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Greetings,

I’m delighted to share our 2023-2025 Strategic Plan for Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts! This plan is the result of a thorough process that included extensive stakeholder outreach, quantitative and qualitative research, and a more progressive, forward-thinking plan for the arts industry.

Over the past few months, we have worked with Social Architects LLC to help us define our challenges and goals to share with our stakeholders. Through a Wagon Wheel organizational survey, interviews, and multiple listening sessions, we’ve come away excited to see Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts continue to lead the growth of Warsaw’s Arts and Culture Tourism economy.

We have crafted this plan to improve and augment the great programs you appreciate at Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts, while expanding and adding new areas of focus such as diversity, donor relations and education. Over the coming months, you’ll continue to see details emerge about how we are implementing this plan, and we’ll share updates as the work progresses. We are ready to be bold, try new things, and, above all, think differently.

Thank you—we’ll see you soon!

With gratitude,

Lakesha Green
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Greetings,

It is my pleasure to present Wagon Wheel Center for the Art’s 2023-2025 Strategic Plan. This Strategic Plan is the result of a nine-month effort involving dozens of patrons, donors, staff, community partners, nonprofit consultants, and the Board of Directors. I believe this plan complements and builds upon our rich history and legacy. The honest and bold feedback from those we serve reinforces the key tenets of our mission; to provide performing arts experiences that create community unity, educational opportunity, and economic growth.

We know the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been especially hard on the Arts. The pandemic taught us to be agile, responsive, creative, and innovative and we have applied these lessons to chart our course for the next three years. Woven throughout this plan is a commitment to nurturing and investing in life-changing, quality, live theatre, music, and arts programming. The resulting document positions us for increased relevance and impact in a rapidly changing world. To that end, as we embark on this transformative journey, we ask for your patience as we are unwavering in our commitment to doing it right.

The reimaged Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts will be a premier “learn, create and do space”. A living venue where our theatrical productions are the hub and the many forms of art are the spokes: Wagon Wheel Junior, Wagon Wheel Symphony of the Lakes, Wagon Wheel Conservatory, Wagon Wheel Professional Theatre, Wagon Wheel Community Theatre, and Wagon Wheel Concert Series. This creates a Wheel, gaining momentum as we focus on enhancing our community culturally, educationally, and economically.

I’d like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to Social Architect, LLC, and everyone who helped craft the plan by offering their time, resources, and insight.

With gratitude,

Emily Illingworth Kosnik
BOARD PRESIDENT
Board of Directors

LEGACY STATEMENTS FROM THE BOARD

EMILY ILLINGWORTH KOSNIK
GENERAL MANAGER & MINORITY OWNER
TOYOTA OF WARSAW
“I want my legacy of service at WWCA to be built upon giving talented and experienced artists and musicians a place to continue serving and inspiring the citizens of Northern Indiana. I firmly believe that generations to come will thank us for nurturing and investing in life changing, quality, live theatre, and arts programming.”

ADAM TURNER
MANAGING ATTORNEY
TURNER VALENTINE, LLC
“I want my legacy of service at WWCA to be built upon recognizing WWCA as a place where creative education occurs for all ages and all experience levels.”

KRISTIN MASON
CORPORATE CONTROLLER
PARAGON MEDICAL
“I want my legacy of service at WWCA to be built upon developing strong financial stability to ensure that our community can continue to enjoy the performing and educational benefits of the Wagon Wheel for many years to come.”

APRIL FITTERLING
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
WARSAW COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
“I want my legacy of service at WWCA to be built upon giving back the financial responsibility and facility maintenance that needs support and the opportunity to grow and thrive for years to come.”
Board of Directors

CREATING A LEGACY

SHAWN BROWN
PUBLISHER OF LAKE CITY LIVING
BEST VERSION MEDIA

“As a Wagon Wheel Board member, I strive to use my gifts of influence, charisma, and serial optimism in the community to cultivate interest in seeing the continued success of the Wagon Wheel for years to come.”

