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# 2025

annual report



Oklahoma  
Children's  
Theatre

INSPIRING IMAGINATION  
SINCE 1986



# highlights

**Oklahoma Children's Theatre**  
INSPIRING IMAGINATION  
SINCE 1986

Oklahoma Children's Theatre (OCT) provides extraordinary live theatre and interactive educational experiences for young audiences. For nearly 40 years, OCT has inspired young people to imagine their potential, strengthen family connections, and invest in the future of our communities.

While our primary focus is serving children in grades K–12, our impact extends far beyond. From employing local artists to adapting programs for audiences with sensory sensitivities, OCT creates inclusive experiences for children and adults alike.



Our work is built around three core pillars:  
**Performances, On-Site Education, and Outreach.**



**Performances** include our mainstage productions, Young Company shows, and—coming in 2026—*Theatre for the Very Young*, designed specifically for infants, toddlers, and their families.



**On-Site Education** includes our after-school classes and camps, where creativity and confidence thrive. These programs teach theatre and life skills to children from pre-school to 16.



**Outreach** encompasses our touring productions and the reimagined *Page to Stage* program. These programs allow us to reach communities that may otherwise not have access to the arts.

Each program plays a vital role in helping young people **dream big, discover new passions, and grow in confidence.**

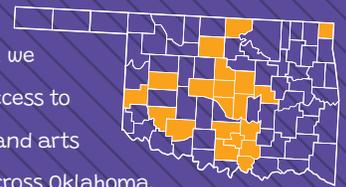
**in 2025  
we...**

REACHED  
**11,901**  
CHILDREN

SUPPORTED  
**132**  
LOCAL TEACHING  
ARTISTS

& HOSTED  
**67**  
PERFORMANCES

Through this, we expanded access to live theatre and arts education across Oklahoma.



Together, we're building a brighter, more creative future for every child in Oklahoma.



# Letter from Austin



Dear Friends of OCT,

2025 has been an incredible year for Oklahoma Children's Theatre thanks to the hard work and dedication of our team, Board of Directors, and community members like you. I want to express my deep appreciation

to everyone who has poured their heart into this organization and the young people we serve.

OCT is more than a place - it's a community of caring individuals who inspire the next generation. As I wrap up my second year as Executive Director, I've been reflecting on the impact OCT has on children and families, and one word keeps coming to mind: **discovery**.

We provide a joyful space to create and explore. It's in those moments of discovery when a child learns something new, finds the courage to perform, or expresses a thought that I see the thread that has run through nearly four decades of OCT: **a stage where every child belongs**.

One of my favorite moments happens during our summer camps. On Monday mornings, we often see first-time campers who are nervous to step out of their car. By Tuesday, that hesitation starts to fade and by Friday, that same camper is beaming on stage, performing proudly for their family.

As we look toward our 40th anniversary, I'm inspired by OCT's legacy from the productions and programs we've built to the thousands of

children who've grown up here. Some conquer stage fright, others discover lifelong passions but **all walk away with confidence and a sense of belonging**.

That's what excites me most about the years ahead: continuing this legacy. We'll ensure every child has a stage, every story finds a place, and every idea has the chance to shine. I hope you'll celebrate this milestone with us and continue standing alongside OCT as we build the next 40 years together.

Before I close, I want to give a standing ovation to our Board President, **Jamie Shouse**, whose service concludes at the end of this fiscal year. Since joining our board in 2018 and stepping into leadership in 2022, Jamie has devoted immense time, energy, and care to OCT. She has guided us through challenges and transitions with wisdom and heart, and her impact will be felt for years to come.

While her term as President is ending, I'm thrilled that Jamie will continue supporting OCT as we prepare for our 40th anniversary, helping to raise the resources that will carry forward our legacy and ensure our stage remains open to all children.

I hope we can all take a page from Jamie's example - stay engaged in our community, advocate thoughtfully for OCT, and care deeply for every child who walks through our doors.

- Austin Klososky | Executive Director



# year in review

## performances

At Oklahoma Children's Theatre (OCT), we select our productions with purpose. Since our main audience is students and school groups, we focus on stories rooted in literature, allowing schools to connect performances with classroom lessons, activities, and discussions that deepen students' understanding of story structure, themes, and character development.

