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Q1

Arts/Culture Organization Information

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Arts/Culture Organization	Window Seat Media
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Q2

Project Name

Brave Practice Playback Theatre Collective

Q3

Project Summary

Window Seat Media is a community of multimedia storytellers in the South Sound region who use story as a catalyst for conversation, connection, and social change. Our mission is to amplify local knowledge, share powerful ideas, and ask what is possible. We weave stories that have been forgotten, silenced, or ignored into the fabric of our public life because we believe our future is written with the stories we narrate, and we are committed to creating a more inclusive, connected, and just world.

In the fall of 2021 we launched a new community engagement program: Brave Practice Playback Theatre Collective. Brave Practice offers ongoing workshops, community-based collaborations with local organizations, and performances using Playback Theatre. Playback is an original form of interactive and improvisational theatre where people tell true stories from their lives and others enact them on the spot using music, dialogue, metaphor, and movement. Brave Practice uses theatre as a tool to help people connect together in community through deep listening, storytelling, and making art with empathy.

With practice, we know that bravery is a skill we can grow over time. By creating a community space for people to take supported risks, our company encourages participants to nurture the inherent bravery inside themselves. Especially in the context of the pandemic, where mental health struggles and isolation are at an all-time high, simply the act of coming together in community and being vulnerable can feel like a risk. We invite participants to explore themes such as deep listening, personal identity, community wisdom, care, and responsibility to bridge social divides and seek a deeper understanding of ourselves, other perspectives, and the human experience. Through storytelling, we work to acknowledge our shared humanity and celebrate our differences across identities and backgrounds (multiple and intersecting racial-ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religious/spiritual, national, and socioeconomic identities). As a company, we engage in ongoing learning and dialogue on the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion, asset-based community development, civic engagement, and Playback skills and techniques to be of better service to our diverse community.

Brave Practice programming enhances WSM's current community engagement offerings. Ongoing workshops (both virtual and in-person, as permitted) add a low-barrier way for the community to become involved with WSM's community oral history and storytelling projects. This helps broaden our reach and attract new interest and support.

Q4

Total Grant Request Amount

\$5,000

Q5

What types of expenses will your grant be used to cover?

City funding will support the following activities of Brave Practice:

- Support for program expenses, including space rentals and supplies,
- Support for staff time dedicated to planning and implementation, and
- Support for ongoing learning and community dialogue

We are requesting \$5,000 to support the launch of Brave Practice as an ongoing community engagement program of Window Seat Media. As detailed in the budget, the overall cost of operating the program exceeds the anticipated revenue. Funding will enable us to facilitate Brave Practice planning, programming, and community partnerships. Funding will also help support space rentals, promotional and communications services, stipends for performers, incentives for community collaborators, and start-up costs. We have factored a percentage of Window Seat Media's operating and business expenses into the budget because WSM is functioning as the backbone support organization for Brave Practice's community engagement efforts. We are actively pursuing multiple funding streams to support community engagement at Window Seat Media so that community members can count on repeated offerings. Funding from the City of Olympia will be a crucial support to the success of this initiative.

Q6

Yes

Eligibility - To apply for this opportunity organizations must:- Have programs centered on arts and/or culture in Olympia- Minimum two-year history of continuous operation serving Olympia residents- Be a 501(c)3 non-profit organization- Have at least one ongoing arts program open to the public in Olympia- A City of Olympia Business License
Previous grant recipients must wait one granting cycle before reapplying
Does your program/organization meet eligibility?

Q7

How does your Arts/Culture Organization's prior experience ensure a successful project?

Window Seat is a community of multimedia storytellers in the South Puget Sound who use story as a catalyst for conversation, connection and change. We are especially committed to weaving the stories that have been forgotten, silenced, or ignored into the fabric of our public life. We do this because we believe we write our future with the stories we narrate, and we are committed to helping to create an inclusive, connected, and just world.

Oral history and personal narrative are at the center of our work. We experiment with a variety of formats - Playback Theatre, community conversations, podcasts, film screenings, exhibits, and more - to amplify local knowledge, share powerful ideas, and ask what is possible. We carry out our work in three primary ways:

- 1) We teach workshops in nonprofit storytelling, media literacy and oral history to support community engagement and local change-making;
- 2) We offer multimedia storytelling services to raise awareness and funds; and
- 3) We curate community oral history and storytelling projects to elevate local knowledge, share powerful ideas, and ask what is possible.