ALYSSA LOWE
CO PASTOR
HOME CHURCH

“My legacy of service at WWCA will be to have assisted in advancing the mission of WWCA in every way possible. My passion lies in providing high quality educational opportunities and acting experiences to youth and in doing this they will develop important life skills such as confidence and self-esteem, as well as positively impact their mental wellbeing.”

TERRY WHITE
RETIRED
GRACE COLLEGE & SEMINARY

“I would like to see Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts providing local leadership in musical/theatrical/arts programming of high quality and providing community arts leadership that other communities will want to use in modeling their cooperative arts programs. A compelling component of this will be providing arts training and internship opportunities for upcoming generations of music and theatrical performers.”
Board of Directors

CREATING A LEGACY

CARY SCHLOTTERBACK
RETIRED
ZALE PHARMACY

“I want my legacy of service at WWCA to be built upon giving the creatives of Warsaw a place where their creativity not only survives but thrives.”

MELISSA JORDAN
OFFICE MANAGER
LEGACY FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC

“I want my legacy of service at WWCA to be built upon fostering an appreciation for the arts and strengthening our outreach in the community.”
# INTRODUCTION

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts (WWCA) strategic plan covers fiscal years 2023 through 2025. The plan was spearheaded by newly appointed WWCA executive director, Lakesha Green with support from the WWCA executive board. The plan was conducted over the course of a nine-month period that included the identification of an experienced professional nonprofit capacity-building firm, securing capacity-building grants, organizational research, and discovery, and identification of strategic priorities and tactics for implementation. The purpose of this plan is to ensure the long-term health and vitality of the WWCA as the organization heads toward another 60+ years of operations. The area identified as strategic goals were selected as critical areas of focus to shift the organization toward a more stable footing, post the worldwide Coronavirus Pandemic of 2020.

# OUR HISTORY

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Wagon Wheel Playhouse’s first summer season. The Wagon Wheel Playhouse was owned and operated by Major Herbert Petrie and his wife Mildred. The theatre was held under a large canvas tent. Folding canvas chairs made up the 600+ seating. The property included two old chicken coops that had been converted into a scene shop and costume shop and dressing rooms. The orchestra consisted of Vernon Rector playing the Hammond organ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Major Petrie retired and sold the theatre and adjoining property to a group of Warsaw businessmen: Loren Miller, Larry Castaldi, Gay Robinson, Charles Berstch, Blaine Mikesell, and Bob Steele.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>A new partnership comprised of Tom Roland, Bill Whitney (the husband of popular Wagon Wheel actress Ann Whitney), Dave Wilkinson, Mike Hall, and Bruce Shaffner purchased the theatre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Roland, Whitney, Wilkinson, and Hall were all preparing for retirement and looking to sell the theatre property. The partners made a deal with Shaffner, who became the sole owner of the Wagon Wheel.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>The Wagon Wheel formalized as Wagon Wheel Theatre, Inc. and became a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, led by Board President, John E. Hand (owner of Hand Industries).</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>December - Wagon Wheel purchases the theatre and adjacent property at 2517 E Center Street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>More than 66 years later, audiences continue raving about the unique and intimate theatre-in-the-round setting.</td>
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INTRODUCTION

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts is to provide performing arts experiences that create community unity, educational opportunity, and economic growth.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to preserve our legacy and create sustainable, affordable programs by becoming the region’s premier location for professional theatre, arts education, and community involvement.
INTRODUCTION

CORE VALUES STATEMENT

Our Core Organizational Values document is aspirational. We ask everyone at the Wagon Wheel – whether your time here is measured in hours, weeks, or decades – to embrace these principles. It’s how we get our best work done. We are striving to diversify our staff of artists, technicians, and professionals dedicated to creating vibrant performing arts. We are theatre arts reimagined, for current and future artistic leaders, and the first exposure for students to enjoy the magic of the performing arts.

ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

We collaborate to create an atmosphere that empowers artists to do their finest work. Our rigorous standards reflect our commitment to excellence in every area of production.

