



GREATER DES MOINES

15 YEARS OF ELEVATING ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE



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ON THE COVER

Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation presents Mental Banquet: Painting with Lights by Oyoram on the east facade of the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates.

BRAVO, Des Moines!

Des Moines is such a special place to live because of its vibrant arts, culture and heritage landscape. Renowned organizations that bring world-class theatres, galleries, performance spaces, dance troupes, choral ensembles, orchestras and more to the region are supported by local leaders who are dedicated to placing those same organizations at the core of the community's growth.

At the turn of the century, that commitment fueled the beginnings of what would become Bravo Greater Des Moines in 2004. Bravo has since emerged as a stunning example of how a region can come together and take control of its own future.

Bravo leverages community resources to maximize the impact of arts, culture and heritage to advance regional priorities. Funded almost entirely through hotel and motel taxes generously contributed by 17 local government partners, Bravo makes direct investments to cultural organizations and programs that make Greater Des Moines an exceptional place to live, work, play and visit. Bravo also leads efforts to advance cultural priorities beyond grantmaking and plays a critical role in elevating and enriching a vibrant region.

Fifteen years in the making, we celebrate the beginnings and rise of Bravo Greater Des Moines. It took visionaries, from both the private and public sectors, to build the organization into what is today — an integral piece of Des Moines' thriving landscape.

GREATER DES MOINES BOTANICAL GARDEN



BRAVO 1





DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS

THE BEGINNINGS OF BRAVO

A mix of visionary leaders put Bravo at the center of
Des Moines' growth

It was 2003 when Steve Zumbach, a local lawyer and philanthropist, took over as the chair of the Greater Des Moines Partnership, a chamber overseeing the entire Greater Des Moines region. He had big goals.

Zumbach had recently read Richard Florida's book titled, "The Rise of the Creative Class," which stressed the importance of quality of life in attracting individuals who create new ideas, technology or other creative content, driving the economy. Zumbach and the Partnership leveraged this theory to launch Project Destiny, a regional collaboration to strengthen Greater Des Moines into a place where more people wanted to live.

A main component of the project was creating an organization dedicated to elevating arts, culture and heritage — the impetus behind Bravo.

"In the new-age economy, it was the creative class that was going to drive jobs, particularly in technology," Zumbach says. "Those people with those skillsets wanted to live in interesting places. Places with beaches, oceans, mountains. Des Moines has none of those. But we did have arts and culture. We could build a place where people wanted to live around culture and the arts."

There was support in both private and public sectors. Community leaders such as Connie Wimer, founder and chair of Business Publications Corporation, Suku Radia, then chief financial officer at Meredith Corp., Steve Chapman, then CEO of Ruan Transportation Management Systems, and many more were involved. They all set out to find funding to back this initiative.

Christine Hensley, a Des Moines city council member for more than 20 years, was already a supporter of the arts. She sat on a number of

cultural nonprofit boards around the city. She first heard about this movement in an early 2000s meeting between Warren, Dallas and Polk Counties. The arts, culture and heritage nonprofit sector was looking for more consistent funding, but there wasn't one place to receive it. Cities wanted to help.

"I was always very supportive because I felt that what [arts, culture and heritage] brought to the community was really significant," Hensley says. "We [the cities] needed to figure out a way that we could be supportive, and the hotel and motel tax made all the sense in the world."

The leadership group knew seeking funds via tax dollars would be a tough road. But with the hotel and motel tax, they had a shot. It was seen as money from outsiders, and part of it could be directed toward this initiative.

The city of Des Moines recognized the importance and immediately showed interest. They agreed to jump on board if other cities bought in. That's when Gene Meyer, then the mayor of West Des Moines and now the president of the Partnership, stepped up and said yes. Other cities followed suit, and by 2004, nine communities were on board to allocate a portion of their hotel and motel tax to one newly-formed organization. That organization would act as a pass-through funder, investing in, promoting and measuring arts, culture and heritage in the region. That organization was Bravo.

The end result was a public-private partnership that happens in so few places, especially these days. But it happened in Des Moines.

"Public-private partnerships are really such a successful piece of what makes communities so great," Hensley says. "We assume everyone



operates this way, and they don't. Bravo is a perfect example of how it works so beautifully here."

Bravo was initially named the Regional Cultural Council, but there were immediate problems pointed out by then-Hy-Vee CEO Ron Pearson, who was on a Bravo committee at the time. Pearson believed the name wouldn't stick. It was too forgettable. After some banter between Zumbach and Pearson, Zumbach asked Pearson what the name should be.

"He says, 'Well, what about Bravo?'" Zumbach recalled with a laugh. "That was the birth of the name Bravo."

It took almost two years after Bravo was officially incorporated before it accumulated enough funds to make grants. That year, in 2006, 38 organizations shared \$1.3 million in general operating support investments from Bravo. Bravo was unstaffed at the time and was only able to operate thanks to incubation support from the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines.

