



**ANNUAL
REPORT**

**2024-
2025**



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WHO WE ARE

OUR VISION

To be an innovative and inclusive performing arts company that fosters personal and artistic excellence, elevates Calgary's cultural fabric, and drives personal growth in youth.

OUR MISSION

To develop lifelong skills in leadership, teamwork, perseverance, and self-confidence through high-quality performing arts instruction and experiences in a safe and supported environment, where young people are given the opportunity to grow, express themselves, and develop their potential through singing, dancing, acting, and performing.

OUR VALUES

Excellence

- We provide an environment where the freedom to strive, fail, try, and persist leads to the fulfillment of each singer's highest potential.
- We bring experienced and credentialed staff, a strong foundation of music education, and professional teaching standards to every classroom and program.

Inclusion

- We provide a place that offers a path to unlimited opportunities for growth as a performer to children and youth with any skill or experience level in singing.
- We believe that every voice is worthy and valuable, and we strive to create and maintain a culture of belonging, safety, and acceptance.

Performing

- We design performing opportunities that support children and youth to develop resilience, risk-taking, and confidence
- We value the process of creating, and prioritize the well-being and development of our learners as integral to this process.

Excellence
Inclusion
Performing
Community
Collaboration

Community

- We engage performers, families, volunteers, and staff to support each other respectfully in a shared sense of purpose and joy.
- We build leaders and engaged citizens who contribute to our city and beyond.

Collaboration

- By coming together and sharing our expertise with each other and the greater artistic community, we enrich our understanding, create as partners what we could not do alone, and expand the possibilities for artistic expression.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

The 2024-2025 season for the Youth Singers of Calgary marked the continued growth and transition for this incredible organization with over 500 singers participating in our programs across all of our divisions and programs, plus an additional 2500 students taking part in our School Residency Program.

A few highlights from this season:

- In Fall 2024 we expanded our School Residency Program where we take the YSC experience out to schools around Calgary. We completed nine of these with 2500 students taking part.
- We launched “Youth Singers School”, a pilot program inviting school groups into APAC for a one-week YSC experience through Campus Calgary / Open Minds. We hosted 4 one-week sessions.
- We expanded our collaboration with other organizations to increase the exposure of YSC in the community.
- This included hosting “A Concert Celebration” at the Bella Concert Hall, with 2 high school guest choirs and emcee Malcolm Edwards, joining Mini-Pops on the Calgary stop of their national tour, performing at 4 local elementary schools, and entertaining audiences at dozens of other public and corporate performances, including 15 different festivals and community events.
- The number of organizations regularly using APAC Continued to grow helping us fulfill the vision of the ATCO Performing Arts Centre being an Arts and Community Hub within the City of Calgary.



Spring 2025 marked the final stage of our transition for Shirley Penner, our much-loved Founder. With Ingrid Mosker starting as our Director of Development, Shirley stepped down as our Chief Development Officer. The YSC community is eternally grateful to Shirley Penner and her supportive husband Don MacLean for their vision, leadership, and endless energy in building YSC into what it has become; a premier performing arts organization that has made a profound difference in the lives of thousands of area youth over the past 40 years. Thank you Shir! <3

The 2024-2025 season also marked the third and final year of my term as Youth Singers of Calgary Board Chair. It has been a true honour to have been able to work in this capacity with our talented Board of Directors and the amazing staff and volunteers of this organization. Since our eldest daughter started in KIDS & MUSIC in the Fall of 2001, my wife, two daughters and I have been involved in various programs and volunteer opportunities across YSC. We look forward to new opportunities to stay active within the organization and continue to contribute to its success in the years to come.

Additional Thank-Yous

Thank you to Megan Thomson, Shane Simmons, and JP Hermano, whose terms have expired and will be leaving our Board. We thank them for their immense talents and dedication to YSC during their time on the Board. Thank you to all the Board members for their ongoing dedication, insight and leadership that they provide to our organization.