Our work is both highly collaborative and experimental. We love finding points of intersection with others to increase our collective impact through collaborative oral history and storytelling projects in the region. We have two paid part-time staff, one who is also the founder, and many collaborators (both paid and volunteer) who bring their unique skills to help further our mission. Our collaborators include multimedia storytellers, artists, academics, community organizers, and community organizations.

Our current and past community storytelling projects have included:

Window Seat Media launched in 2017 with Voices from the Harbor, an event series that was co-curated by Window Seat Media and The Evergreen State College with funding from Humanities Washington. The primary goal of Voices from the Harbor was to put the Grays Harbor region's history to work as a community development tool. Some of the project's core assumptions are that, if you know what to look for, a walk down the street can reveal the history of a community, a neighbor's memory can provide insight into the lessons and experiences of a generation of citizens. By creating a space for community conversations about the evolution of the Harbor, we added critical perspective to development efforts intended to solve contemporary issues like affordable housing and homelessness.

We launched our community oral history project, The Third Thirty, in partnership with Senior Services of South Sound in 2018. The Third Thirty is an ongoing community oral history project that invites South Sound elders to share their stories and memories about a moment in time or to explore a question or theme in relation to their own experience. The stories are gathered by Thurston County residents – many who are also in their “third thirty” years of life – who enroll in a workshop taught by WSM. Participants learn the art and practice of oral history, build their listening and interviewing skills, and consider the ethical issues of gathering and sharing other peoples' stories while interviewing a community member. We then share the stories through public readings, a podcast, and community exhibits. Our most recent exhibit was on display at Browsers Bookshop in downtown Olympia in October and featured six community leaders and artists, including Nat and Thelma Jackson, Harvest Moon, Pat Holm, Debe Edden, Tom Anderson and Lyn Hertz. The series will grow as it moves out Olympia City Hall and then to The Evergreen State College in the winter of 2022.

In 2019 and 2020 we curated a multimedia, multidisciplinary conversation series called InhaleExhale about death and dying in collaboration with local artists and people working in end-of-life care. The project is guided by a few questions: What are our “blueprints” for dying? Where do these stories come from and how do they inform the care we seek and receive? What stories challenge our understanding – or are challenging to hear – and what can we learn from them? We curated a variety of monthly events – from visual and performing arts events, to community conversations and nuts and bolts workshops – to explore these questions together.

Local and state-wide organizations and groups also hire Window Seat Media to provide multimedia storytelling services, like videos for fundraising events, and to host workshops that train organizations to do it themselves. Our past clients have included the Community Foundation of South Puget Sound, the Community Farmland Trust, CIELO, the Center for Washington Cultural Traditions (a program of Humanities Washington and the Washington State Arts Commission), and the Thurston Conservation District.

Our strength is partnership-driven projects that are grounded in authentic relationships with mutual benefit. We believe that Brave Practice builds on these values and will provide an even more accessible way for us to connect deeper to old and new friends within our community to share stories.

Q8

Please summarize the public benefit of your proposed project. Please describe in what ways this project will reach underserved communities.

Storytelling is a vital part of human life. It affords opportunity for reflection, deep listening, and engagement with ourselves, each other, and the world around us. In a society that has become more polarized, less civically engaged, and less willing to learn from different perspectives, community storytelling can nourish, heal, and strengthen our communal life. We understand that stories are told not only through words, but also through all oral traditions, including the food we grow and prepare, the music we make, dances we perform, our handicrafts, traditions, and rituals. We aspire to gather and share nuanced, layered stories with artistic and ethical integrity.

WSM is committed to walking our talk when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion. As a worker self-directed nonprofit with equal pay and shared leadership, we are a nimble organization that thrives on synergy, abundance thinking, and experimentation. We value human-centered relationships, community in our homeplace, collaboration, transparency, and trust. We work to tailor our offerings based on community needs and assets, engage in active inquiry to continually refine our practice, prioritize accessibility and cultural responsiveness in our programming, and center voices that have historically been in the margins.