Since that first grant year, Bravo has grown substantially. That's in part thanks to the tireless work of community leaders and partners like Catch Des Moines to grow tourism in the region, driving hotel and motel revenue. In Bravo's 2019 operating grant cycle, nearly \$4 million was invested in 68 organizations.

The initial agreements between Bravo and the cities were annual and had to be renewed by a vote of each council each year. The experiment was such a success, however, that in 2011, the agreements were extended to require renewal only every three years. And in 2014, the agreements became perpetual, further demonstrating the value the public sector sees in a thriving creative economy.

BRAVO HAS AWARDED MORE THAN 900 GRANTS TO ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS TOTALING NEARLY \$40 MILLION.

Cities haven't wavered in their support. There are now 16 communities joining Polk County in investing hotel and motel tax revenue in Bravo. Since its inception, Bravo has awarded more than 900 grants to arts, culture and heritage organizations and programs totaling nearly \$40 million. According to a 2016 economic impact study funded by Bravo, Greater Des Moines can quantify a \$185 million annual economic impact from the region's cultural organizations, affirming that these assets are need-to-have economic engines and integral to achieving community goals.

Today, 15 years later, Bravo's success has correlated to community success. Des Moines is one of the fastest-growing communities in the Midwest, and arts, culture and heritage are right at the center of it all.

"This is a history of a lot of good people making a contribution to get something done," Zumbach says. "It took courage. It took wisdom. It took foresight by brave, local leaders." ■



PARTNERS IN GROWTH

Bravo's investments are integral to arts, culture
and heritage in Des Moines

Bravo plays an important role in Greater Des Moines by investing in and impacting a wide variety of arts, culture and heritage nonprofits. Currently, Bravo has more than 70 cultural partners ranging from museums and dance troupes to theatre companies, historical societies and more. Annual grants range from less than \$1,000 to more than \$500,000 and help support incredible work being done by nonprofit cultural organizations across the region.

Bravo is a crucial source of revenue for upstart, growing or established nonprofits, who all help make Greater Des Moines a better place to live, work, play and visit.

The seeds of funding

Stephanie Jutila can confidently say the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden wouldn't exist without the support of Bravo.

Through its funding and backing, Bravo was there every step of the way when the Botanical Garden made the monumental transition from a municipally-operated organization to nonprofit in 2011.

"We wouldn't be here without Bravo. It's as simple as that," says Jutila, president and CEO of the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden. "Their grant [every year] to support our operations and expand our programs allows us to do so much for the community. And not only be relevant, but bring something that nobody has to the community, to the residents, to the workforce, to the visitors."

Bravo's yearly grant helps the organization continue to do what it does best: stun visitors with breathtaking scenery and enticing events.

The Botanical Garden is made up of 14 acres

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just north of the East Village under Interstate 235. In addition to plant collection and showcasing, the organization also operates a geo-domed conservatory, which is an iconic landmark when people enter Des Moines from the north or east.

Bravo's investment is crucial to the Botanical Garden's abundance of events, including the 29 music concerts every year. Other signature events include the Annual Symposium, Botanical Blues, a weekly blues concert in the winter, and the Spring Garden Festival.

There's another Bravo benefit, too. Jutila said Bravo's support acts as a stamp of approval for the organization. It's the foundation for when the Botanical Garden conducts outreach to private donors.

"It's a thumbs up," Jutila says. "This is an organization that Bravo wants to support. It encourages more philanthropy toward arts and culture. It's almost like a challenge. Bravo is investing at this level. What can others do?"

Bravo encourages its organizations to look for new ways to partner with other arts and culture institutions. Through that encouragement, the Botanical Garden started an Earth Day event with the Science Center of Iowa and World Food Prize. The organization also hosted an outdoor opera in partnership with the Des Moines Metro Opera, a first in Greater Des Moines.

It's the initial backing from Bravo that acts as a pillar for the Botanical Garden, and many other organizations, to build on.



“Bravo makes it very efficient for the cultural institutions that rely on contributed support, so they don’t have to go to every city council where we are impacting their residents,” Jutila says. “The layers keep going on and on. This is a case of one plus one equals far more than two.”

Launching point

When Barbara Vaske took over as the executive director of the Ankeny Art Center about 10 years ago, the organization’s programming consisted solely of after-school education programs for students. The offering was robust, but the Art Center, which was established 38 years ago, had the potential to be more.

Thanks to Bravo, Vaske said the Art Center moved into what she calls its mature stages. Initial funding from Bravo helped Vaske establish a membership program, which has become a major stream of revenue for the organization.

“Bravo was life changing for us — absolutely life changing,” Vaske says. “When I started here 10 years ago, we were trying to figure out who we were and what the Art Center would be. That money was so critical when you’re so little.”