COMMUNICATION

We aspire to work as a team within and between departments. We respect our co-workers’ time and resources by striving to meet deadlines.

COMMUNITY

We collaborate to create an atmosphere that empowers artists to do their finest work. Our rigorous standards reflect our commitment to excellence in every area of production.

DIVERSITY

We are committed to an environment that fosters inclusion and reflects our community. We respect varied backgrounds and life experiences. We attract under-represented talent and hire professionals from all across the country.

EDUCATION

We are proud of our deep ties to the local community, and our programs serving schools that reach over 3000 students each year. We pride ourselves in the continued professional development of the Board and staff members.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

We honor our audience, donors, and Board by being responsible with our finances, while also being environmentally responsible as we create beautiful high-quality performing arts with elegance and continued sustainability.

RESPECT

All great work is nurtured in an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect. Harmonious and collaborative rehearsal rooms, production shops, and office spaces are our priority. We value physical safety and a supportive and fun work environment.
ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In late 2021 WWCA was able to secure a pro bono organizational assessment through the nonprofit capacity building and consulting firm Social Architect, LLC. The assessment was conducted with the board and staff leadership teams. Through a focus group style interview process, several key areas of organizational capacity were examined. The areas examined include organizational planning, organizational structure, leadership, fundraising, finance and accountability, communication, and evaluation. See Appendix 1-WWCA Organizational Assessment Report, FY.21.22

SWOT (STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS) ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis is a framework for identifying and analyzing an organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. These words make up the SWOT acronym. The primary goal of SWOT analysis is to increase awareness of the factors that go into making a business decision or establishing a business strategy.

PROJECT PHASES

PHASE 1-RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

Key Elements: Board and Staff Surveys, Site Visit, Organizational Document, and Process Review Summary: Board staff and key volunteers responded to surveys along with an extensive review of organizational historical documents. During the initial site visit processes and systems were examined to ascertain the organization’s strengths and areas of weakness.

PHASE 2-DETERMINE DIRECTION

Key Elements: Collection of survey results, Focus Groups, Review, and analysis of staff and volunteer interviews Summary: During this phase survey data collected underwent an extensive analysis to identify rising themes and key focus areas identified by both board, staff, and volunteers.

PHASE 3-GOAL & STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Key Elements: 2-day Nonprofit Capacity Building Strategic Planning Retreat, 2-day Arts-based NPO Staff Program Development, and Team Building Workshops, Grant Writing and Program Development workshop, Identification of strategic priorities

PHASE 4-PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION

Key Elements: Formulation of Strategic Goals and S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reasonable and Time-Bound), Identification of Goal Leaders
OUR PLAN

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Nonprofit Capacity and Infrastructure Building.
Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts seeks to strengthen its long-term sustainability and organizational capacity in the areas of nonprofit infrastructure, management and governance, and staff capacity.

S.M.A.R.T OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1.1
WWCA will review and revise the organization's current by-laws to be better suited to industry standard nonprofit by-laws by March 31, 2023.

OBJECTIVE 1.2
WWCA will develop and implement a formal new board member onboarding and training program by the end January 31, 2023.

OBJECTIVE 1.3
WWCA will develop and approve a comprehensive Employee Policies and Procedures manual reviewed by a human resource professional by the end of February 28, 2023.

OBJECTIVE 1.4
WWCA will develop and adopt a Communication and Media Relations Policy to govern all mass communications throughout program operations by the end of the Fiscal Year 2023. Draft to board of directors by June 30, 2023.
OUR PLAN

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Nonprofit Capacity and Infrastructure Building

The Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts seeks to strengthen its long-term sustainability and organizational capacity in the areas of nonprofit infrastructure, management and governance, and staff capacity.

S.M.A.R.T OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1.5

WWCA will reevaluate and redesign its current programs to increase collaboration and communication among program staff and better community-based service offerings based on industry-specific high-quality arts-based programming guidelines by the end of June 30, 2023.