This year, OCT presented three **Mainstage** shows and two **Young Company** performances. Mainstage productions feature professional actors - often adults - performing for young audiences, and are chosen for their educational value and ability to spark empathy, imagination, and joy.



### Young Company

The **Young Company** allows children ages 9-16 to take the stage themselves. These student performers bring stories to life for their community, gaining confidence and collaboration skills along the way. Participants learn to take direction, support their castmates, and express themselves with courage and imagination, skills that reach far beyond the stage.



*thank you for your support!*

Our work is strengthened through partnerships with organizations such as **Oklahoma City Public Schools**, **Positive Tomorrows**, **Dove Science Academy**, **Banner Public Schools**, and others. We're also grateful to **Oklahoma City University's Theatre Department** for helping build our sets and connecting us with talented emerging actors seeking real-world theatre experience.

In 2025, our Mainstage lineup included:

**A Sick Day for Amos McGee**

A heartwarming story of friendship between a zookeeper and his animal friends.

**Maddi's Fridge**

An inspiring tale of friendship, empathy, and the importance of helping others.

**CORDUROY**

The beloved adventure of a curious teddy bear searching for belonging.

In 2025, the Young Company performed:

**Seussical Jr.**

A colorful, imaginative tale following Horton and the Whos.

**Disney THE LITTLE MERMAID Jr.**

The beloved story of Ariel, Prince Eric, and the world beneath the sea.



Each production reinforced themes of kindness and compassion as part of OCT's **2025 Season of Kindness**. Through the generosity of our community, we provided **759 free tickets**, allowing more children to experience the magic of theatre.



# program upgrades

## Lighting

This year, OCT made significant upgrades to our stage lighting system, retrofitting our fixtures with new **LED technology**, which allows for greater versatility in design and richer, more dynamic colors, empowering our creative team to bring stories to life in new ways. The switch to LEDs has also made our operations more **energy-efficient!**

Thanks to the generosity of our **donors**, we can enhance both the **quality and creativity** of our performances, so every production shines brighter, literally and artistically.



## Sensory-Friendly Performances & Accessibility

In 2025, OCT proudly became **Sensory-Aware Certified** through **Square Holes**, an organization dedicated to helping arts programs create more inclusive experiences for individuals with disabilities and sensory needs.

We introduced our first sensory-friendly performances, offering one adapted show for each Mainstage production beginning with *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*. These performances feature **smaller audience sizes, softer lighting, quieter sound effects, and a relaxed environment** that welcomes movement and vocal expression. Audience members can also check out **noise-reducing headphones and fidget tools**, and our newly established **Quiet Room**, supported by the **Oklahoma City Thunder**, provides a calm space with sensory materials and soothing lighting.

The response from families and educators has been overwhelmingly positive. Building on this success, OCT received a grant to develop sensory training for our On-Site Education staff, ensuring that our camps and classes become more accessible for all children in the years ahead.



## 2025 numbers

SERVED

14,652

KIDS, FAMILIES,  
& ARTISTS

PROVIDED

\$8,830

IN ON-SITE EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

PLUS

\$6,831

IN FREE  
TICKETS

## finances

### Revenue

Sponsorships - \$67,325.00

Grants - \$257,072.16

Contributions - \$72,381.96

Earned Revenue - \$475,840.71



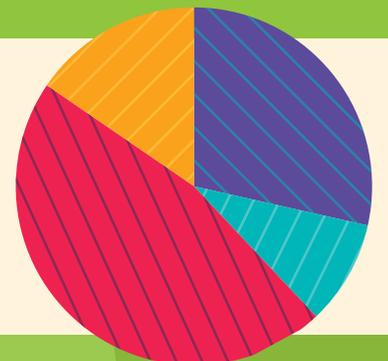
### Expenses

Admin - \$242,387.94

Development - \$79,726.89

Education - \$390,112.10

Productions - \$133,042.36



# our programs

## Camps

OCT's **school-break camps** take place each spring and summer, welcoming children from the OKC metro and beyond. We offer a variety of themed camps, grouped by age, from theatre favorites like *Wicked*, *Stage Combat*, or *Broadway Jr.* to arts and innovation camps like **Podcasting** or **Trash Robots**.