Those beginnings helped grow the Ankeny Art Center into the comprehensive arts organization it is today, featuring many different exhibitions, events, classes, camps and more. The Art Center’s signature fundraising event is Santa’s North Pole Village Craft Sale. More than 250 exhibitors are spread across three Ankeny schools.

Growth has come to education programs, too. When Vaske started with the Art Center, only about 75 students signed up for programs offered. In 2019, that number is expected to be close to 900.

In addition to Bravo’s funding, the organization has also been a steady hand for Vaske. Vaske has a vast background in the art industry, but lacked experience running a



business. Bravo helped guide her toward better planning and strategy habits.

“They force me to think like a business,” Vaske says. “Because of the ways the grants are written, it holds me accountable. It helps that I have a partner in this, or else we’re just struggling to do bare minimum. We’re in a good position right now, and that’s because we get funding from Bravo. Operating support really is critical.”

An instrumental push

In August 2015, Tiffany Johnson and six other community leaders started Pyramid Theatre Company to fill a need in the state. The founders saw there was a lack of diversity in Iowa theater, so the organization was focused on telling and illuminating stories of black artists.

From the beginning, Bravo has been essential to getting the upstart company off the ground. Pyramid Theatre is now moving into its fifth season of shows.

“Bravo has been extremely instrumental in the development of Pyramid over the last three years,” says Johnson, artistic director. “Without the support of Bravo, we would not be able to fully realize these productions and absorb the cost associated with producing these works.”

The two annual performances put on by Pyramid Theatre — one classic work and one contemporary work by a new and emerging artist — gives a creative outlet to Iowa’s underserved communities. The organization has also grown beyond central Iowa. Pyramid Theatre has run two successful co-productions with Brown University in Rhode Island and Riverside Theater in Iowa City.

“BRAVO IS NOT JUST INSTRUMENTAL IN THE ARTS, THEY ARE INSTRUMENTAL IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY.”

TIFFANY JOHNSON

Every year, through an artist-in-residence program, the organization brings in national talent, whether that be an actor or actress, director or stage manager. An apprenticeship position has helped local residents get involved in the theater industry while shadowing professionals.

Because of Bravo’s support, Pyramid Theatre is now a real force in the local cultural landscape. And that’s why Johnson believes Bravo’s role is so much bigger than what meets the eye.

“Bravo is not just instrumental in the arts, they are instrumental in building a community,” Johnson says. “They afford us the opportunity to do incredible work. While they do support the arts, that’s just a gateway to being able to empower people. Bravo has been an invaluable asset for us as a company, and I don’t know how to adequately thank them for what they do for us and the community.” ■

CULTURAL PARTNERS

Bravo Greater Des Moines invests in arts, culture and heritage nonprofit organizations across the region to strengthen the cultural landscape.





ANKENY AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Ankeny Area Historical Society has two museums, a 1905 farm house and barn that displays the history of the Ankeny area. Displays include Ankeny schools, a country kitchen and parlor, country school, farming, uptown store, toy room, sewing room, bedroom, dining room and library.

www.ankenystory.org

ANKENY ART CENTER

Ankeny Art Center features two gallery spaces showcasing solely Iowa artists, as well as classes for children and adults.

www.ankenystory.org

ANKENY COMMUNITY BAND

Ankeny Community Band provides a venue for post-secondary musicians to gather, have fun and put on several free band concerts every summer in the Ankeny community.

www.ankenystory.org



ANKENY COMMUNITY CHORUS

Ankeny Community Chorus offers spring and fall concerts as well as a performance at the Iowa State Fair.

www.ankenystory.org



ANKENY COMMUNITY THEATRE

Ankeny Community Theatre's mission is to provide quality live theater entertainment and participation opportunities for Central Iowa community members through stage productions, as well as youth and adult educational programming.

www.ankenystory.org

AFTER SCHOOL ARTS PROGRAM (ASAP)

ASAP provides year-round, high-quality arts enrichment programs free of charge for underserved students grades K-8. Programs are offered at more than 20 locations around Des Moines, serving about 2,500 students annually.

www.asap-dsm.org

BALLET DES MOINES

Ballet Des Moines is Des Moines' resident, professional ballet company, bringing world-class artists and performances to the stages and communities of Iowa.

www.balletdesmoines.org

CULTURAL PARTNERS



BLANK PARK ZOO

Blank Park Zoo's mission is to inspire an appreciation of the natural world through conservation, education, research and recreation.

www.blankparkzoo.com

CARLISLE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Carlisle Area Historical Society's mission is to preserve local history and historical artifacts for future generations through educational programs, museum space, theater, art and music.

www.cahs.webs.com

CENTRAL IOWA WIND ENSEMBLE

Central Iowa Wind Ensemble provides opportunities for listening to and participating in outstanding performances of wind band music.