Finally, a special thank you to the Office and Artistic Staff who continue to go above and beyond to deliver an amazing program for all our participants. Your tireless efforts and dedication are truly appreciated.

ERNIE ABBOTT

CHAIR, YSC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The 2024–2025 season was a remarkable year of achievement and growth for Youth Singers of Calgary. Together, our vibrant community of staff, artistic leaders, volunteers, and performers created life-changing opportunities for children, youth, and adults through the power of music and performance.

This year also brought sadness with the passing of Don McLean. Don, husband of our Founder, Shirley Penner, was a steadfast supporter of Youth Singers. His encouragement and sharp business sense strengthened the organization from its earliest days. Don’s spirit will always be part of Youth Singers.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to everyone who makes Youth Singers strong. Our volunteers are the heartbeat of the organization bringing energy, creativity, and dedication to everything they do. From behind-the-scenes helpers to department managers, your commitment of time and talent ensures our success.

Our artistic and administrative staff deserve special recognition for their professionalism, collaboration, and care. The artistic team inspires excellence and joy in every rehearsal, while the lean administrative team ensures every program runs smoothly. Together, they embody the teamwork that makes Youth Singers thrive.

We also extend deep appreciation to our Board of Directors for their steady leadership and strategic vision, and finally to our supporters, sponsors, and donors for believing in our mission and fueling our creativity and growth. We would not be here without you!

As we look ahead, we do so with gratitude for our past and excitement for what's to come. The 2025–2026 season marks our 40th anniversary — a milestone celebration of creativity and community.



MEGAN EMMETT

CEO - YOUTH SINGERS OF CALGARY

MEMBERSHIP STATS

Division	Members	Returning Members
KIDS & MUSIC (PreK to Grade 2)	62	31
KIDAZZLE (Grade 3 / 4)	30	11
KIDZXPRESS (Grade 4-6)	47	36
JUNIOR HI (Grade 7-9)	55	41
SENIOR HI (Grade 10-12)	34	31
ACT3 (18-30)	22	12
STAR (Special Needs)	40	34
ONCUE/SHINE (Semi Professional Ensembles)	32	32
ADULT DIVISIONS (SECOND CHANTS/ENCORE/PHYSICIANS CHOIR)	40/34/21	35/33/15
SHOWBIZ KIDZ (Summer Camps)	98	21
Total Members	510	332

YSC STRATEGIC PLAN COMMITMENTS



Our People

YSC aims to value and maximize the skills of its board, staff, and volunteers. Key actions include formalizing HR policies, creating clear job descriptions, developing a volunteer engagement framework, implementing succession planning, and focusing on professional and personal development.

Our Programs

With the challenges of reduced registrations and diversity gaps, YSC plans to enhance program relevancy and reach. Initiatives include developing an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) plan, leveraging technology, creating inter-divisional learning opportunities, expanding the Residency Program, and exploring strategic partnerships.

Our Finances

To support program growth and facility maintenance, YSC focuses on diversifying revenue streams. This includes developing a comprehensive fund development program, engaging alumni in philanthropy, maximizing facility usage for revenue generation, and executing a long-term financial plan.

Our Profile

YSC aims to enhance its community profile and position itself as a leader in the choral industry. This involves developing a communications plan, establishing consistent messaging, increasing public awareness of its facilities, and strengthening community partnerships.

Our Operations

As YSC evolves, it will strengthen its operational foundation. Plans include adopting a governance model, developing a building plan for the APAC, implementing a program operations management system, conducting risk assessments, and enhancing IT systems.

MESSAGE FROM FOUNDER

What can I say as we are planning our 40th birthday celebrations?

No question, I experienced tough labour pains giving birth to this baby. With a partner like mine, we weathered the storms and enjoyed endless success and happiness for our youth, with the entire village ready to jump in and help. I'm so proud of the many levels of humans we serve.

