



JUSTIFICATION FOR WAIVER OF RENT

TUCSON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

June 14, 2013

I. Overview

Arts Express has a rich heritage leading back to its incorporation in 1998 and its recognition as a 501(c)3 in 1999. Founded by arts educators Drs. Joan and David Ashcraft, the mission of Arts Express, Inc. is to change lives and build a better community by creating opportunities for children and adults to learn and experience the power of the arts. Arts Express serves the people of Pima County and strives to: (1) Establish partnerships with local programs, businesses, artists and other professionals who share similar goals; (2) Provide access and meaningful arts engagement opportunities for all individuals (regardless of age, race, ethnicity, income, gender, religion, sexual orientation or ability); and (3) Maintain the highest artistic standards in all its endeavors.

Arts Express productions like *A Hero's Salute* and *Let Freedom Sing* provide opportunities for civic engagement and family entertainment for the entire community. Through its arts education programs (including the Behind the Scenes-Broadway and More program, Express Yourself Vocal Competition and the Saturday/summer Fine Arts Youth Academy programs), Arts Express opens up the world of the arts to youth. Arts Express aims to teach, cultivate and enrich young people so that they might experience the power of the arts while learning to become productive citizens. As a trusted arts education provider for 12 years, Arts Express primarily serves Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) students and families. In fact, in 2012-13, 84% of the Arts Express arts education enrollees were TUSD students.



For its FAYA Program, **ARTS EXPRESS** is a 2011 recipient of the

Child & Family Services Making Children's Lives Better Award!

In addition to its partnership with TUSD, Arts Express forged partnerships with influential entities and individuals who share the goal of enriching the quality of life for Southern Arizona youth. Of particular significance are the partnerships with the Broadway in Tucson, Tucson Symphony Orchestra, Arizona Opera Company, UApresents, and Opening Minds through the Arts (OMA). These associations bring additional experience and expertise, expanding opportunities for FAYA students.

Operating under a November 2008 –June 2013 lease, Arts Express rented office/storage space from TUSD at the nominal fee of \$1/year at Naylor Middle School. During the summer of 2011, Arts Express was asked to relocate to the PACE building located at 594 S. Campbell Avenue. After facilitating this move, Arts Express received an amendment to the lease agreement from TUSD designating the new address and adding the requirement that Arts Express pay for utilities and maintenance. Over the last year, Arts Express has faithfully paid for the building utilities and maintenance. The organization was granted a waiver of rent for the space for the 2012-13 period based on its provision of services to TUSD students and families at below-market rates and financing of scholarships for many TUSD students. In order to continue these services for TUSD students and families, Arts Express hereby requests a continued waiver of rent for use of the PACE building during the 2013-14 period (through June 2014). Arts Express is actively looking for new space and expects to be relocated by the end of the June 2014 lease term.

II. Provision of Quality Summer Arts Programming for TUSD Students at Below-Market Rates and Financing of Scholarships for Needy Students

FAYA provides summer arts immersion programming for students grades 2-12. Held in the month of June, half day and full day options are available. The morning session (8:00 am – 12:00 noon) is comprised of classes in various art forms, including dance, visual arts, choral music, band and orchestra. Students participate in two 1 hour and 50 minutes classes with a 20 minute break provided between classes. Standards –based arts instruction is aligned to the students’ individual age and skill level. Students are engaged not only with their assigned arts teacher but also with artists in master class situations to expand their individual technical abilities. FAYA instructors address the skills and techniques that allow students to create art, understand art in specific contexts, and develop skills to assess and reflect on their own art creations as well as artwork of others. A supervised lunch and recreational period is held from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm.

In the afternoon, students participate in the study and production of a musical theater production, complete with music, dance, drama and stagecraft. Auditions are held during the first three days of the session and assigned roles for all students will be announced. The program culminates with student performances, art exhibits and musical theatre productions that are open to the public.

