really see the results on stage. Yes, I give because the shows are amazing — but mostly to make sure it all continues.”

The impact you have throughout our community is profound. I am deeply moved by your desire to create positive change in the world through the arts. Your gifts are helping us make a difference in the lives of thousands of people.

Your investment in Paramount is powerful. I hope you’ll find other highlights and stories from the recent months informative and enjoyable.

I am grateful for your enthusiasm, contributions and kindness; and I hope to see you around the theatre soon.

With gratitude — *Jonathan Jensen*

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



NOVEMBER 1

Bold Series Subscription
Pre-Sale for Current
Donors and Subscribers

NOVEMBER 19

Opening Night of
Rodgers & Hammerstein’s
Cinderella

NOV 26 – DEC 23

The Second City’s Holiday
Revue at Copley Theatre

NOVEMBER 29

Bold Series Subscriptions
On-Sale for General Public

NOVEMBER 30

GivingTuesday



PARAMOUNT
THEATRE



TOAST

CHEERS TO
PARAMOUNT!

On Friday, August 27, we hosted our inaugural TOAST: Cheers to Paramount, prior to the opening night performance of *Kinky Boots*. We welcomed close to 150 patrons, donors and friends of Paramount into our newly renovated Copley Theatre — home of the upcoming *Bold Series* — and new lobby bar within the North Island Center for a preview of the two spaces and to “raise a glass” in celebration of our return to the stage.

The energy throughout the evening was filled with excitement as everyone was happy to be back at Paramount to see a live performance — for many it was their first since the start of the pandemic. Our guests were equally excited and impressed by the newly renovated spaces and are looking forward to sitting down in Copley Theatre to watch our *Bold Series* productions opening this spring.



Top Left Photo: Mark & Pam Truemper
Bottom Left Photo: Tom & Joyce Fisher
Right Photo: Alderwoman Scheketa Hart-Burns & William Burns

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING IN THE WORLD: RETURN OF LIVE PERFORMANCE AT PARAMOUNT

During the run of the show, over 60,000 patrons enjoyed “the amazing ensemble” of *Kinky Boots*, led by Michael Wordly as “Lola” and Devin DeSantis as “Charlie.” *Chicago Tribune’s* Chris Jones called the opening night of the production a



“**TRULY STUNNING BURST OF JOY AND VITALITY,**” and our audiences agreed, reflecting on their time watching *Kinky Boots* as “absolutely fabulous” and “unbelievable, remarkable.”



Left to Right: Jake Krippez, Jr., Ryan Krippez, Jake Krippez, III, and Joe Krippez pictured with a guitar signed by Los Lobos from a concert they sponsored at RiverEdge Park in 2019.

DONOR DIGEST

CREATING A LEGACY AT PARAMOUNT: KRIPPELZ FAMILY PROFILE



Chances are if you’ve been to a concert at RiverEdge Park in the past few summers or the holiday show at the Paramount, it’s safe to say you shared that night with one or more members of the Krippez family.

Jake’s Inc., located in the heart of Aurora on S. Lake St. just down the river from downtown, has been a loyal sponsor of Paramount for the past five plus years.

"The Krippez Family believes the arts promote true prosperity to our area and community — unifying us all."

Their commitment to the organization culminated in the spring of 2021 when they decided to affirm their support of the programming at RiverEdge Park and the Broadway Series with a multi-year pledge for the next three years.

With the philanthropic investments from Jake’s Inc. and the entire Krippez family, Paramount remains strong and poised to welcome back audiences to the Broadway Series and RiverEdge Park. Because of their service and leadership, the Aurora community will have access to high-quality, affordable arts and cultural experiences for years to come.

“As long time supporters, we are proud to be a part of the long-term growth plans Paramount Theatre and RiverEdge Park continue to have on the city of Aurora and surrounding communities.”



Earlier this month the Aurora Women’s Empowerment Foundation (AWEF) awarded Paramount a grant in support of two female-focused theatre programs starting in 2021 and 2022, with plans to continue funding the programs year after year.

The first of the two programs is Paramount Theatre’s Inception Project which provides staged readings of world-premiere theatrical works written by, produced, and/or performed by female artists, including those from the black, indigenous, and BIPOC community. The second program is the Paramount School of the Arts Theatre for Young Audiences touring show which will bring the play *Adelita* — a musical odyssey following a 17-year-old female folk hero of the Mexican Revolution — to local schools throughout Aurora for free.

Both programs will be accompanied by talkback discussions — facilitated by the artistic team — and focus on close examination of the play’s circumstances, characters, and themes. Talkbacks are designed to inspire thought-provoking conversations and spark meaningful action.

We are excited for the opportunity to bring more diverse and inclusive programming to our community and grateful to the AWEF for their generosity and partnership.



THANK-A-DONOR DAY

On Thursday, October 7, we celebrated our annual Thank-A-Donor Day! Our Paramount Family recorded a series of videos which were shared with our donors through email and social media to mark the occasion. Additionally, our development team called hundreds of donors throughout the day to thank them personally!



Courtesy of Joe Buglewicz

Did you know Paramount takes groups of donors to New York City for a fabulous Broadway weekend four times a year? This unique fundraiser for our Theatre is a perfect weekend getaway; ideal for theatre-lovers of any kind. After a brief break—due to the pandemic—the trips resumed in September. On the heels of Broadway’s reopening, Paramount development team members Jonathan Jensen, Jordan O’Hara Smith, and Will Skrip guided a small group of donors through a weekend of memory-making experiences.

It was a historic time to be seeing *The Lion King* and *Wicked* on Broadway, as performers, backstage crew, theatre staff, musicians and audiences alike had desperately awaited the return to in-person performances for over 18 months. The energy in the theatres was electrifying!

For a more intimate theatre experience, our group also saw Broadway veteran Amy Spanger perform her one-woman concert at Feinstein’s/54 Below — a beloved cabaret theatre tucked away in Manhattan’s theatre district. Fun fact: Spanger originated the role Sherry in *Rock of Ages* on Broadway — a show coming soon to Paramount’s very own stage during our Broadway Series in spring of 2022.

Arguably the most special aspect of the trip, our group dined with beloved Paramount alumni who now live and work in New York City. They may be performing on Broadway, but they all agreed there is no place like Paramount.



NYC Tour Group at Junior’s Restaurant in Times Square

Plans are already firming up for New York Trips in 2022 — new shows, new adventures and new memories await Paramount supporters in the Big Apple!

INTERESTED IN JOINING US?

Visit ParamountAurora.com/new-york-trips or email Will Skrip at wills@paramountarts.com. Reservations for September and October 2022 will open to existing donors first, starting mid-November. A perfect gift for the holidays!