Watching YSC grow into this great big, beautiful family gives me more fulfilment than anyone needs. The education and excellent artistic product are so strong, and how awesome that YSC was finally officially recognized as the professionals we have been for many years. This achievement will assist fund development for YSC's future growth.

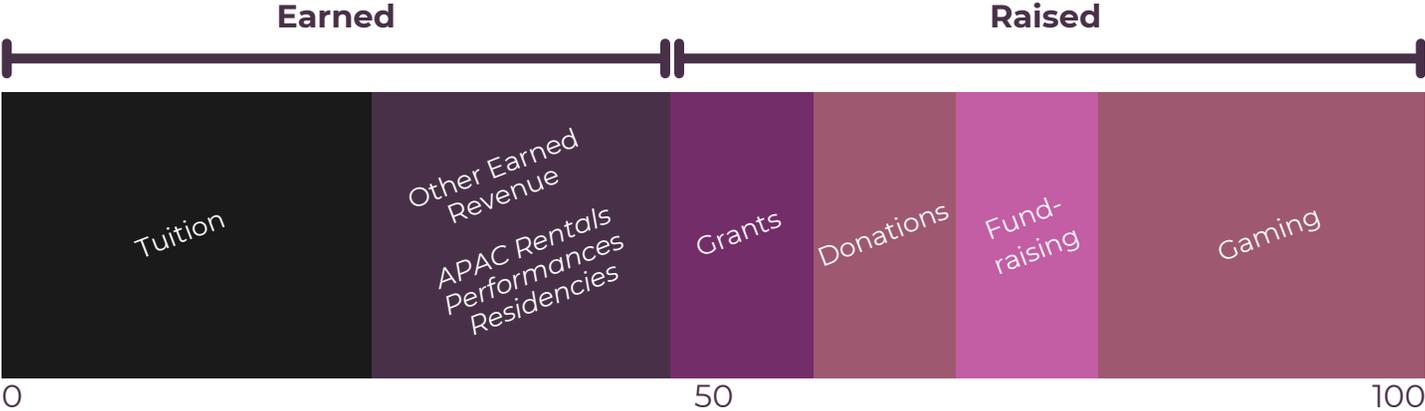


We have everything! We have performers of all ages, strong leadership, accomplished artistic staff, amazing volunteers, incredible teamwork at all levels, and a shared passion to accomplish our mission.

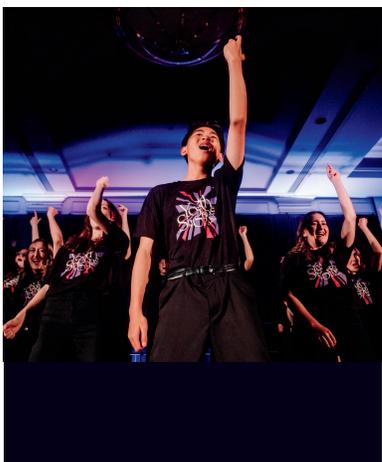
Our greatest challenge as we move into the future is to maintain what we have developed together and keep building financial support for the YSC organization. Megan, as CEO, together with Tricia, Artistic Director, and our numerous talented, experienced teams, will guide the organization towards continued and growing success. We are always prepared for change where needed, so we will continue to meet current needs. What a significant experience Don and I have had working with hundreds of our best friends on **Project 'Youth Singers of Calgary.'**

Thank you to each and every one of you for making a tremendous difference in our world!!

SHIRLEY PENNER
YSC FOUNDER



SEASON SNAPSHOTS



JUNIOR HI Tour to California

Awards:

- Show Choir - Superior Rating
- Concert Choir - Superior Rating
- Outstanding Soloist - Donovan Jones
- Esprit de Corps Award (for overall positive spirit, showmanship, and attitude)



JUNIOR HI performs as a guest artist with the Mini Pops!



