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## Starlight Announces Uniquely KC Campaign



*A \$40M Campaign to Secure a Historic Kansas City Landmark for Future Generations.*

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – Starlight, the oldest and largest continually operating performing arts organization in the Kansas City metropolitan area, today announced its Uniquely KC campaign. The bold plan will connect the community through live arts experiences that entertain, inspire, and engage and create accessible live arts experiences for all generations at one of Kansas City’s most unique outdoor venues.

The public announcement was made today at Starlight Theatre on the Jeannette and Jerome Cohen Community Stage. Starlight is excited to announce that it has raised \$21.618 million thanks to significant gifts from Sunderland Foundation, the City of Kansas City, Missouri, Hall Family Foundation, the State of Missouri, William T. Kemper Foundation and the Morgan Charitable Foundation, in loving memory of Sandi Morgan.

“Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the future of Starlight will be enhanced for generations to come,” said Lindsey Rood-Clifford, Starlight President + C.E.O. “For more than 70 years, Starlight has provided live performing arts experiences for all at a historic landmark in one of the largest municipal parks in the United States. Through this campaign, we want to not only improve the Starlight experience for our current patrons, but extend the tradition to new, diverse participants of all ages – fostering a shared accessible home for performing arts.”

“The Sunderland Foundation is proud to support Starlight’s Uniquely KC campaign,” said Kent Sunderland, Chairman of the Sunderland Foundation. “We applaud organizations like Starlight that foster a vibrant Kansas City. These capital projects will not only improve Starlight’s iconic venue; they will address needed improvements to welcome new audiences, increase access to the arts to

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underrepresented populations, and bolster the economy.”

The campaign will make capital improvements across the entire Starlight campus, including:

- **Central campus:** Construction of a new robust production truss and light bridge for enhanced production capabilities. Additionally, a new state-of-the-art seating canopy will provide shade to approximately 3,200 seats to allow for summer Broadway matinee programming, and open opportunities for other community events and partnerships.
- **West campus:** Original restrooms on the west campus will be renovated and tripled in capacity to better enhance the Starlight experience. Starlight will continue its dedication to being the home for accessible live arts experiences by adding its first health and nursing rooms and publicly accessible family restrooms.
- **East campus:** Starlight’s kitchen will be renovated to upgrade food and beverage services and expand equipment and storage opportunities.

The campaign will also help launch five new community programs, designed to fill gaps in important arts programming across Kansas City and make the Starlight experience more accessible to all generations. New programs include a free residency program for elementary schools to produce their first musical; a performance series for young audiences and families; a technical theatre training program for students; expansion of Starlight’s existing community tickets program to reduce barriers to participation; and an Arts Bridge program that will activate Starlight’s historic facilities through community partnerships.

Mayra Aguirre, President of the Hall Family Foundation, expressed her support of the campaign for how it will improve the quality of life for all Kansas Citians. “Engagement with the performing arts has the power to unite communities and positively benefit an individual’s physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Through Uniquely KC’s capital improvements and program expansions, Starlight is building on its vision to be the home for accessible live arts experiences – for all people – to reap the benefits of engaging with the arts.”

The campaign is comprised of three major objectives: enrich and expand live arts experiences, create more education and community access opportunities, and enhance the guest experience through venue improvements.

Howard Cohen, President of Starlight’s Board of Directors, stated, “It’s been almost 20 years since Starlight’s last major capital campaign and now is the time to look ahead and support this institution for generations to come. Starlight seeks to attract and develop new arts audiences, enhance arts access and education, foster and support the arts and culture sector in Kansas City, and generate positive economic impact to the region. This campaign will accomplish that and more. We look forward to welcoming all of Kansas City to Starlight when this is complete!”

Starlight’s Uniquely KC construction projects aim to be completed in two phases. Phase 1 is slated to begin in the fall of 2024 and be completed by the spring of 2025, prior to the summer season. Phase 2 is slated to begin in the fall of 2025 with an anticipated completion date of April 2026. Development partners include GastingerWalker& and JE Dunn Construction.

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For renderings and more information about Uniquely KC, visit [www.kcstarlight.com/uniquelykc](http://www.kcstarlight.com/uniquelykc).

### **About Starlight**

Opened as a theatre in 1950 and a nonprofit organization in 1951, Starlight is the largest and oldest performing arts organization in Kansas City, Missouri, and connects our community through live arts experiences that entertain, inspire, and engage audiences of all ages. Offering diverse programming year-round, Starlight presents Broadway musicals, concert events, and extensive community engagement programming, including classes, scholarships, and one of the largest high school musical theatre award programs in the nation. Located on 16 acres in Swope Park, the historic, city-owned venue is the second-largest outdoor producing theatre in the country with almost 8,000 seats.

Follow Starlight on social media @kcstarlight and visit [kcstarlight.com](http://kcstarlight.com) for more information.

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