www.CIWE.org

CITY VOICES

City Voices is an after-school nonprofit music education program that offers disadvantaged students tuition-free music instruction. By facilitating student access to those frequently out of reach due to lack of financial resources, City Voices is mitigating inequalities by providing skills, opportunities and knowledge necessary to excel in school, community and careers.

www.cityvoicesdesmoines.org



CIVIC MUSIC ASSOCIATION (CMA)

CMA is a presenter of world-class concerts founded in 1925. CMA is committed to bringing great music to Central Iowa and offering music education opportunities featuring guest artists at no cost to K-12 schools and post-secondary universities.

www.civicmusic.org



CLASS ACT PRODUCTIONS (CAP)

COMMUNITY THEATRE

CAP Community Theatre is a children's community theatre that strives to give young people, regardless of experience, the opportunity to be part of and appreciate live theatre.

www.captheatre.org

CULTUREALL

CultureALL creates authentic, personal interactions that engage you in learning about your neighbors, colleagues and classmates from other cultures. Benefit from tapping into CultureALL's vast network of trained presenters who come from more than 65 cultures. Use tools, resources and strategies that open communities to new ideas and ways of thinking. Diversity shouldn't divide us — it makes us stronger.
www.CultureALL.org



DES MOINES ART CENTER

Des Moines Art Center engages diverse local and international audiences with the art of today through its museum and school, adding to the cultural record through collections and programs. Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2019, the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park features 31 sculptures by 25 of the world's most celebrated artists.
www.desmoinesartcenter.org

DES MOINES ARTS FESTIVAL

Des Moines Arts Festival is one of the world's most respected arts and culture events that hosts 190 professional and emerging visual artists and features outreach programs, live music, art demonstrations, interactive activities and performing arts.
www.desmoinesartsfestival.org

DES MOINES CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Des Moines Children's Museum builds the foundation of lifelong learning by promoting the power of play.
www.dsmchildrensmuseum.com

DES MOINES CHORAL SOCIETY

Des Moines Choral Society is made up of auditioned singers from throughout central Iowa. With a 40-year tradition in the community, the DMCS is a major force for the promotion of choral music in Iowa.
www.dmchoral.org

DES MOINES COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA (DMCO)

Des Moines Community Orchestra (DMCO) is composed of musicians whose love of music brings them together to perform great symphonic works, both new and old. DMCO is deeply committed to making classical music concerts free for everyone and does not charge admission for its regular season concerts. Donations from our audience help sustain the orchestra and allow us to continue this tradition.
www.desmoinescommunityorchestra.org



DES MOINES COMMUNITY PLAYHOUSE

Des Moines Community Playhouse's mission is to change lives by entertaining, enriching and engaging the people of our community through producing high-quality theatrical presentations, avocational experiences and lifelong educational opportunities.
www.dmplayhouse.com



DES MOINES DIVERSITY CHORUS

Des Moines Diversity Chorus is a one-of-a-kind choral group focused on encouraging respect and appreciation for people through music.

www.desmoinesdiversitychorus.org

DES MOINES EUROPEAN HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

Des Moines European Heritage Association connects Iowans with European traditions, language education and cultural experiences.

www.dmeha.org



DES MOINES FILM SOCIETY

The Des Moines Film Society is dedicated to growing the film culture in Des Moines through arts-driven programming, education and support for local filmmakers. We host special event screenings with filmmakers and other artists, which will soon take place in Des Moines' only nonprofit arts cinema.

www.desmoinesfilm.org

DES MOINES GAY MEN'S CHORUS

Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus is dedicated to promoting harmony among and advancing a positive image of gay people through artistic excellence, creative programming and community outreach. The Chorus produces a concert series and, together with the small ensemble HarMENy (men in harmony), performs at numerous community events. Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus uses music to respond to violence, discrimination and marginalization.

www.dmgmc.org

DES MOINES METRO OPERA

Des Moines Metro Opera is a major American opera company and one of the state's largest performing arts organizations. The company's summer festival runs May through July each year during which three operas are performed in rotating repertory, drawing audiences from 40 states and several countries. DMMO engages new, diverse audiences through its 2nd Stages Series, which creates collaborative performances in unexpected spaces.

www.desmoinesmetroopera.org



DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS (DMPA)

As a national leader in performing arts presentation, DMPA strives to engage the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education and cultural activities. As the home of seven resident performance series, arts education initiatives and community programming, DMPA serves more than 380,000 people each year.

www.dmpa.org

CULTURAL PARTNERS



DES MOINES SYMPHONY & ACADEMY

Des Moines Symphony provides extraordinary live symphonic experiences to a growing and diverse community. Through its Academy, one of only five such affiliated schools in the country, over 650 instrumental students each week have opportunities in private lessons, youth orchestras, chamber music and other programs.