Our camps teach theatre skills such as **projection**, **acting**, and **character development** while also fostering transferable life skills – teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking, often gained in just one week of hands-on, themed activities.

OCT is committed to accessibility: through **sliding-scale scholarships**, we support families experiencing financial hardship, ensuring every child has the opportunity to participate. In 2025, thanks to our donors, we provided **\$8,830.73 in scholarship funds**, allowing more children to experience the joy of theatre.



OCT camps are more than a creative outlet, they build confidence, friendships, resilience, and essential social skills that last far beyond the stage.



## Teaching Artists

Each year, OCT supports numerous **local artists and students**, many of whom are former campers themselves. Camp staff serve as teachers, assistants, or music directors, guiding children through theatre fundamentals or arts-focused themes.

Our approach encourages creativity and ownership: projects are often **purposefully open-ended**, giving campers the chance to shape their storytelling and bring their ideas to life.



"I do genuinely believe that OCT brings the kids out of their comfort zones! We notice it every summer! There are always some campers who are so shy and scared towards the beginning of summer and then have an amazing transformation by the end of the summer that we barely recognize them! Their confidence sky rockets!"

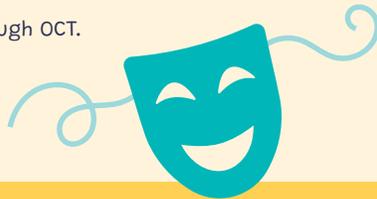
- Garrett Langley

we ♥ camp!

# play it forward

In June 2025, OCT launched its **first-ever Play It Forward campaign**, a weeklong social media initiative designed to rally community support for OCT and theatre for young audiences.

The goal was ambitious: **raise \$5,000 in seven days** to support kids' access to the arts through OCT.



The campaign was a resounding success!

**\$5,050**  
raised from 54  
generous donors

**51%**  
first-time  
contributors  
to OCT

Play It Forward demonstrated the **power of our online community** and the growing commitment to ensuring all children have access to creative, educational theatre experiences.

## outreach & education

### Tour: Cinderella Confidential

Not every school or community can make it to OCT for a live performance, that's why we bring the theatre to them. Our **Tour Program** takes literature-based productions on the road, using a small cast and minimal sets so we can perform in spaces of all sizes.

In 2025, we toured *Cinderella Confidential*, a fresh twist on the classic Cinderella story. Rather than following Cinderella herself, the story follows two competing reporters racing to get the hot scoop.



"Being on tour with OCT has changed my worldview completely. There are so many things happening in the world at large that can siphon hope away quickly. Going to rural town schools and bringing theatre to kids without access to a lot of performing arts has given me a renewed sense of hope and vigor. Furthermore, working with a group of individuals as caring, thoughtful, optimistic, giving, and wonderful as the staff at OCT has lifted my spirits and filled my cup. The work they do is so important, and so necessary especially now. Children should grow up with ample room and space to express themselves fully, so they can grow up feeling seen, heard, and supported. OCT is a beautiful place for exactly this. I will always champion Oklahoma Children's Theatre, and highly endorse them for your support."

- Ashley J. Mandanas



The tour can be paired with a **literacy-based workshop**, providing an additional educational component that deepens the story and reinforces classroom learning.

### After-School Classes

Many schools across Oklahoma face difficult decisions about which specialty classes to offer. With art, music, and drama often cut and fine arts no longer required for high school graduation, students can miss out on opportunities to explore the creative arts.

Oklahoma Children's Theatre provides a variety of **after-school classes** for children ages **3 to 16**, giving students the chance to explore creativity, collaborative storytelling, and a love of the arts. Classes run once a week in four or eight-week sessions and are

tailored to specific age groups to ensure every child can build confidence and skills in a supportive environment.

Every class emphasizes **teamwork**, **creative brainstorming**, and **memorization**, culminating in a final performance where students showcase their accomplishments. Beyond artistic growth, these programs foster essential life skills that benefit children in and out of the classroom.

