



# NEWSLETTER

## Alex Haunty's Theater & Arts Fund, Inc.

August 2017

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

[www.alexhauntystheaterandartsfund.org](http://www.alexhauntystheaterandartsfund.org)

## The Lion King Captures Our Hearts!

**Thank you everyone for your support in making our year of 2016 a big success!!**

Our premier theater experience of 2016 was taking over 150 individuals with disabilities, along with their mentors, to see *The Lion King* at the Overture Center for the Arts. I'm not sure what captivated our audience the most. The music? The story? Seeing the animal characters such as the elephants, the lions and the gazelles come to life? Perhaps it was the vivid colors and dramatic stage creations? Most certainly the story gripped everyone in their heart and had us both laughing and moved to tears. But the highlights continued after the show because one of the dancers from *The Lion King*, who performed a number



*We took Art Working artists, Cutting-Edge students, Middleton High School Transition classes, and individuals from the organization LOV-Dane on three different evenings. What an experience for all!!*

of the animals, coordinated a group of performers to come visit with our young adults after each show.

Talking with the cast after the show, we learned the story of one individual with autism who came to see the show in New York. He was nonverbal for years after

the loss of his father, but started to become verbal again after experiencing the show! The cast shared how the story they bring to life each night is changing lives at so many levels. A highlight for all

*story continues on back side*



*The cast stayed late answering questions and encouraging us.*

### PARTNER WITH US

#### To Give People With Disabilities The Opportunity to Shine!

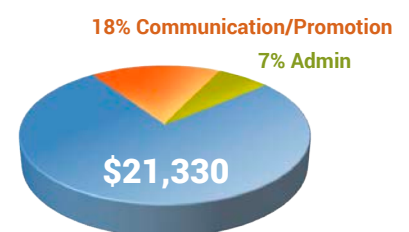
Donate to Alex Haunty's Theater and Arts Fund Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. To learn more about how you can be involved giving special arts experiences to people with disabilities, visit our website at: [www.alexhauntystheaterandartsfund.org](http://www.alexhauntystheaterandartsfund.org)

#### REVENUE 2016



87% Private Donors & Foundation Gifts

#### EXPENSES 2016



75% Theater and Event Expenses

\* \$8,724 starting balance carried over for ticket purchases going into the Overture 2016/2017 season.

Alex Haunty's Theater and Arts Fund, Inc. (AHTAFI) is a nonprofit organization making a difference by helping create access to the arts for people with disabilities and giving them the opportunity to shine. AHTAFI provides special experiences of premier Broadway shows, and is moving to develop workshops and performance opportunities in art, music and theater.



## *The Lion King Captures Our Hearts!* continued

was meeting Mufasa who was first to greet us each night in his face makeup and though we told him how much he inspired us, he shared how our group inspired him. We met young Simba, young Nala, Timon and Pumba who shared how he was about to do his 5000th show!!

We also connected with the Associate Conductor for the Broadway touring production of *The Lion King*, Jamie Schmidt, who is from Madison, WI and also has a daughter with Down Syndrome (DS). Jamie not only came out to meet our entire group one evening as part of a talk back, but he also invited a small group of our



*Alex got a few pointers from actor, Gerald Ramsey, who played Mufasa in The Lion King.*

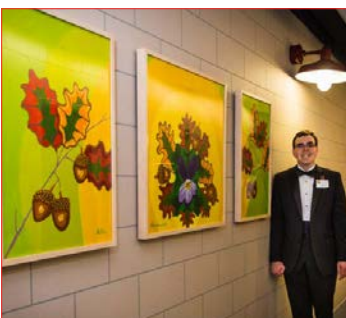
individuals with DS, from the Cutting-Edge program at Edgewood College, along with their professor, Dedra

Hafner, to tour the backstage of *The Lion King*. What a privilege!! They got to see the costumes and the sets and how all the magic happens behind the stage.

The individual attention the cast gave to our guests made an indelible impression on all of us, and seeing *The Lion King* with these groups, re-energized our awareness of what possibilities can open up through experiencing theater for those with intellectual and physical disabilities. Both a music teacher and a high school educator commented, "Now I understand why you are bringing people with disabilities to engage in the Broadway theater experience."

## RODGERS + HAMMERSTEIN'S *CINDERELLA* "The prince is giving a ball!!"

Realizing that while we were waiting for Phantom to come in January 2017, *Cinderella* was coming to the Overture Center, we just had to stretch for one more show to round out our season. "How could our young adults miss this opportunity?" So in October of 2016, AHTAFI took 56 people from both the MHS Transition program and LOV- Dane to see *Cinderella*. We used the "ball" idea to host our first theater reception coupled with the show for our guests at the Overture in the promenade room. Our desire was to create a place for our young adults to feel celebrated and have additional support in enjoying the show. The party was enjoyed by all and added to the depth and learning of the theater experience. It was unanimously decided to add this feature to all of our events in the future if possible.



## *Paintings of Love to Bring Hope and Healing*

Alex was commissioned in 2015 by UW Hospital and Clinics and American Family Children's Hospital to paint six large pieces. He chose to paint a series of flowers, expressing his heart for others to feel loved, be encouraged, be healed and to have hope.

In October of 2016, AFCH generously hosted a reception in his honor to celebrate the unveiling of these pieces. We are grateful for their heart to not only recognize him as an artist, but also to support Alex Haunty's Theater and Arts Fund Inc., through purchasing his art and giving him a significant launch into creating access to the arts for individuals with disabilities and giving them opportunities to shine. Learn more at [www.alexhauntystheaterandartsfund.org](http://www.alexhauntystheaterandartsfund.org).

**Coming in 2017:** Alex Haunty's Theater and Arts Fund Inc., receives recognition when Alex Haunty is honored with the NBC 15 Making a Difference Award.