Alumni and friends sing at the Christmas HUB

YSC teamed up with Radio Station C97.7 for the Pride Parade





SOLD OUT
Concert Celebration at the
Bella Concert Hall
featuring 4 YSC divisions
and 2 guest choirs



15
Original
arrangements



137
Performances Across All Ages,
Featuring Divisional Shows,
Summer Gigs, Festivals, School
Tours, Calgary Live, & More!



Residencies in 7 schools
across 9 weeks, reaching
over 2500 students.



KIDZXPRESS School Tours
4 schools. 2000+ kids entertained by
their peers!



Four music videos
produced, featured on
YSC's YouTube Page



ATCO PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE (APAC)

APAC Welcomes New and Returning Renters

The 2024-2025 season was an exciting one for APAC, with fifteen new organizations renting our facility. These included:

- Fencing competitions
- Spelling bees
- Performing arts groups
- Year end recitals
- Choral Associations
- Chess Tournaments

Several long-term performing groups continued to use APAC as their rehearsal space, and the building remained busy every weekend with rentals or division workshops.



Building Community Through Rentals

APAC's studios, practice rooms, and board rooms have not only generated income but have also created a strong sense of community. For Calgary's arts organizations needing affordable, high-quality spaces for their work, APAC offers a professional environment where:

- Creativity can flourish
- Connections are made
- The arts community can thrive

APAC provides a vital space for the performing arts to develop.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

GIVING PRELOVED APPAREL A SECOND ACT

Hand crafted with care, a team of volunteers transformed donated/unused fabric and 75 YSC choir robes (from the 1960's!) into limited edition tote bags, saving the fabric from the landfill and giving it another life.

This initiative was made possible through the City of Calgary Circular Economy Grant.



MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

A Year That Left Us SONGSTRUCK!

Thanks to our extraordinary Artistic Team, our tireless volunteers, and our brilliantly talented singers, this past year was nothing short of magical. Together, we embarked on a creative journey that explored the power of music—the songs that shape our memories, stir our emotions, and soundtrack the story of our lives.

Our first semester was filled with festive cheer as we planned, prepared, and performed our December mainstage show, Santa's Holiday SLEIGHLIST. This heartwarming production invited us into the musical world of beloved Christmas characters, each sharing their favorite songs of the season. Through their stories, we reflected on how music evokes joy, nostalgia, and the warmth of togetherness—reminding us that the right song can feel like coming home.

Our yearlong theme, SONGSTRUCK, and the title of our Spring Show, captured the essence of music's emotional power. We explored the songs that mark milestones, lift spirits, and heal hearts. Through the eyes of a classful of curious students, we searched for the true meaning of a song—and discovered that music is not just something we hear, but something we feel, carry, and share.