# our impact

**Caring. Confidence. Community.** You can make all of these possible in the life of a child. Today, many kids feel disconnected from their peers and struggle with confidence due to social media and societal pressures. Oklahoma Children's Theatre is a place where they can relax, care for one another, build community, and grow their confidence.

Let me tell you about one of our families:

**The Kaspars and their daughter, Aria.**



Since she was little, Aria loved putting on shows for family and friends. Her parents, Vanessa and Ed, noticed how much joy performing brought her. When Aria got older, Vanessa looked for a summer activity that would inspire their daughter and found Oklahoma Children's Theatre.

**Here she could work on her theatre skills - singing, dancing, acting, and stage presence while also developing teamwork, problem-solving, and confidence.**

Aria has gone on to perform in various OCT Young Company shows, such as: *Annie Jr.*, *Seussical Jr.*, and *Disney's The Little Mermaid Jr.* as well as shows outside OCT. She's gained lifelong friendships, built confidence, and had fun doing it all.

You can support kids' access to theatre by attending OCT shows, donating to OCT, or enrolling your kid in camp or classes. Each of these helps ensure our programs stay available to kids of all ages and backgrounds.

"As parents, we have seen firsthand how important theatre and OCT have been for Aria and the community. It's such a wonderful space for kids to explore their creativity and express themselves in a fun, exciting way."

- Vanessa Kaspar

*real kids,  
real difference!*



# fairytales ball

In 2025, Oklahoma Children's Theatre hosted the **Fairytales Ball**, bringing the magic of theatre to life in an **Alice in Wonderland-themed celebration**. Children and families enjoyed an immersive experience filled with whimsical décor, interactive activities, and creative performances inspired by Lewis Carroll's beloved story. The event offered a joyful opportunity for kids (and adults) to dress up, explore imaginative worlds, and engage with the arts in a hands-on, memorable way! FTB sparks creativity, curiosity, and a sense of wonder in every attendee.



## get involved!

Oklahoma Children's Theatre is always looking for ways to partner. Through your support we can increase youth access to the arts. Your time, talents, and financial support are incredibly valuable to our mission.

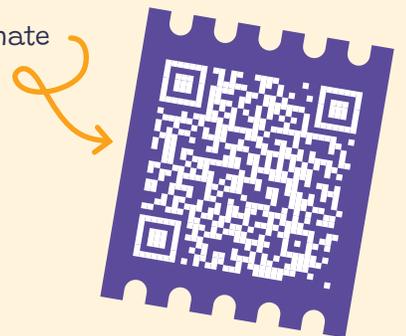


### The Importance of Theatre for Young Audiences

- ★ Fosters Creativity and Collaboration
- ★ Develops Empathy and Self-Confidence
- ★ Teaches Social Skills and Problem Solving
- ★ Improves Literacy and Comprehension

### Ways to Get Involved

- ★ Come to a show
- ★ Enroll your kids in our programs
- ★ Volunteer with us and advocate for kids' access to the arts
- ★ Donate



"Fairytales Ball raised close to 100k in 2025. We started our partnership with the Civic Center through Suzanne. Our theme was a huge hit. The guests loved dressing up as characters from Alice in Wonderland. Suzanne will be chairing the 40th Anniversary Year for FTB. She will continue to do an incredible job!"

- **Olivia Castrejana**  
FTB Chair, Board Member

Save the date for FTB 2026: March 7, 2026



# hear from our staff

Theatre helps kids grow kinder, braver, and more creative—critical skills that they can carry far beyond the stage.



**Austin Klososky**  
executive director

OCT helps kids and families step into the world of a story, see life through someone else's eyes, and learn the power of working together.



**Mollie Reid**  
director of programs

OCT teaches creativity, collaboration, and confidence by using books and themes that kids already love.



**Miranda Wagner**  
director of on-site learning

OCT teaches kids important life skills while giving them the space to be creative, make friends, and have fun.



**Avery Jouris-Chavez**  
director of development

OCT gives kids a space to confidently and bravely try new things and be their most creative selves.



**Madison Carey**  
resident teaching artist

OCT gives children and families a safe space to be themselves and a chance to come together as a community.



