

A SOARING VISION



2023 Capital Campaign

OUR COMMUNITY'S THEATRE

Our community stands out with its long-held renown for forward thinking. Arts Campus Fort Wayne is emerging as the regional epicenter for arts and cultural engagement. It's bold, welcoming, and distinctly ours, helping our region achieve national recognition as a hotspot for talent, creativity, and innovation across all industries.

Since its opening day in 1973, the Arts United Center has been a local venue for theatrical and musical performances, civic and community gatherings, festivals, and classes. But what makes this mid-century modern building in the heart of Downtown Fort Wayne unique is its role as a community theatre.

A community theatre cultivates experiences by, for, and in the community. It provides opportunities for residents to engage in arts and cultural experiences as performers, patrons, or volunteers. A community theatre is a welcoming space for artistic collaboration, created by local talent, for people of all abilities and backgrounds. Here, the neighbor child performs their debut acting role in the local

Here, organizations like **Fort Wayne Youtheatre** offer theatre arts classes like acting, improvisation, and stagecraft to youth from throughout Northeast Indiana, taught by local technical and performing artists. **Fort Wayne Civic Theatre** performances feature community members onstage and behind the scenes, building set pieces and designing costumes. Annual traditions like *The Nutcracker* by **Fort Wayne Ballet** bring families together in the audience, as performers, and backstage—with parents assisting young dancers and managing set props.

Our community's theatre is more than a shared space. The Arts United Center sparks creativity, establishes lifelong connections, and fosters a sense of belonging—all built by and for people who live and work in our community.



production of *Our Town*. Here, your coworker volunteers to usher patrons to their seats for *Hello, Dolly*. Here, grandparents attend their grandchild's first ballet recital.

The Arts United Center is *our* community's theatre.



With your help, we will expand and modernize the Arts United Center to ensure that this community theatre is well equipped to serve the next generation.

THE ORIGIN OF A BOLD IDEA

THE EVOLUTION OF ARTS CAMPUS FORT WAYNE

Arts United
was founded

1955

1961
Arts United hired
Louis I. Kahn to
design a multi-venue
cultural complex

1959

Arts United
studied the needs
of arts and culture
nonprofits

1972

Freimann
Square Park

*Operated by Fort Wayne
Parks & Recreation*

*Opened as downtown
greenspace*

1973

Arts United Center

Designed by Louis I. Kahn

*Community theatre with a 660-seat
auditorium, performance studios,
scene shop, and gathering areas as
flagship to cultural district*

*Owned and operated by Arts United,
home to Fort Wayne Civic Theatre*

1980

The History Center

*Listed on the National Register
of Historic Places (1973)*

*Renovated as headquarters
for the Allen County-Fort
Wayne Historical Society (1980)*

*Renovated historic Barr Street
Market (1988)*

Fort Wayne
Museum of Art

*Designed by Walter Netsch
of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill*

*Owned and managed by
Fort Wayne Museum of Art
Expanded in 2007*

1984

1989

Renaissance Campaign

*Arts United led the Renaissance
Campaign to support
immediate capital needs of
the Arts United Center, History
Center, Embassy Theatre,
and more, and to establish a
permanent endowment for
facility maintenance*



In 1961, Arts United (then known as the Fine Arts Foundation) embarked on an ambitious vision to revitalize downtown Fort Wayne by building a multi-venue cultural district modeled after Lincoln Center in New York City—and they hired world-renowned architect Louis I. Kahn to design it.

The Arts United Center was completed in 1973. This Community Theatre is the flagship of Arts Campus Fort Wayne and stands as an architectural crown jewel—the only Kahn commission in the Midwest, and the only performing arts theatre designed by Kahn in the world.

It was also the only building realized out of Kahn’s original vision of nine structures. But since then, the district has grown to include seven buildings, a public park, and an outdoor market.

“These organizations of the arts, when they come together to be a single center – does it mean that something new is born?... I realized that it does, simply by their being together rather than apart.”