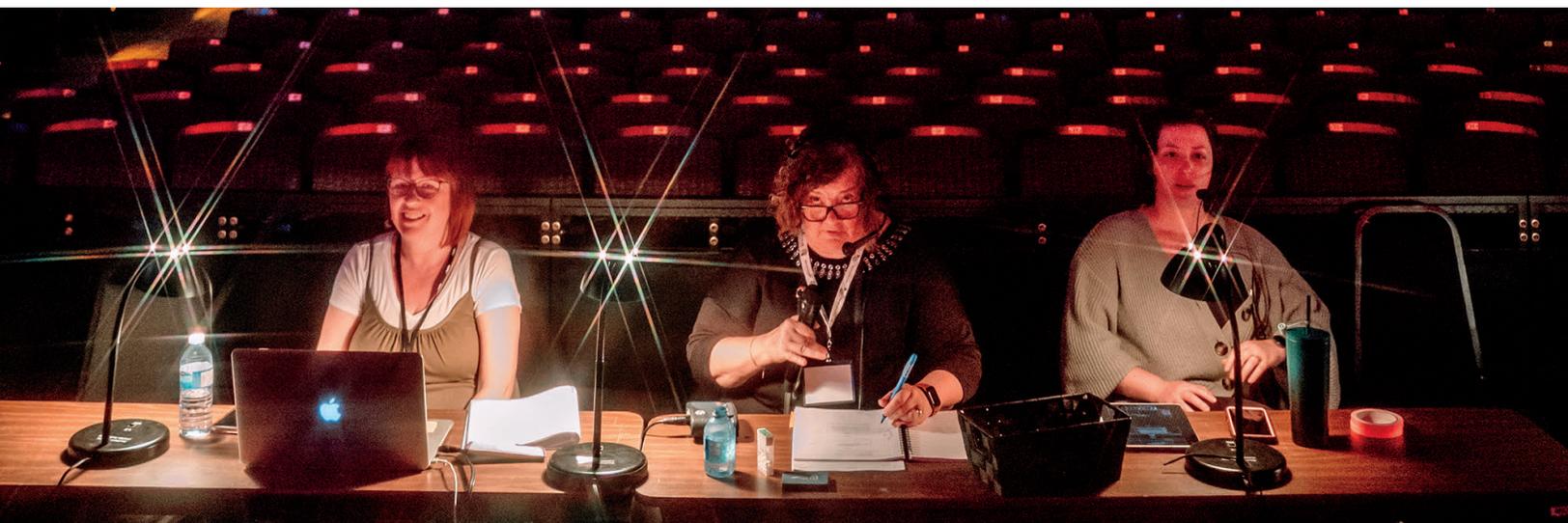
Our very first SINGTHING kicked off the year with energy and intention, laying a strong foundation for learning and connection. A riveting Choral Celebration at the Bella showcased the depth and diversity of our voices. The Junior Hi California Tour was a life-changing adventure, filled with unforgettable performances and personal growth. And we were beyond proud to stage Kathryn Parrotta's "Beyond the Horizon", commissioned for our company's 40th season.

We continue to dream big and create boldly—developing original arrangements, choreography, themes, and scripts that ignite the imagination of our young artists. Our production team works hand-in-hand with our Artistic Team to ensure every singer experiences meaningful, relevant, and transformative artistic opportunities through the Youth Singer program.

This year, we didn't just sing—we soared. We were SONGSTRUCK, and we can't wait to see where the music takes us next!

TRICIA PENNER

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



HEARTS OUT GALA - APRIL 12TH, 2025



HEARTS OUT 2025 was a tremendous success!

Emcees Kate Stevens and Parker Tsang delighted the audience with their lively banter, heartfelt stories, and wonderful repartee.

Kate Stevens is a vivacious RnB singer/songwriter based in Calgary, Alberta. She was the 2020 recipient of the YYCMusic Awards Solo Artist of the Year AND RnB Artist of the year.

Parker Tsang is a SENIOR HI singer who has been with Youth Singers since grade 4!



Heartwarming Performances

SENIOR HI, SHINE, and ONCUE performed throughout the evening, and Sehran Aheer received a standing ovation for his keynote address.

Volunteers

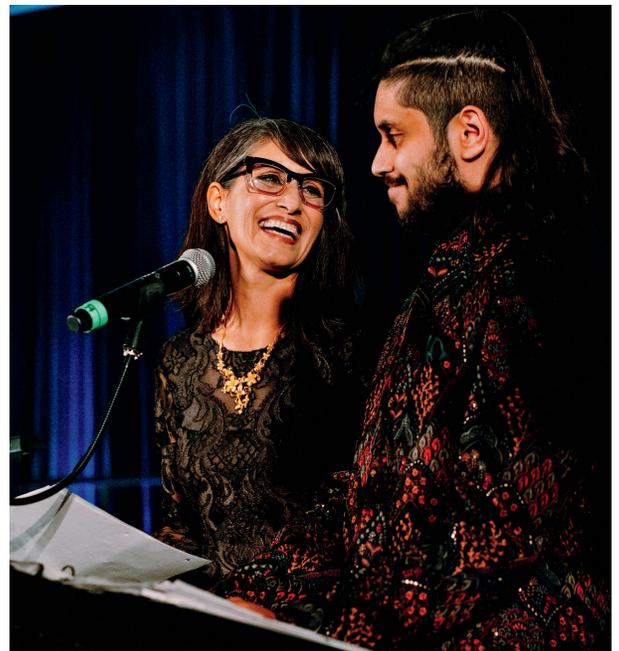
HEARTS OUT would not have been possible without the help of our incredible volunteers.