www.dmsymphony.org



DES MOINES VOCAL ARTS ENSEMBLE

Des Moines Vocal Arts Ensemble is an auditioned chamber ensemble committed to providing inspiring live choral performance experiences for its audiences and singing members. The Ensemble is an arts partner in Greater Des Moines, having recently collaborated with the Des Moines Symphony, Des Moines Choral Society, Orchestra Iowa and numerous university ensembles.

www.dmvae.org

DES MOINES YOUNG ARTISTS' THEATRE (DMYAT)

DMYAT is committed to introducing youth to the transformative power of the arts, training students in performance, design and direction, and encouraging artists to use theatre to create positive social change. We aspire to be our region's premier organization for theater created by youth for youth, while offering an inclusive experience to all — regardless of background, affiliation or experience.

www.dmyat.org

GATEWAY DANCE THEATRE (GDT)

Based in Des Moines since 1972, GDT was created to provide quality urban arts and outreach programs, with a mission to use the arts to engage, communicate, educate and collaborate with diverse communities. GDT's goal is to enrich lives and advance a vision for a diverse arts movement through performing arts for all ages while also broadening arts outreach, increasing cultural sensitivity and heightening social justice awareness.

www.gatewaydance.org



GREATER DES MOINES BOTANICAL GARDEN

Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden's work blurs community boundaries and invites users to experience original, thoughtful and innovative gardens and programming.

www.dmbotanicalgarden.com

GREATER DES MOINES MUSIC COALITION

Greater Des Moines Music Coalition is committed to supporting and developing the local music economy through artist and audience development, music education, music tourism, mentorship and advocacy, and providing the infrastructure necessary to establish and maintain Des Moines as a nationally recognized music city.

www.desmoinesmc.com





GREATER DES MOINES PUBLIC ART FOUNDATION

Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation places art in public spaces through public and private collaborations. The Foundation actively seeks opportunities for art integration throughout the community with the goal of establishing a world-class destination for public art.

www.dsmpublicartfoundation.org

HARMONY CENTRAL CHORUS

The Harmony Central Chorus is an award-winning women's chorus that has performed a four-part a cappella harmony for more than 60 years.

www.HCChorus.org

HARMONY DELEGATION BARBERSHOP CHORUS

For more than 73 years, Harmony Delegation has been actively encouraging men of all ages to sing a cappella music through events in the Des Moines area.

Everyone in Harmony, an initiative promoted by the Barbershop Harmony Society and being discussed by Harmony Delegation, allows us to expand our outreach to anyone interested in singing barbershop music — male or female.

www.harmonydelegation.com

HEARTLAND YOUTH CHOIR

Heartland Youth Choir provides a performance-based program for young singers in central Iowa, ages 4-18, with an emphasis on musical literacy, character development and community engagement. With six choirs to meet the needs of every singer, HYC helps children of diverse backgrounds with a particular aptitude in vocal music to explore that interest beyond their school setting.

www.joinhyc.org



HISTORIC VALLEY JUNCTION

Historic Valley Junction's mission is to inspire and enhance the evolution of the original Historic Valley Junction district by preserving and sharing its history, attracting and supporting small businesses, and engaging and connecting the greater community.

www.valleyjunction.com

HOYT SHERMAN PLACE

Hoyt Sherman Place remains a regional cultural icon. With a historic mansion, two art galleries and a 1,252-seat live performance theater, this facility boasts something for everyone, including a mansion and art gallery tours on weekdays. The intimate theater hosts nationally recognized artists as well as local dramatic and musical productions, dance recitals, graduations and weddings.

www.hoytsherman.org





I'LL MAKE ME A WORLD IN IOWA

I'll Make Me a World in Iowa is a diverse collaboration of Iowans highlighting African American arts, culture and contributions through education, awareness and preservation during an annual enrichment celebration and with continual educational outreach.

www.worldiniowa.org



IOWA ARCHITECTURAL FOUNDATION

Iowa Architectural Foundation provides educational programs for adults and children, including a summer day camp and tours for students, walking tours for adults, "Eat. Drink. Architecture.," custom tours for companies and an architecture app for visitors. IAF's tours and classes create romance around Greater Des Moines architectural treasures and bolster appreciation for Des Moines as a city.

www.iowaarchfoundation.org

IOWA ASIAN ALLIANCE

Iowa Asian Alliance's mission is to unite diverse Asian, Asian American and Pacific Islander communities with the purpose of fostering economic growth and broader community development within the state of Iowa, with a vision of creating an Iowa in which Asians, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are an integral part of a vibrant and prosperous community.

www.iowaasianalliance.com



IOWA GOLD STAR MILITARY MUSEUM

Iowa Military Museum honors and depicts the stories of Iowa Veterans.

www.goldstarmuseum.iowa.gov

IOWA HALL OF PRIDE

Iowa Hall of Pride showcases what it means to be an Iowan by celebrating the Iowa high school experience and those who have went on to do great things for the state.