Community-based collaborations with partner organizations through Brave Practice deepen our existing ties in the community. Over our 5 years of programming, Window Seat has collaborated with a diverse array of communities on community-driven storytelling projects, including CIELO, the South Sound Chapter of the Asian Pacific Islanders Coalition, the Center for Washington Cultural Traditions, and the Looking Back, Moving Forward project. Brave Practice is building a relationship with Khurshida Begum at ASHHO Cultural Community Center to co-produce events centering survivors, communities of color, and historically underserved community members. We are invested in building a long-term relationship with ASHHO and being of service where storytelling and oral history skills can serve alongside and in collaboration with some ASHHO community programming. On November 6, Brave Practice will take part in the Walk With Erin Jones event, where folx walk alongside each other to connect and create change. After everyone returns from the walk and can eat delicious ethnic comfort food cooked by chef Khurshida, they can participate in a Playback Theatre event, tell stories and listen deeply in community with Brave Practice. Community members will be invited to reflect on the theme of Pay it Forward: Stories of food, hunger, and how abundance can feed us all. We feel mission and value alignment with ASHHO and couldn't be more excited to explore ongoing collaborative possibilities.

There is great need to amplify the voices of those who have been forgotten, silenced, or ignored throughout history. We would love to partner with the City of Olympia so that we can share stories that lift up our shared humanity, celebrate our differences, and help us collectively make the world we want to live in.

Q9

How does this project expand or build upon the arts in our community?

Brave Practice was born from the legacy of the Heartsparkle Players, a longstanding community-centered Playback Theatre troupe in the South Sound region. Debe Edden, the artistic director of the Heartsparkle Players, has mentored Meg Rosenberg, co-founder of Brave Practice and the new Community Weaver at Window Seat Media, for the last half-decade. Debe has served as a creative collaborator, trusted advisor, and board member of Window Seat Media since its inception, and introduced Meg to Elaine Vradenburgh, Curator and Co-founded of WSM. Since graduating with their MPA (Evergreen, '18), Meg has honed an organizational plan for a new Playback Theatre company in the South Sound region. Running Brave Practice as a community engagement program through Window Seat Media is a dream of community service, connection, and social change coming true. Our kickoff public workshop took place on September 19, 2021 at the ASHHO Cultural Community Center. In October, Brave Practice and the Heartsparkle Players hosted a joint online performance on the theme 'Roots and Wings' to introduce Brave Practice to the local community and larger international Playback community. We look forward to a 2021-22 season full of workshops, joint-performances, and community partnerships.

Q10

Describe any other funding you have pursued for this project in addition to the Arts/Culture Organization's contributions and the City's matching grant. Please indicate whether the funding has been secured.

We have secured \$5,000 in funding from the Freas Foundation (the matching funds for this grant) and have submitted a request for \$10,000 from Humanities Washington. We have also committed \$2640 of our individual 2022 fundraising goal toward supporting this new program.

Q11

Project Expenses: please list a description and the amount of each project expense. (Eg. Artist fees: \$500)

Project Expense 1	Workshop space: \$450
Project Expense 2	Rehearsal space: \$300
Project Expense 3	Performance venue: \$250
Project Expense 4	Performer stipend: \$200
Project Expense 5	Promotional materials and communications services: \$100
Project Expense 6	Start-up costs: \$200
Project Expense 7	Operating costs: \$140
Project Expense 8	Community partner incentive: \$100
Project Expense 9	Business expenses: \$250
Project Expense 10	Staff time: \$21,600
Total Expenses	\$23,590

Q12

Project Income (Matching Funds): please list a description and the amount of each project income source (Eg. Ticket sales: \$500) this can include dollar and in-kind sources. (Note: volunteer hours can be included as "project income". Each volunteer hour is valued at \$31.72. To calculate the In-kind dollar value of your volunteer hours multiply the total number of hours by \$31.72. (Eg. 10 Volunteer Hours: \$317.20)

Project Income 1	Workshop Registration Fees: \$150
Project Income 2	Special events/Commissioned Performances: \$300
Project Income 3	Community-based Performance Revenue/Donations: \$500
Project Income 4	Secured/Match Grant (Freas Foundation): \$5,000
Project Income 5	Submitted Grant Proposals (Humanities WA): \$10,000
Project Income 6	Individual Gifts: \$2,640
Total Income (Matching Funds)	\$18,950
Grant Request Amount	\$5,000
Overall Total (Add total income & Grant Request amount)	\$23,950

Q13

Respondent skipped this question

Optional: Please upload any supplemental information.

Q14

Please attach verification of your organization's 501(c)3 status.

WSM_IRSLETTER.PDF (29.2KB)