Special Thank You

To our wonderful honorary chairs, Leela Aheer and Sehran Aheer.

A Night to Remember

As the night came to a close, guests danced the night away and went home with fabulous prizes and goodie bags, reusable knot backs handcrafted by YSC volunteers, filled with sweet treats and surprises. We are thrilled to announce that we raised over \$130,000!



YOUTH SINGERS' SCHOOL

Empower Young Leaders. Build Strong Communities.

Campus Calgary/Open Minds (CC/OM)* is an award-winning, dynamic learning experience that takes children out of the classroom and into the community, for a week of hands-on learning with subject matter experts.

This year, thanks to the support of an anonymous family foundation, Youth Singers of Calgary partnered with CC/OM in a pilot project towards becoming their newest community site: Youth Singers School at the ATCO Performing Arts Centre!

During our 4 weeks of pilot programming:

- 90 students performed after 5 days at YSS
- 40-50 parent volunteers came over the course of the program
- 5 teachers, 100 students, and nearly 200 family members came to one of the 4 culminating performances at APAC.
- 53 people attended the Youth Singers of Calgary Spring performance at the Jubilee Auditorium, thanks to their exposure via Youth Singers School

The pilot was a success!

Rich, hands-on exploration of curriculum-linked themes, including:

- Sound and light
- Musical instruments and costumes
- Emotions and storytelling
- Collaboration and cultural connections

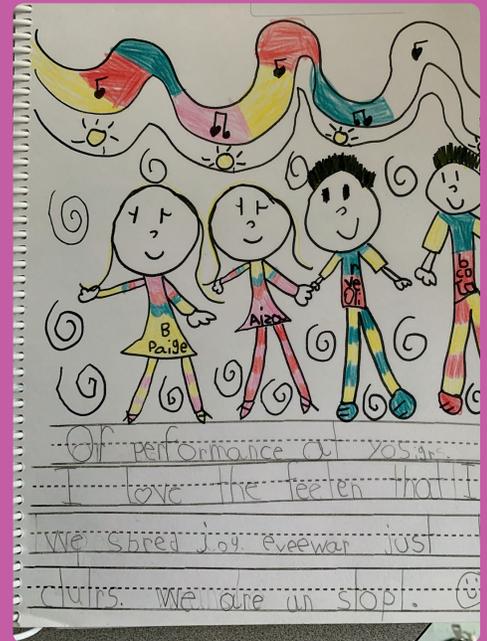
Four outstanding final performances showcased the culmination of each class's five-day experience at Youth Singers School. All performances were recorded and shared with teachers for distribution to families.

Overwhelmingly positive feedback from teachers and school administrators that praised student engagement and educational value, and inspired meaningful, long term shifts in instructional practice.

Valuable insights gained through monthly professional development sessions.

Increased exposure and collaboration through networking with other Campus Calgary sites.

Excellent evaluation received from the Campus Calgary/Open Minds operations team that affirmed the quality and impact of the program.