www.iowahallofpride.com



IOWA JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Iowa Jewish Historical Society's mission is to inspire people of all backgrounds to connect with and preserve Iowa's Jewish history and culture. The IJHS collection, exhibits, programs and publications are the keys to preserving and understanding the history and contributions Jewish Iowans have made to Iowa, the United States and the world.

www.ijhs.online

CULTURAL PARTNERS



LIVING HISTORY FARMS



LATINO HERITAGE FESTIVAL

IOWA SHAKESPEARE EXPERIENCE

Using the memory and abiding works of William Shakespeare, Iowa Shakespeare Experience preserves and honors the traditions of the classics through the interpretation of classic works to foster memorable experiences and engage strong new connections between audiences and the arts.

www.iowashakespeare.org

IOWA STAGE THEATRE COMPANY

Iowa Stage Theatre Company transforms Iowa, its citizens and arts community by producing truthful, relevant and intimate theater that inspires, enlightens and entertains.

www.iowastage.org

IOWA YOUTH CHORUS

Iowa Youth Chorus' mission is to use the art of choral music to help every child reach their fullest potential. Iowa Youth Chorus envisions a world in which every child in Iowa has access to the benefits of a world-class choral music education regardless of who they are, where they come from or their ability to pay for it.

www.iowayouthchorus.org

ITALIAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER OF IOWA

A museum with artifacts, vocational displays and research library, IACC offers classes in language, cooking, genealogy and folk dancing.

www.iaccofia.org

LATINO RESOURCES

Latino Heritage Festival is a celebration of arts, culture, music, dance and affirms the Latino community's contributions to the Greater Des Moines area, Iowa and our country.

www.latinoheritagefestival.org

LIVING HISTORY FARMS

Living History Farms educates, entertains and connects people of all ages to Midwestern rural life through hands-on, interactive experiences. Set on 500 acres in Urbandale, Iowa, the museum recreates the daily routines of 300 years of agricultural history with three working farm sites and the historic town of Walnut Hill.

www.livinghistoryfarms.org



MAINFRAME STUDIOS

Mainframe Studios is a new non-profit model for providing permanent affordable workspace to artists of all disciplines.

www.mainframestudios.org

MUSIC UNDER THE STARS

Music Under the Stars performs free concerts during the summer months that feature band music of the highest quality to entertain, educate and uplift all the people of central Iowa.

www.musicunderthestars.org



PYRAMID THEATRE COMPANY

Pyramid Theatre Company provides a gateway to the arts for the Des Moines community by illuminating the presence of black artists in the theatre cannon, and to provide a means of artistic expression to emerging black voices. Pyramid Theatre commits itself to the tenant of “Sankofa” from the Akan language of Ghana meaning “return and retrieve,” and offers works firmly rooted in the lessons of the past in order to serve the needs of the present.

www.pyramidtheatre.org

SALISBURY HOUSE

Salisbury House’s mission is to preserve, interpret and share the international significance of Salisbury House and its collections as a historic house museum for the educational and cultural benefit and enjoyment of the public.

www.salisburyhouse.org

SCIENCE CENTER OF IOWA

The Science Center of Iowa engages and inspires visitors by bringing learning to life. Centrally located in Downtown Des Moines, SCI features hands-on exhibits and unique programming to encourage learning and fun for all ages. With live science demonstrations, a 50-foot planetarium and ever-changing events and programs, there’s always more to explore.

www.sciowa.org



STATE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF IOWA

The State Historical Museum of Iowa exhibits and cares for a rich collection of historic artifacts while also providing history education programs for children, families and learners of all ages. Visitors can discover Iowa’s heritage through a variety of experiences including exploring 50,000 square feet of exhibition galleries, tours, collections, education programs and events throughout the year.

www.iowaculture.gov/history

STATION 1 RECORDS

Station 1 Records is an artist entrepreneurship and patronage organization dedicated to building a regional and national platform for independent artists from Des Moines and central Iowa, while continuing to diversify and grow the local music industry through music business education, artist development and community events.

www.station1records.com



TALLGRASS THEATRE COMPANY

Tallgrass Theatre Company’s mission is to enrich and contribute to the West Des Moines community by producing engaging, creative and challenging theatrical productions in an environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive for both our artists and audiences.

www.tallgrasstheatre.org

CULTURAL PARTNERS



URBANDALE COMMUNITY THEATRE

Urbandale Community Theatre's mission is to provide creative and cultural opportunities to the Des Moines area through the production of classic, Broadway productions for people of all ages.

www.urbandaletheatre.com

WEST DES MOINES HISTORICAL SOCIETY

West Des Moines Historical Society is a volunteer-based organization dedicated to community enrichment through education, preservation and celebration of the history and the heritage of the greater West Des Moines area.

