



Ms. Sandy Shaughnessy, Director
Division of Cultural Affairs
Florida Department of State
R.A. Gray Building, Third Floor
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Ms. Shaughnessy,

I am writing you today in regards to Florida Studio Theatre and their application to the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs for the 2019-2020 General Programing Support grant. In order to continue elevating art while serving the Sarasota community, FST is in great need of support from the State of Florida.

Florida Studio Theatre serves as one of the major cultural resources in Sarasota with a 5 theatre campus serving over 215,000 attendees annually. FST makes a strong effort to make their theatre accessible to all, creates opportunity, enhances access to arts and culture, and exhibits a high level of impact through its six major programs.

FST's Mainstage furthers best practices in the field by presenting the best in contemporary theatre; Stage III represents a new approach to introducing audiences to edgy, challenging theatre; Cabaret draws in new audiences with its musical reviews, social/political satire, and Improv; New Play Development identifies top-caliber plays that are largely unexplored and untested but speak to a broad audience; Education offers theatre classes for children and adults, including those who are financially disadvantaged or have special needs; and Children's Theatre provides a full season of family-friendly performances in addition to the award-winning WRITE A PLAY Program that inspires an average of 47,000 K-12 students each year.

It is vital for FST to maintain funding sources in order to continue to thrive and serve the Sarasota community. In closing, I respectfully ask that you consider FST's grant proposal for the 2019-2020 season. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jim Shirley
Executive Director

20 May, 2018

Ms. Sandy Shaughnessy, Director
Division of Cultural Affairs
Florida Department of State
R.A. Gray Building, Third Floor
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Ms. Shaughnessy,

I am writing this letter to share with you my admiration and gratitude for the Children's Theater Program at the Florida Studio Theater in Sarasota. Both of my sons have grown enormously through the program, and their participation would not have been possible without the generous scholarship program offered by FST.

We moved to Florida from Oakland, CA two and a half years ago under a great deal of emotional and financial duress. Our last couple of years in CA were extraordinarily difficult, and while many of the social and emotional stressors improved dramatically when we moved to Sarasota, the financial hardship worsened and only now is beginning to abate. My aunt has been involved with FST for many years (30? 35?) and directed me toward their summer camp.

For my younger son (now 11), my praises of FST may be what you hear from other supporters: he had a ton of fun, went from being the new kid in town with no friends to having a little crew, tried new activities and stretched himself, adored the staff, and felt safe asking to try tasks that excited him even if they were not the norm. The staff completely worked with him on this, and he got to experiment with tech work instead of acting. Regarding my older son (now 12), however, I am at a loss to effectively explain what a blessing the camp and the after school program have been. Elijah is a complicated boy; he can be very moody and shy and, given his SLD (specific learning disabilities) in reading and writing, often does not fit with his peers. He has a difficult time making friends and being a part of groups. Not at FST. Not only does he like the activities (improv, acting, dancing, team building) and many of the other students, his life has been profoundly positively affected by the way the AMAZING staff engages with him. They assist with the basics like helping him write pieces and choosing pieces for him that are within his skill level, but they also give him the message again and again that he is perfect just the way he is. They take the time to talk to him, hear his worries and his excitements, and encourage him to take risks without ever making demands. This has been like therapy for my careful child! He has transitioned from being a boy who sat backstage crying and utterly refused to do the final recital his first summer to blossoming into a performer who starts practicing his lines from the moment he comes home with them and loves to write his own pieces. This lonely guy has also made two beloved friends through FST who have brought a lot of joy into our lives. I am planning to send both boys for two of the three sessions this summer, making it their third summer with FST.

It is completely accurate to say that this experience would not have been available to my sons without the very generous scholarship FST offers. While the program costs at FST are actually quite reasonable, their father and I have been worried about paying for food and never could have sent them without the scholarship support.

I know my family is not alone both in struggling financially and in wanting to offer exceptionally high quality growth and development opportunities for our children in the arts (and otherwise). My aunt likes to say that the programs at FST are about helping the youth connect to and accept themselves. They are not just learning about being actors but also about life skills: listening while others are speaking, collaboratively building on ideas, constructing and executing a project as a group member, and cooperation. I agree. Supporting FST with a grant helps offer all of this to students who would not otherwise be able to access this level of resources and fun. FST has made my sons better people, and (if I may say it) that makes a better Florida.

I hope you support the Florida Studio Theater!

All my best,

Jennifer Lieberman

JenLiebermanMFT@gmail.com

(941) 315-6808



Charles F. Williams

CHIEF JUDGE

TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA

2002 RINGLING BLVD.

SARASOTA, FLORIDA 34237

TELEPHONE: (941) 861-7942

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LFudge@jud12.flcourts.org

Ms. Sandy Shaughnessy, Director
Division of Cultural Affairs
Florida Department of State
R.A. Gray Building, 3rd Floor
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Monday, May 21, 2018

RE: State General Programming Grant 2019-2020 Season

Dear Ms. Shaughnessy,

I have been asked to write a letter of support of Florida Studio Theatre's application to the Division of Cultural Affairs for funding through the 2018-2019 Season.

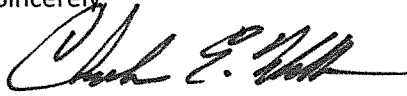
I have worked extensively over the past year with Florida Studio Theatre related to several initiatives I am involved with. I am a founding member of the Sarasota County Bar Association's Diversity Committee. Florida Studio Theatre and I share the same vision as it relates to diversity and inclusion. We both feel that the arts provide an outstanding platform to expose people, young and old, to these ideas.

