An Engaged Performing Arts Center

The mission of Wharton Center is to enrich the lives of Michigan residents and strengthen the value of the arts in everyday life by serving as a leading resource for renowned arts entertainment and education programs.

Wharton Center accomplishes its mission by:

- Serving as an industry leader and advocating to help bolster the cultural and economic vitality of the community and the state
- Presenting a diverse selection of performing arts and experiences with world-renowned artists and newly commissioned works
- Providing meaningful, participatory lifelong learning programs both at Wharton Center and throughout the state for audiences of all ages
- Striving to ensure that the diversity of our community is reflected on its stage and in its audience
- Advancing the arts by presenting Michigan’s finest arts organizations
- Maintaining exceptional service and state-of-the-art facilities
- Managing the organization with fiscal responsibility

Over 25 Years of Arts, Education, and Community Support

Wharton Center for Performing Arts is a leading resource for arts entertainment and education programs in Michigan. At its core, Wharton Center is more than a space to entertain; it is a place to educate, engage, and inspire.

The majority of the Center’s funding is derived from corporate sponsorships, private donations, ticket revenues, and rental income, with less than 3% of its operating budget from Michigan State University. In an average year, Wharton Center is supported by nearly 75 corporate sponsors, 2,500 private donors, and more than 350 individual volunteers.

Recently, the Michigan State University Federal Credit Union announced a $2.5 million gift to Wharton Center to fund a new Institute for Arts & Creativity and continue its support of the Broadway series. The new institute will provide participatory learning programs at Wharton Center and throughout the state for audiences of all ages. It will umbrella existing education programs including the Act One School and Family Series, Jazz Kats: Jazz For Kids, Young Playwrights Festival, and additional new programs.

Education and Outreach Programs

The primary goal of Wharton Center’s education and outreach programs is to connect people of all ages to the performing arts by offering a range of programs suited to a variety of learner needs, with the hope that they will find for themselves that participation in the arts enriches, enhances, and broadens one’s life.

Performance Outreach
- Seats 4 Kids
- Student Ticketing Program

Arts Educational Outreach
- Act One: Family and School Series
- Act One: Wharton Center Docents
- Jazz Kats: Jazz for Kids
- Young Playwrights Festival
- Master Classes
- Artist Residencies
- Kennedy Center Partners in Education
- Preview Lectures
- Evening College

Community Engagement
- Advisory Council
- Inner Circle
- Speakers Bureau
- Cultural Engagement Council
- Community Advisory Panels
- Community Events

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Examples of Wharton Center Outreach

Artists-in-Residence

Residencies provide unique opportunities to integrate teaching artists into the academic and community experience. During a multi-day stay on campus and in the community, an artist-in-residence shares expertise and insights on creativity during close interaction with youth and lifelong learners.

Artists-in-residence programs often include lecture demonstrations on campus and in the community, master classes, career development discussions, and opportunities for one-on-one and group mentoring. Most programs strive to integrate the creative process into all areas of study and interest, not just the arts.

Artists-in-residence for the 2008-2009 season are jazz legend Wynton Marsalis, Latin band Tiempo Libre, jazz vocalist Sophie Milman, and the return of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival of Canada.

MSU partners
College of Arts and Letters; College of Education; College of Music; Honors College; James Madison College; and Residential College in the Arts and Humanities

Community partners
Michigan high schools

Funded by
Accident Fund Insurance Company of America; MSU Federal Credit Union; Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs; National Endowment for the Arts; ACSUS Fund for the Arts, with the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs Canada; and MSU partners

Seats 4 Kids

Seats 4 Kids is a scholarship fund to provide free tickets to local youth who could not otherwise afford to attend a performing arts event. Contributions from generous individuals allow Wharton Center to provide tickets to economically disadvantaged children through local community service organizations and Title 1 schools that have been pre-approved based on their ability to distribute scholarship tickets to qualified kids.

Tickets are purchased for public performances using the lowest possible price, which is typically $25 for Broadway and $15 for non-Broadway. Seats 4 Kids funds are not used to purchase tickets to Arts In Education programs such as Act One and Jazz Kats: Jazz For Kids.

MSU partners
MSU Family Resource Center

Community partners
Lansing School District; Cristo Rey Community Center; Black Child and Family Institute; Boys and Girls Club of Lansing; Allen Neighborhood Center; El Shabazz Academy; Eagle Visions Ministries, Inc.; and Students of Promise

Funded by
Donations from generous individuals and businesses; MSU Alumni Club of Mid-Michigan

Artists-in-Residence

Kennedy Center Partners In Education

Professional Development Series
The Professional Development Series of the Kennedy Center’s Partners in Education program is a collaboration among Wharton Center, Ingham County Intermediate School District, and the Kennedy Center. It is designed to enhance teachers’ ability to teach and through the arts. The program covers such topics as cultivating creativity through art, drama as a classroom management strategy, and engaging kinesthetic learners in the curriculum.

Community partners
Ingham Intermediate School District; Kennedy Center Partners in Education

Funded by
Ingham Intermediate School District; Kennedy Center for Performing Arts; and Wharton Center for Performing Arts

More information available online at: whartoncenter.com/education/kcpie.aspx

More information available online at:
whartoncenter.com/support/seats4kids.aspx

To view a comprehensive list of our education and outreach programs, please visit whartoncenter.com/education.