www.wdmhs.org

WORLD FOOD & MUSIC FESTIVAL

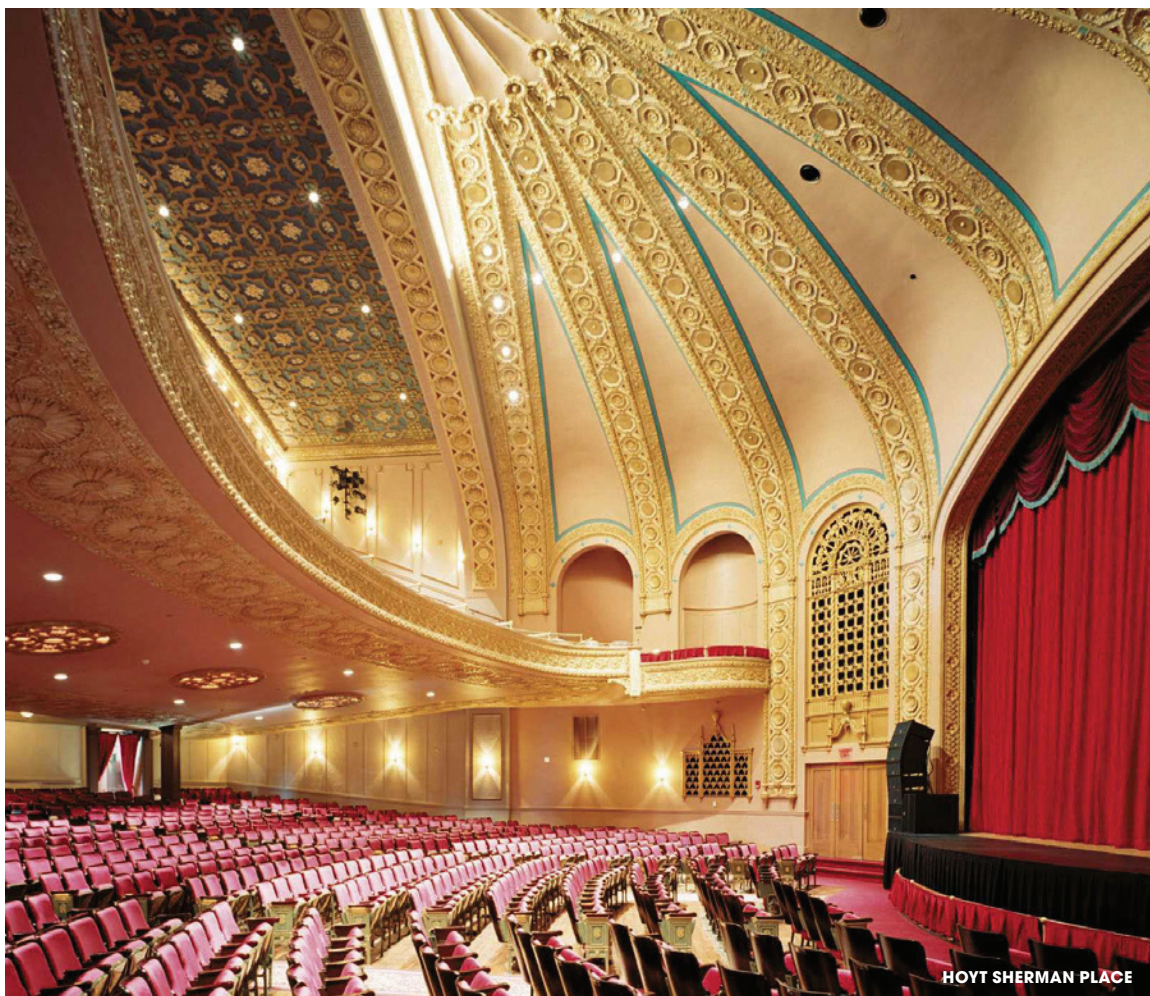
World Food & Music Festival is a vibrant three-day cultural celebration. It encompasses culinary vendors with cuisine from around the globe, cooking demonstrations, contests, dancers and musicians with international flair. Children enjoy unique activities while adults enjoy an impressive variety of worldwide craft beers, wines and cocktails. Authentic cultural experiences are enjoyed by all.

www.worldfoodandmusicfestival.com

WORLD FOOD PRIZE

World Food Prize operates the Norman E. Borlaug Hall of Laureates as a public museum and convocation center that showcases cultural programs and exhibits art telling the story of Iowa's humanitarian and agricultural past.

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BEYOND GRANTS

Bravo moves into new ways to elevate arts, culture
and heritage

When Bravo began 15 years ago, its primary role was to serve as a regional, collaborative and critical funding source for the many arts, culture and heritage nonprofit organizations in Greater Des Moines. Still today, strategic grant investments remain Bravo's core function and top priority.

But as the region has evolved, Bravo has found new opportunities to remain relevant, going beyond grantmaking to make a lasting impact in new and measurable ways.