This past year I have participated or assisted in forums and audience talk-back related to the plays **Native Gardens**, **How to Use a Knife**, **The Things They Carried**, and **Honor Killing**. Involved in all of these performances was student participation from local high schools and the New College of Florida, the Honors College of Florida, located here in Sarasota. Florida Studio Theatre has been proactive in securing the attendance of many people in the community who would not ordinarily be able to attend the theatre by having events such as "Pay What You Can Night" and student sponsored performances. No other theatre in this area does this in the way FST does in ensuring that the people who really need to see these plays do so.

We have gone out to schools with representatives from FST to discuss the plays and the social impact of the subject matter of the plays. This along with the regular dialogue we have with the audience during the talk-backs have made the Sarasota community a much more enlightened place and a more diverse and welcoming destination for all people.

Florida Studio Theatre has made this community a much better place through these programs and its outreach. I highly recommend they receive this grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles E. Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charles" being more prominent.

Charles E. Williams

Chief Judge

12th Judicial Court



Florida House of Representatives
Representative Jim Boyd
Commerce Chair
District 71

May 25, 2018

DISTRICT OFFICE:

717 Manatee Ave West
Suite 100
Bradenton, FL 34205
(941) 708-4968
Fax: (941) 708-4970

CAPITOL OFFICE:

418 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850) 717-5071

COMMITTEES:

Commerce Committee
(Chair)

Appropriations
Committee

Rules and Policy
Committee

DISTRICT STAFF:

Albie Kaminsky
Legislative Aide

Ms. Sandy Shaughnessy, Director
Division of Cultural Affairs
Florida Department of State
R.A. Gray Building, 3rd Floor
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

RE: General Support Grant

Dear Ms. Shaughnessy,


Please accept this letter in support of Florida Studio Theatre's application for the Division of Cultural Affairs General Programming Support Grant. I am pleased that Florida Studio Theatre is pursuing this funding and thank you for your consideration of their application.

Through its six major programs, FST serves over 215,000 attendees per year, including many in my congressional district. I am confident that they will use this grant funding to further their mission point "to make theatre accessible and affordable to as many people as possible." FST succeeds in providing programming for a variety of different tastes, including Broadway and Off-Broadway plays, new and regionally produced works, and socially significant productions. I am especially impressed with FST's efforts to expose Florida's children to art through the WRITE A PLAY Program which impacts over 47,000 students each year.

I strongly recommend Florida Studio Theatre as a recipient of a General Program Support Grant from the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs.

Thank you again for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,


Jim Boyd
State Representative
District 71



THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

COMMITTEES:

Judiciary, *Chair*
Banking and Insurance, *Vice Chair*
Agriculture
Appropriations Subcommittee on Finance and Tax
Appropriations Subcommittee on Pre-K - 12 Education
Children, Families, and Elder Affairs
Regulated Industries

JOINT COMMITTEE:

Joint Committee on Public Counsel Oversight

SENATOR GREG STEUBE

23rd District

May 15, 2018

Ms. Sandy Shaughnessy, Director
Division of Cultural Affairs
Florida Department of State
R.A. Gray Building, 3rd Floor
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Re: General Program Support Grant for The Florida Studio Theatre

Dear Director Shaughnessy,

I would like to recommend the Florida Studio Theatre for a *General Program Support Grant* from the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs. The Florida Studio Theatre has been integral to the cultural development of Sarasota since their inception in 1973. Their productions touch the heart of many and their community outreach continues to develop. I look forward to watching the Florida Studio Theatre grow for another 45 years with the support of patrons, our local art alliance and the State of Florida.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Very respectfully yours,

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read "Greg Steube", is written over a circular blue stamp.

W. Gregory Steube, Dis't 23

REPLY TO:

- ☐ 6230 University Parkway, Suite 202, Sarasota, Florida 34240 (941) 342-9162
- ☐ 326 Senate Office Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5023

Senate's Website: www.flsenate.gov

JOE NEGRON
President of the Senate

ANITERE FLORES
President Pro Tempore



The Florida House of Representatives

Representative Joe Gruters

District 73

May 15, 2018

Ms. Sandy Shaughnessy, Director
Division of Cultural Affairs
Florida Department of State
R.A. Gray Building, 3rd Floor
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Re: General Program Support Grant

Dear Ms. Shaughnessy,

I am pleased to recommend Florida Studio Theatre as a recipient of the General Program Support Grant from the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs

Florida Studio Theatre has been integral to the cultural development of Sarasota. They have a commitment to producing high quality art and offering a wealth of opportunities in education and play development. Their educational programs have been a significant resource in nurturing creativity in thousands of adults and children annually.

In addition to their artistic achievements, Florida Studio Theatre has maintained low prices for tickets to their shows, making their art accessible to all those who seek the theatrical experience. These high-quality experiences attract over 215,000 patrons to the theatre each year, bringing culture, diversity, and economic development to the downtown Sarasota area.

Accordingly, I support Florida Studio Theatre as a recipient of a General Program Support Grant from the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Gruters". The signature is stylized with a cursive script.

Joe Gruters

District Address

381 Interstate Boulevard
Sarasota, Florida 34240-8686
(941) 378-6309

Tallahassee Address

1101 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300
(850) 717-5073