

STAGEBRIDGE

Oct. 30, 2017

An Important Message from the Stagebridge Board of Directors

[Please help Stagebridge - click here to make a donation today!](#)

Dear fellow Stagebridgers,

It's time for the second annual challenge grant! It's not very often that we write you about fundraising, so **please read this announcement carefully.**

Today, we are kicking-off our matching grant challenge from Aroha Philanthropies, one of our most steadfast supporters. **This year they are providing a \$25,000 match to this effort.** We would like to make this campaign, which runs from today until December 15th, the only fundraising appeal we make to you, our students, this fiscal year. But for this to happen, we need your support in more ways than one.

As some of you may know, we operate at nearly breakeven and without cash reserves, investing all our monies in providing the best performing arts programming for older adults in the world. We have heard from both national and international visitors that Stagebridge's programs are unmatched. When funding is delayed, unexpectedly reduced, or not provided, all of our programs are put at risk. Tremendous strains on cash flow leave us scrambling to cover our program expenses. Our funders require that we be sustainable, yet our performing arts classes barely cover their costs - to say nothing of our outreach programs, which rely on outside funding to continue. Without a cash reserve, we will never be able to build sustainable programming.

The funding scenario nationwide has changed, especially for small, non-profit arts organizations. We have confirmation that many funders who have given to us in the past will not be funding us this fiscal year as their priorities have changed. This creates a huge gap between our expected revenues and expenses. It also means that potential new sources of government and foundation funding are much more competitive. **We all need to take collective action** to help keep Stagebridge the leader in creative aging, and continue doing all the wonderful things we do in the performing arts, at schools, in skilled nursing facilities, and at senior centers around the Bay Area. If we don't meet this challenge and find a sustainable way to fund our work, we will have rolled over to those negative external energies and we will be forced to scale down considerably with diminishing revenues.

There are many things we can do, with your help:

- First, to those students who still have not paid their Fall quarter tuition and are not on scholarships or payment plans, **please pay off your balances now and/or donate**

your credits or refunds.

- Second, we will be having a brown bag luncheon in the next few weeks during this challenge grant campaign where you can meet with your board members and Stagebridge team members to ask questions and offer ideas and suggestions. In turn **we will be looking for students interested in helping us form committees** in marketing, fundraising, outreach, and planning the 40th anniversary celebration next year. We will also keep you updated on new and ongoing efforts in marketing, partnerships, alliances and fundraising.
- Third, we are Oakland's best kept secret and this has to change! **We ask you to help us spread the word** about Stagebridge AND the challenge grant to your friends, neighbors, children, grandchildren, and basically anyone interested in donating or getting their employers involved with us. You all know bankers, brokers, executives, nonprofit personnel and companies that would fall in love with our mission. Our next big donor could be sitting there across the street from your house and you don't know it!
- Finally, Winter and Spring quarters are historically our weakest, not to mention Summer, when we have reduced programming with less revenue. Following our funders' directives of sustainability, beginning January 2018, classes will be priced to better reflect their value and the cost of having outstanding professionals teaching amongst us. This can be as little as a modest \$2.00 increase per class session. No other performing arts entity offers so much for so little and our own peer organizations tell us our current pricing is unsustainable without significant grant funding. For those in need, we still offer generous scholarships. In fact, even during these financially tight times, we didn't increase class prices and we provided over \$3,500 in scholarships so no one was left out.

So, from your board of directors, we kindly ask you to please give promptly and generously during this campaign. Dig deep into your wallets, and then dig deeper. Think about what Stagebridge means to you and the community we serve. If Stagebridge didn't exist, what would you do with that time that would be just as rewarding, fulfilling and life enriching?

Run, don't walk, to make your tax-deductible donations today and let's make this the best fundraiser ever, and bring Stagebridge to solid footing for the future. If you have any questions, feel free to contact any of us via the Stagebridge office or stop by the Executive Director's office.

Stagebridge will get me through times with no money better than money will get me through times with no Stagebridge. -long time Stagebridge student and donor

On behalf of your board and the Stagebridge team, we thank you in advance for your generous and unwavering support.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Flynn, Chairman
Marcia Grossman, Secretary
Ruksana Azhu Valappil, Ph.D.
Claire Wahrhaftig
Natalie Fay
Nader Robert Shabahangi, Ph.D.

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Stagebridge was founded in 1978 by Dr. Stuart Kandell.

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Our community partners: Aegis Senior Living, Agesong, Albany Senior Center, Aluminous Theater Company, Aurora Theater, Alzheimer's Association of Northern California & Nevada, Center for Elders Independence, Cornerstone Theater Company, Creative Aging San Francisco Bay Area, Department of Health and Human Services Brain Health Campaign, Elder Care Alliance, FICTILIS, The First Congregational Church of Oakland The Flight Deck, Institute on Aging, Jack London Improvement District, The Marsh, Medical Hill, Mercy Retirement and Care Center, Northern California Presbyterian Homes, Oakland Unified School District, Piedmont Center for the Arts, Piedmont Players, Ragged Wing Theater Company, St. Mary's Center, Satellite Affordable Housing Associates, Senior Center Without Walls, Shields Skilled Nursing, Shotgun Players, South Berkeley Senior Center, Storycorps, Storytelling Association of California, Strawberry Creek Lodge, Tell It On Tuesday, Timeslips, UCSF Memory & Aging Center, The Villages San Jose, Wee Poets, West Contra Costa School District, West Oakland Senior Center.

Local businesses that support us: Amazon Smiles, Barefoot Wine, Books Inc Alameda, C.L. P. Specialties, Grand Copier, Grocery Outlet, Numi Tea, The Oakland A's, Oracle, Piedmont Grocery, The Piedmont Post, Roast Coffee Co., Safeway, Salesforce, Solano Express, Sprouts, Whole Foods, Z's Café, 7-11 at 2350 Harrison St. Oakland, CA

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