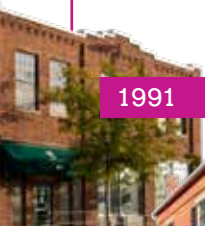
Louis I. Kahn

Hall Community Arts Center

Purchased and donated to Arts United by the Foellinger Foundation (1990)

Renovated and dedicated in memory of William and Sarah Niezer Hall (1992)

Home to Cinema Center and Fort Wayne Dance Collective



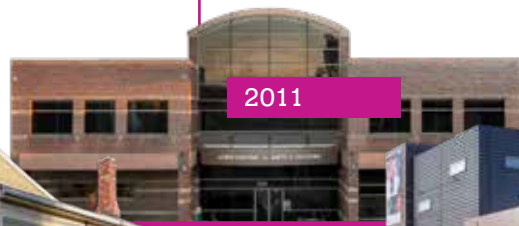
1991

Auer Center for Arts & Culture

Purchased and renovated by Arts United (2010)

Named in honor of a major gift from the Edward D. and Lone Auer Foundation

Home to Artlink, Fort Wayne Ballet, FAME, Fort Wayne Trails, Arts United, and beginning in 2023, Fort Wayne Youtheatre



2011

Arts Campus Fort Wayne

Established a formal name and brand for the cultural district



2018

2024-2026
Expansion and
Modernization
of the Arts
United Center



2010

Alexander T. Rankin House

Historic home of Alexander Rankin, abolitionist minister (1840)

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places (2004)

Owned by ARCH



2014

Parkview Physicians Group ArtsLab

Versatile Black Box Theatre (150–220 seats)

Named in honor of a major gift from Parkview Physicians Group

2021

Indiana State Cultural District

Fort Wayne Common Council formally designated Arts Campus Fort Wayne as a local cultural district

Indiana Arts Commission formally designated Arts Campus Fort Wayne as one of 12 cultural districts in the Hoosier state



A SOARING VISION

The Arts United Center is the flagship building of Arts Campus Fort Wayne. It's a space for auditions, rehearsals, scene building, costume making, and gathering as a community. It complements other spaces that host national traveling productions as a venue that serves the residents of Northeast Indiana.

The audience usually knows who is on stage at the Arts United Center. A grandparent may see a grandchild here for a dance recital, or a friend may be acting in the ensemble of a musical production. This convergence of community makes connections to arts and cultural experiences deeper.

At 660 seats, this theatre is optimal to sell out local and regional shows. While many regional facilities can house more patrons for national roadhouse shows, the spaces do not provide the intimacy necessary for these performances or cost effectiveness to the organizations. The Arts United Center supports the creative economy by acting in that role.



Fort Wayne Youtheatre



Audiences Unlimited



Fort Wayne Ballet



Fort Wayne Civic Theatre



Fort Wayne Philharmonic



Dance schools like SheeKriStyle Academy of Dance Arts



Cultural programming like Amaneceres de Mexico



Taste of the Arts Festival

TOGETHER WITH OUR COMMUNITY, WE WILL ACHIEVE:

1

Expansion and modernization of
an iconic, internationally known
community venue

A place to celebrate local talent

2

Accessibility so that people of all
abilities can perform, participate,
work, and volunteer

Where everyone belongs

3

Collective impact on Northeast
Indiana's advancement

Energizing regional growth through the arts



With your help, we will advance Arts Campus Fort Wayne by expanding and modernizing the Arts United Center.

1

FULLY ACCESSIBLE

Constructed prior to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Arts United Center will meet and exceed expectations for accessibility so people of all ages and abilities can fully participate—as audience members, performers, backstage crew, volunteers, and employees.

The **Community Arts Center Lobby** with a passenger elevator, family restroom, and security check-in will transform the use of two multi-purpose performance studios on the second floor.

An accessible entry and connectivity corridor create a safe space for pick up and drop off for youth participants and people with limited mobility.

Venue-wide **theatrical technology** such as automated stage rigging, specialty lighting and audio equipment for accessibility, and additional audiovisual capabilities will enhance the theatre experience for all.

A **service elevator** will be positioned near the loading dock on the east, improving access to all levels of the theatre.

2

FULLY FUNCTIONAL

The Arts United Center is uniquely designed as a community theatre, providing well-equipped spaces for local theatre, dance, and musical productions.

An acoustical shell for orchestra and musical performance will enhance the quality of productions and increase the use of the stage for multiple art forms.

Administrative space for the Fort Wayne Civic Theatre creates more room for set design and construction, as well as professional office spaces for Civic staff.

The **Community Scene Shop** offers additional space for more community members to create sets and props for productions, resulting in increased availability of the stage for other performing arts organizations.

Modernized HVAC, lighting, networking, and security systems will provide much-needed improvements to operational performance and safety enhancements.

Updated guest amenities include expanded women's restrooms, dedicated concessions and merchandise areas, and updated auditorium seating.



3

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Designed by world-famous architect Louis I. Kahn, the Arts United Center is an iconic, nationally significant architectural landmark. It is Kahn's only commission in the midwest and only performing arts theatre in the world.