OBJECTIVE 1.6

WWCA will establish board and staff education, training, and professional development opportunities to be conducted annually by September 30, 2023.
OUR PLAN

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Financial Accountability and Security
Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts seeks to increase its financial accountability and security by focusing on the areas of improving financial policies, budgeting, and diversification of its funding portfolio.

S.M.A.R.T OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 2.1

WWCA will review, revise, and adopt its Financial Policies and Procedures by March 31, 2023

OBJECTIVE 2.2

WWCA will recruit at least one board member or volunteer with a high level of expertise in the field of investment and money management to assess and make recommendations concerning the organization’s long-term financial health needs, creation of endowment and emergency reserve fund by the end of December 31, 2023.

OBJECTIVE 2.3

WWCA will assemble a capital campaign committee to conduct a capital campaign feasibility study and develop a written capital campaign plan by the end of December 31, 2025.

OBJECTIVE 2.4

WWCA will develop and train staff on the creation program level budget submissions and usage policies by the end of the June 30, 2023.
OUR PLAN

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Financial Accountability and Security
The Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts seeks to increase its financial accountability and security by focusing on the areas of improving financial policies, budgeting, and diversification of its funding portfolio.

S.M.A.R.T OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 2.5

WWCA will develop an annual fundraising plan that aligns with the organization’s annual operating budget and approved program budget needs by the end of the September 30, 2023.

OBJECTIVE 2.6

WWCA will identify a building environment consultant to assess current WWCA facilities and equipment assets and develop/adopt a facilities management plan to include all buildings, offices, computer systems, and equipment by June 30, 2024.

OBJECTIVE 2.7

WWCA will develop and implement a Grants Administration and Management policy and procedures manual along with a grant-seeking calendar by the end of the June 30, 2024.
OUR PLAN

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Arts Education and Training

Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts seeks to increase its capacity to provide formal and informal arts-based education and training in the community through the development of high-quality curriculum-based programs, and increased collaboration with local education systems across all of its current program disciplines.

S.M.A.R.T OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 3.1

WWCA will develop and design a high-quality curriculum-based arts education and training program aligned with industry-standard outcomes and teaching methods by December 31, 2023.

OBJECTIVE 3.2

WWCA will establish written memoranda of agreement with local education system partners that benefit and support the organization and the local school systems in the effort to provide increased access to school-age children and youth by the end of the September 30, 2024.

OBJECTIVE 3.3

WWCA will develop education and training programs for people in all stages of life including adults through a community charrette and/or survey process by the end of December 31, 2024.
OUR PLAN

STRATEGIC GOAL 4
Marketing, Communication, and Community Outreach
Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts seeks to strengthen its marketing, communications, and community outreach efforts both internally and externally in the areas of policy development, communications planning/execution, and planned community outreach.

S.M.A.R.T OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 4.1
WWCA will develop and design a marketing and communications plan in line with the agency’s newly developed media relations policy by the end of September 30, 2023.

OBJECTIVE 4.2
WWCA will plan and execute an annual community outreach plan targeting both prospective donors and program participants by the end of the September 30, 2023.
OUR PLAN

STRATEGIC GOAL 5

Partnership and Community Place-Making
Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts seeks to develop formal community partnerships aimed at building upon the organization’s reputation in addition to reimagining WWCA as a premier community, “learn, create, do space” similar to that of the makerspace movement.

S.M.A.R.T OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 5.1

WWCA will research and identify at least 10 new community partnerships beneficial to both the WWCA and its potential partners by the end the March 31, 2025.

OBJECTIVE 5.2

WWCA will develop and execute a standard memorandum of agreement/understanding format to engage community partners in helping the organizations meet its mission through shared resources by the end of the March 31, 2025.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts Board and Executive Leadership team would like to thank the staff and numerous volunteers that helped to support the development of the organization's FY.23.25 strategic plan. We would also like to thank the following funders for providing fundraising and capacity-building grant support for this project as well as the following organizations for hosting our board and staff for our strategic plan retreat.

FUNDER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kosciusko County Community Foundation

Arts United

BOARD & STAFF RETREAT THANKS

Camp Alexander Mack