*"I love the feeling that I had.
We shared joy everywhere
just like colours. We are
unstoppable"*

- Grade One pilot class,
Douglasdale Elementary
January 2025



ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

CEO
MEGAN EMMETT

Director of Development
INGRID MOSKER

Operations & Facility
JOCELYN SMITH
CAROLE TSANG
BRYAN CLARKE*
KEITH HEILMAN*

Finance Administration
CHRIS HENDERSON-MCDADE

Marketing & Communications
KAELA CARON
CHRIS THOMPSON*

Founder & CDO
SHIRLEY PENNER

Production & Technical
BRIANNA RUDOLFSSEN
COLIN LOWE
DESIRI JONES*

Youth Singers School Coordinator
TARA LIMA-COELHO

Fund Development & Circular Economy
JANICE SCHNEIDER*
KRISTIN MILLER*

Alumni Engagement
LOIS MAFRICA*

*part time

ARTISTIC STAFF

Artistic Director
TRICIA PENNER

Principal Choreographer
DONALD JONES

CREATIVE TEAM
CHRIS THOMPSON
JOCELYN JONES

Lead Creator
KATHERINE BURROWES, ILLFX

Theatre Arts Director
CONRAD BELAU
EMILY DALLAS, ASSOCIATE

Choral & Vocal Directors
JASON ERHARDT
DEANNA HENDERSON-MCDADE
MALCOLM EDWARDS
DAVE MORTON
JUDIT SZANTO
KATHY SEIBEL
DEAN LAUDERDALE
JEN MORTON

Resident Choreographers
JESSICA ECKSTADT
LISA RYAN
LAUREN THOMPSON
KIRSTEN WILLIAMS
JULIE THIESSEN
BREYA HARDY

Principal Director
KATHRYN PARROTTA

Assistant Directors
MADISON MCNEES
LLOYD ANDERSON

Assistant Choreographers & Coaches
SERENA MAZIL
JENHENE MORGAN
NATHAN SNYDERS-BLOK
DESIRI JONES

Collaborative Pianists
KATHY SEIBEL
CLAIRE BUTLER
BRENT KRAWCHUK

STAR Assistants
PAULA BRASH
DEXTER JOHNSTON

Arrangers and Sequencers
KATHRYN PARROTTA
KRISTIAN ALEXANDROV
JOE SLABE
REID MCLEAN WIEST

Sound Designer and Technical Director
JOHN HILDEBRAND

Lighting Designer
KRIS MISH

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Vice Chair

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STEVEN WEIMER

VOLUNTEER STAFF MANAGEMENT TEAM

New Family Liaison: KELSEY WHITAKER

KIDZXPRESS President: FRANCIS GALLIOTT

KIDZXPRESS Volunteer Coordinator: KIM WATKINSON

JUNIOR HI President: HEATHER LAUBENSTEIN

JUNIOR HI Volunteer Coordinator: KAREN PORTERFIELD

SENIOR HI President: TAMARA SAMPSON

SENIOR HI Volunteer Coordinator: KIM BERCSENYI

ACT3 President: KATHERINE SAMPSON

SECOND CHANTS President: BETTY POWERS

ENCORE President: JORDAN MARRA

Heritage & Archives Manager: AICEE HAGEL

Bingo Captain (Grey Eagle): MARGE RUSNAK

Bingo Co-Captain (Bingo Barn): TRACEY ABBOTT

Casino Chair: JENNIFER PETERS

Raffle Chair: MEGAN THOMSON

Hospitality Manager: TAI HOANG

Music Library Manager: JAN RUSNAK

Set Design Manager: HEATH KAI

Wardrobe Manager: ALANA LUCIER

Props Co-Managers: KRISTIN MILLER, GILLIAN WEBBER

Wardrobe Support: VAUGHAN LILLICO

Logistics Manager: JOHN WANG

Facility and Shop Support: LORNE LILLICO

Hearts Out Honourary Chairs: LEELA AHEER, SEHRAN AHEER

Sponsorship & Ticket Sales Chair: LAURA HAMBLEY LOVETT

Gala Event Planning Chair: LISA GRAY

Auction & Prizes Chair: STACEY SCHAUB-SZABO

Volunteer Chair: DANICA STROCEN

Marketing Chair: KENDRA NEMETH

PR and Sponsorship Support: SIERRA BEAULIEU



THANK YOU TO OUR MAJOR SUPPORTERS