Preservation of Kahn's mid-century design elements in this 50-year-old building will ensure that the use of bricks, concrete, natural wood, wagon wheel lighting fixtures, and natural light are preserved and celebrated.

New building additions will be located in the rear, preserving the original structure in the front, resulting in minimal change to the iconic characteristics of Kahn's design.

CONNECTIVITY

Dinner and a show is a cliché for a reason. When patrons come downtown, they park once and enjoy nearby parks, trails, restaurants, farmers markets, and shopping.

Enhancements to the adjacent parking lot will support patrons of the Arts United Center and the Fort Wayne Museum of Art—all without losing coveted spots.

Arts Campus Fort Wayne will join the Urban Trail with an enhanced pedestrian walkway between the Arts United Center and Freimann Square.

More indoor/outdoor events that animate the park will be supported by the design of the new Family Arts Center Lobby and pedestrian pathway.

As the Arts United Center celebrates its 50th season, your investment will ensure that this community venue is equipped to serve the next generation.





A COMMUNITY THEATRE FOR EVERYONE

Connecting Performers and Audiences of All Ages and Abilities

Through the extensive modernization of the Arts United Center and newly created access to rehearsal and workshop spaces, Arts United will broaden its reach and deepen its impact through its current programming while also engaging new performing groups and audiences.

Fort Wayne Civic Theatre is Northeast Indiana's largest civic theatre company, the second largest community theatre in Indiana and one of the oldest in the nation, serving over 29,000 people annually. Fort Wayne Civic Theatre's **In The Wings** program serves approximately 4,000 at-risk and economically disadvantaged youth and families, and senior citizens on fixed incomes. **Project Lights Up!** provides free dedicated performances for approximately 2,500 individuals on the autism spectrum or with other sensory sensitivities, as well as their families. The live theatre experience is, for many of these people, an unfamiliar art form—one which has the potential to spark creativity, produce lasting impressions, and reap many benefits in their lives.

Fort Wayne Ballet, Indiana's leading professional ballet company, serves over 35,000 people each year. Fort Wayne Ballet presents 30 free community performances and over 4,300 arts educational classes and workshops annually. **Fort Wayne Ballet provides scholarships/assistance for tuition and free outreach performances to nine Title One schools** through Fort Wayne Community Schools. Through a grant from Arts United and in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club, Fort Wayne Ballet is initiating a program to **engage low income fourth and fifth graders who cannot afford to enroll in traditional ballet training.**

Arts Campus Fort Wayne currently provides **free access to arts and cultural activities to 137,000 people on the Arts United Center Plaza and adjacent Freimann Square Park.** Activities include Taste of the Arts, Downtown Improvement District's Lunch on the Square, Fort Wayne Museum of Art's Chalk Walk, Three Rivers Festival, Fort4Fitness's Spring Cycle, local performances, and more.

Arts United is committed to serving the full community. Arts Campus Fort Wayne venues—Arts United Center and Parkview Physicians Group ArtsLab—are community venues. To ensure these venues are accessible to everyone, especially underserved members of our community, Arts United will initiate the **Community Venue Grant Program** to provide these spaces at free or reduced costs for programs that serve people with disabilities, low-income individuals, and people of color.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

2021

Allen County Together Plan

In Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.'s economic development plan, advancing the Arts Campus and supporting its long-term sustainability is listed as a prioritized initiative to support the development of an innovative community.

2021

Growing with Vision: Northeast Indiana READI Proposal

In the "Growing With Vision" regional development plan presented by the Northeast Indiana Regional Development Authority, the Arts Campus was highlighted as a key objective for downtown vibrancy.

2020

Vision to Vibrant

In Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.'s 2020 Legislative Agenda, the Arts Campus is listed as a 2020 Legislative Priority supporting goals for quality of place and economic development.

2018

Public Realm Action Plan

Facilitated by the Downtown Improvement District, the Public Realm Action Plan presents the "Canvas at Freimann Square" as a pilot concept to create an interactive outdoor art park, inspiring a sense of curiosity and play for kids and families. Public Realm considers quality of place indicators such as walkability, bike-ability, street activation, and urban beautification, and takes into account the factors that impact where people like to spend their time in their city.

2016

Downtown Blueprint

The City of Fort Wayne's downtown strategy lists Arts United's efforts to renovate and expand the arts campus and strengthen its connection to nearby residential and retail activity zones at The Landing and Riverfront.

