

DEAR FRIENDS,

At the age of eight, I walked into Grand Rapids Civic Theatre's historic halls to audition for *The Wizard of Oz* and brightly sang "Consider Yourself" from *Oliver!*. That moment began my lifelong passion for the theatrical arts and the community found in this world.

Throughout my childhood and adolescence, I actively participated in at least a dozen shows at Civic Theatre and found my best friends who helped shape my personality with their smiles, goofy attitudes, and unending support which lasts to this day. Civic Theatre not only fueled my artistic passion, but it also held me to high academic standards as I was not allowed to participate in this love of mine unless I had completed my homework and stayed on track with grades.

As a teenager, I regularly volunteered as an intern in the education office during the school year and as a Theatre/Teaching Assistant throughout the summers. I was first inspired to work in special education due to my experiences with a variety of students who saw immense success on Civic Theatre's stage. My volunteer hours and experiences at Civic Theatre helped me obtain scholarships in college, as well as be hired as a professional teacher for summer camps.

THESE TEACHING EXPERIENCES AT CIVIC THEATRE ALLOW ME TO COMBINE MY PASSIONS FOR EDUCATION AND THEATRE, AND I CONTINUE TO SEARCH FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO DO THIS WITHIN MY DAILY LIFE.

As Civic Theatre's current Summer Camp and Low Sensory Night Coordinator, I am constantly finding ways to increase our diversity and inclusivity for all students and individuals in our community. Your support helps us reach these goals by assisting the thousands of students, staff, volunteers, and artists who rely on Civic Theatre for their creative outlets, friendships, and professional careers, as I have throughout my life.

Civic Theatre has a special community of individuals, and I am lucky enough to have met my spouse while teaching here. I truly cannot express the importance of the connections that are formed in the theatrical world, and Civic Theatre's presence in the community is particularly unique and wonderful.

Please help us continue these connections and create your own legacy by giving a financial gift today.


Jenna Betka-Pope



*Jenna Betka-Pope in the musical
Thoroughly Modern Millie (Female Ensemble)*

A MATCHING GIFT DOUBLES THE INSPIRATION

Thanks to the generosity of a loyal supporter of our theatre, a gift today goes further than ever. New and increased donations made now will be matched – dollar for dollar. Inspire lives through theatre arts by making a contribution today.



*Jenna Betka-Pope in the musical
Thoroughly Modern Millie (Female Ensemble)*