Arts, culture and heritage don't just benefit quality of life. They contribute to economic development, talent attraction and retention, cultural competency, education, health and wellness and so much more.

"In the last five years, we've looked at additional opportunities beyond funding to ensure that arts and culture are increasingly recognized as critical aspects of the region's strength," says Sally Dix, executive director of Bravo. "Bravo has established credibility, accountability, transparency, trust and expertise so we can elevate important conversations about the role the cultural sector plays in our community. Where I think Bravo's role has evolved is that we are now able to intertwine the value of arts and culture into every critical conversation about our region. We are not just a funder anymore."

A crucial way this change for Bravo comes to life lies with the commissioning of a Central Iowa Regional Cultural Assessment in 2016. The project's goal was to clearly align arts and culture with economic development and growth, progress and change in Des Moines. The Assessment now stands

as the cultural pillar of Greater Des Moines' Capital Crossroads effort, a collaborative initiative led by community leaders to steer the region's future.

The Regional Cultural Assessment was funded and facilitated by Bravo and directed by a nine-member steering committee led by Drake University President Marty Martin. In all, more than 800 central Iowans participated in the study through surveys and in-person meetings. Four Regional Cultural Priorities were defined:

Every Day, Everywhere Art: Generate more spontaneous artistic and cultural connections in new and different places.

Strengthen the Creative Economy: Develop the talent and skillsets of creative entrepreneurs and artists.

Cultural Tapestry: Support arts, culture and heritage as diverse, accessible, inclusive and equitable throughout central Iowa.

Youth Connections: Ensure that all young people in the region have access to a rich array of creative and cultural experiences, both formal and informal, educational and recreational.

The priorities are wrapped with goals and visions, all aimed toward improving quality of life and economic prosperity in Des Moines by leveraging arts, culture and heritage.

Kathryn Kunert, vice president of economic connections and integration at MidAmerican Energy, is the president of the Greater Des Moines Partnership Board and the incoming president of the Bravo Board of Directors. In her work at MidAmerican Energy and with the region's top business and government leaders, Kunert has a unique understanding of just how important building quality of life is to the region.



In Des Moines, the future of attracting and retaining workers revolves around arts and culture.

“It’s incredibly important for a community to have arts and culture to shape the community,” Kunert says. “It helps Des Moines become a diverse, inclusive and attractive community for people who want to live, work and play here. I think arts and culture help shape all the different qualities of a community and are very important to what makes employers thrive and be successful here.”

While the Assessment was commissioned by Bravo, the implications and opportunities are much bigger than a single organization. The priorities provide a roadmap for the region to ensure the arts

are part of every effort designed to make the community thrive.

“Arts and culture should be considered integral to regional success,” Dix says. “With this assessment, we will drive the region forward in new ways. Creating that definition and intersection between arts and culture and other regional priorities is an exciting opportunity for us.”

Bravo’s community partners realize that importance as well. West Des Moines has been one of Bravo’s largest investors since the organization launched in 2004. Jim Sandager, a local financial adviser and longtime Bravo board member, has

served on the West Des Moines city council for more than 20 years.

For him, arts, culture and heritage are some of the most important aspects of West Des Moines and the Greater Des Moines area. They help attract employees for local businesses, boost quality of life and even bring in tourists to contribute to the local economy.

“The role of a city councilperson is to operate effective city government, keep the public safe, maintain infrastructure and generally ensure that a community is someplace people want to live,” Sandager says. “Without question the work Bravo does with public funds helps us attract and retain talent in West Des Moines by making the region a more vibrant, thriving place to live.”

Sandager cited a couple of examples as to how investments into arts, culture and heritage can benefit a city.

As part of a citywide beautification effort, West Des Moines is implementing public art alongside an 11-mile stretch of Veterans Parkway. One of the projects, *Folded Flags*, received a \$50,000 grant from Bravo. Another project, the *Jamie Hurd Amphitheatre*, will be a bustling entertainment space and also received a \$50,000 grant from Bravo for a nearby art project. Both projects squarely enhance Bravo’s Every Day, Everywhere Art priority and are a boon for West Des Moines.

“Both are significant projects,” Sandager says. “The Bravo organization shows us that the sum of us together is greater than the sum of us apart. This sense of community that is built when we are

“THE BRAVO ORGANIZATION SHOWS US THAT THE SUM OF US TOGETHER IS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF US APART.”

JIM SANDAGER

together makes a stronger region and helps us celebrate the amenities important to us.”

Arts, culture and heritage are an integral part of Greater Des Moines’ future. And as Bravo celebrates 15 years, the pieces are in place for that robust future. Armed with new priorities and goals, Bravo is entering perhaps its most significant period yet.

“We have the table set, we just have to bring it all to life,” Dix says. “The forces have come together. Because of the solid foundation we have, our partners, and now our new strategy and concept, we have all the elements in place to amplify what has happened in the last 15 years in an exponential way.” ■

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