2015

Road to One Million

This plan was formed for the successful application to the state's Regional Cities Initiative, through which Northeast Indiana formed the Regional Development Authority and received \$42 million to incentivize over \$255 million in projects in its first year. The expansion of Arts Campus Fort Wayne was listed as a long-term project at that time.

2015

Platform for Cultural Advancement

Arts United led a cultural visioning process with input from 2,300 people. The vision was established to become a national destination by advancing arts, culture, and quality of life. A major priority of this vision was supporting a strong, integrated downtown as the cultural and creative centerpiece of the region.

2006

Plan-It Allen!

The comprehensive plan for the City of Fort Wayne and Allen County, which pre-dates Arts United's acquisition of the Auer Center (2011) and branding of Arts Campus Fort Wayne (2016-18) lists the development of the community's cultural facilities under the umbrella of Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne as a strategic objective.

Audience Growth = Economic Growth

The average attendee spends \$31.47 per person, per event (not including the cost of admission) on restaurants, lodging, retail, transportation, or childcare—discretionary spending that stays local.

Allen County Business Survey, 2020, Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.

79% of businesses said that arts and culture has a strong impact on their ability to attract and retain talent.

Allen County Business Survey, 2020, Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.

90% of businesses indicated that downtown Fort Wayne's revitalization has a strong impact on talent attraction and retention—the #1 community attribute cited by businesses—and the strength and diversity of arts and culture has contributed mightily to the success of downtown.

Allen County Business Survey, 2020, Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.

As a midsize metropolitan area in the heart of the Midwest, residents in Fort Wayne have access to the amenities one would expect to find in a large metropolis, like excellent entertainment options and a thriving arts scene.

US News & World Report, Best Places to Live

Downtown Fort Wayne is the heart of our city—and a vibrant one at that! Stroll down tree-lined streets to explore a growing Arts Campus, hop on our 8-miles of riverfront trails and enjoy Promenade Park, or spend the day exploring some of our favorite family-friendly attractions.

Joe Martens, 2022, "This Town in Indiana Has Been Ranked as One of the Best Places to Live in the United States"



With your help, we will advance Arts Campus Fort Wayne by expanding and modernizing the Arts United Center.

Help Arts United reach the finish line of the A Soaring Vision capital campaign.

From now until December 31, 2023, your gift will be DOUBLED by the AWS Foundation (up to a total of \$1 million).

As the Arts United Center celebrates its 50th season, your investment will ensure that this community theatre is equipped to serve the next generation.

The AWS Foundation is pleased to issue a \$1 million matching challenge to support the future of the Arts United Center as a fully accessible gathering place—a theatre where people of all ages and abilities can engage in the performing arts together.



Patti Hays
President and CEO,
AWS Foundation



Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne is a nonprofit local arts agency that serves the Northeast Indiana community through arts advocacy and promotion, fundraising, grantmaking, business services support, and community and economic development. Arts Campus Fort Wayne is convened by Arts United.



Leadership

A SOARING VISION COMMITTEE

Dave Haist, Chair *Retired, Do it Best*
Ben Eisbart *Retired, Steel Dynamics, Inc.*
David Storey *Parkview Health*
Jeanne Mirro *Community Volunteer*
John Rogers *The Rogers Company*
Madelane Elston *Community Volunteer*
Melissa Schenkel *STAR Financial Bank*
Nancy Stewart *Community Volunteer*
Pamela Kelly, M.D. *Community Volunteer*

PUBLIC FUNDING TASK FORCE

Jon Bomberger, Co-Chair *Faegre Drinker*
John Stafford, Co-Chair *Retired, PFW Community Research Institute*
Carolyn Bean *Arts United*
Dan Ross *Arts United*
Dave Haist *Retired, Do it Best*
David Storey *Parkview Health*
John Rogers *The Rogers Company*

ADVISORY CABINET

Chuck Surack *Surack Foundation*
Jim Marcuccilli *STAR Financial Bank*
Mark Hagerman *Hagerman, Inc.*
Mike Packnett *Parkview Health*
Scott & Melissa Glaze *Fort Wayne Metals*

ART LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

*Board Leaders of Arts Organizations,
Coordinated by Jeanne Mirro and Carolyn Bean*

Beth Walker *ARCH*
Carol Lindquist *Fort Wayne Philharmonic*
Carta Robinson *Unity Performing Arts Foundation*
Cathy Christoff *Fort Wayne Cinema Center*
Jared Baker *Fort Wayne Dance Collective*
Jenny King *Audiences Unlimited*
Justin Molitoris *Fort Wayne Civic Theatre*
Melisa McCann *Fort Wayne Ballet*