**Marcus Buttweiler**  
resident teaching artist

OCT provides access to theatre for kids across the state, regardless of income or situation.



**Katy Sullivan**  
production & outreach coord.

OCT encourages children to be their true selves through expression in the arts. We curate a kind, safe, and brave space for them to learn and play through theatre!



**Erica Heiselman**  
admin. & customer service asst.

## board members

**Jamie Shouse**  
Outgoing President

**Shawn Richardson**  
Incoming President  
& 2025 Treasurer

**Kanika Brown**  
Vice President

**Riley Joseph**  
Secretary

Kristen Elder | Emily Taylor | Leslie Te | Olivia Castrejana | Gina Ellis | Jessica Schwager  
Amanda Lopata | Brent Smith | Jennifer Stevenson | Alyson Moses

### 2026 Incoming Board Members

Patrick Hullum | Katie Wagner | Catherine Warren | Raylen Lyles

# Letter from Jamie

Serving on the OCT Board for the past seven years has been an education about what the work of dedicated individuals can accomplish. I started my tenure under OCT's founder, Lyn Adams, whose passion for OCT was evident



**Jamie Shouse**  
outgoing board president

in her every move. She cared about each individual child who came through her programs. Her warmth radiated in every greeting, every interaction, and every pancake flipped. And that caring is a wonderful foundation that is woven into the DNA of OCT.

As OCT has experienced many transitions in recent years, including the hiring of our current Executive Director, Austin, we have had the privilege of the continuity of three employees who also worked with Lyn—Mollie, Miranda, and Madison. Their willingness to adapt and grow has made OCT's reach boundary-less in the coming years. Austin's leadership as Executive Director has been what OCT has needed at a time that felt uncertain. Austin has breathed calm, certainty, and support into OCT over the past two years.

**My favorite thing about OCT is how they continue to strive to increase their inclusivity.** The staff is constantly trying to figure out ways to make experiences more connective for individuals in all walks of life. This past year they added sensory friendly performances and tackled the issue of food insecurity in Maddi's Fridge.

I often talk about how much I love watching the Young Company productions at OCT during the summer, which are productions played by campers. I am addicted to watching the look on the actors' faces, their confident posture, and their engagement in the process. They are projecting belonging.

With a full heart, I conclude my time on OCT's Board. I am grateful to the staff for letting me be a part of this organization and contribute in a way that is small compared to their efforts. Volunteers are transient, but I will feel the impact of OCT on my life permanently. I cannot wait to see all that OCT accomplishes as it approaches its fortieth year.

- Jamie Shouse | Outgoing Board President

# 2026 season

Jan - Feb

wake up,  
**BROTHER BEAR**



Mar - Apr

DON'T LET THE  
**PIGEON**  
DRIVE THE BUS!  
the musical!



June

HONK!  
JR.



• 1986 •

**40**  
YEARS

★ Oklahoma  
Children's  
Theatre

• 2026 •

July

DIARY  
of a  
**Wimpy Kid**  
THE MUSICAL

Sept - Oct

**Dragons Love  
Tacos**



Oct 29 - Nov 1

**A TALE  
of two  
CITIES**

a co-production with Theatre OCU

December

**Bah  
Humbug!**



Looking Back, Dreaming Forward



# 2026 schedule

**January 16 - 23**

*Wake Up, Brother Bear* | Theatre for the Very Young

**February 15**

Enrollment opens for Summer Camp

**February 17**

Spring Classes begin

**March 7**

Fairytale Ball at the Civic Center

**March 16 - 20**

Spring Break Camp

**March 26 - April 12**

*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!*

**May 26**

Summer Camp Begins

**June 11 - 14**

*Honk! Jr.* | Young Company

**July 30 - August 2**

*Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Musical* | Young Company

**August 7**

Last day of Summer Camp

**September 25 - October 9**

*Dragons Love Tacos*

**October 29 - November 1**

*Tale of Two Cities* with Theatre OCU

**December 3 - 18**

*Bah Humbug!* | An OCT Original!

see you there!



## Thank You

to all the incredible  
supporters who made  
2025 so special!



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