Through the years, Arts Express has worked hard to keep the FAYA tuition affordable for TUSD families. Through effective management, low overhead and development of a dedicated team of volunteers, FAYA is by far the best summer program value in town as shown by the following comparison:

	Classes Rate/Hour
U of A Youth University: \$375-\$395 for one-week session; \$435 for two week session	\$12.42 - \$19.75
St. Gregory’s Mind's Alive Summer Program Classes: \$295/2 wks for half day; \$490/2 wks for full day	\$11.80 (HT) and \$9.80 (FT)
Catalina Foothills Community Schools Summer Program Classes: \$120/wk for half day; \$220/wk for full day	\$6/hr (HT) and \$6.29 (FT)
Arts Express Fine Arts Youth Academy: \$345/4-weeks half day; \$725/3-weeks full day	\$4.33 for (HT) and \$4.04 (FT)

	Junior Musical Theatre Rate/Hour
Catalina Foothills Community Schools Junior Musical: 3 wks 4 hrs at \$415	\$6.91
Arts Express Fine Arts Youth Academy Junior Musical: \$330/4-weeks half day	\$4.12
	HS Musical Theatre Rate/Hour
Christian Youth Theatre Summer HS Musical: 2 wks 5.5 hrs at \$325	\$5.90
Catalina Foothills Community Schools Summer HS Musical: 4 wks 4 hrs at \$415	\$5.19
Arts Express Fine Arts Youth Academy HS Musical: \$360/4- weeks half day	\$4.50

Assuming a minimum of a \$2/hour difference between FAYA and other local summer programs, Arts Express saves families \$160 each summer (\$2 x 80 hrs of programming). For 2012, this savings totaled \$15,840 for TUSD students and families. Because FAYA operates on a small margin, any increase in rent or other overhead would be passed on directly to FAYA students (primarily TUSD families).

FAYA fills the gap for arts education in Southern Arizona, providing intensive summer arts study for at-risk kids. FAYA seeks to provide access to the arts for every child in the community. Students from all economic situations are able to attend the Academy because the playing field is leveled through scholarship opportunities. On average, scholarships are provided to approximately 54% of the students based on financial need and recommendations of school counselors and teachers. Scholarships are based on the Federal Government's Income Qualification Scale for public schools. A parent or guardian completes the application and provides documentation to support their financial need. Supporting documentation includes the most current W-2, front page of the most current Federal tax form, or most current schedule C form (self-employed). All services and scholarships are provided without discrimination based on race, religion, gender, age, disability, national origin or sexual orientation.

Because an overwhelming majority of FAYA's enrollment is from TUSD, most of the program's scholarships are provided to TUSD students. In 2011, Arts Express provided FAYA scholarships for TUSD students as follows:

	# Students	\$ of Scholarships
TUSD students qualifying for and receiving FAYA – Summer scholarships in 2012	53	\$10,202

Arts Express generates funds for scholarships via its community events, individual and corporate donations as well as grant and foundation applications.

III. Provision of Quality Saturday Arts Programming for TUSD Students at Below-Market Rates and Financing of Scholarships for Needy Students

The demand for a quality arts education program on the weekend has prompted Arts Express to provide a 6 week arts program on Saturdays. Miller Elementary School, a Title I school on Tucson’s southwest side, was the first site for this program which began in Spring 2013. Plans are now underway to continue this programming for the 2013-14 school year, providing a Saturday program at this site each quarter. Students attend six 2-hour classes from 8:00am to 10:00am, with separate programming provided for Kindergarten – 2nd grade and 3rd – 5th grade students. For the first session, visual arts and dance classes were offered. Classes in other arts disciplines will be offered in the future. The program culminates with a showcase for student families and friends.

	# Students	\$ of Scholarships
TUSD students qualifying for and receiving FAYA-Saturday scholarships in Spring 2013	21	\$1,365

During the 2013-14 school year, similar programming will be developed at other Title I elementary and middle schools throughout the Tucson area.

IV. Provision of Quality Broadway Behind the Scenes Programming for TUSD Students at Below-Market Rates and Financing of Scholarships for Needy Students

Behind the Scenes: Broadway and More! (BTS)

Arts Express believes that for today's students to be future innovators and leaders, they need to experience the benefit of the arts in their community. Arts Express conceptualized the *Behind the Scenes* program as a vehicle to open the world of the arts to local youth. The program was developed in 2011 in partnership with Broadway in Tucson and expanded to other art forms in partnership with UApresents.

Each BTS program is tailored to the age-range that is appropriate for the production and the themes of the production itself. In order to provide an optimum learning experience, BTS programming begins in the classroom before the show and extends through post show education as follows:

- **Pre-Program Education** – Arts Express connects with the attending schools prior to the performance to assist with integrating the topics of the upcoming performance into the curriculum. Study guides and other educational materials from the production are provided to the schools to use as tools. For instance, in preparation for the recent production of *Memphis*, Arts Express worked with the social studies teacher of San Miguel High School to tie in their study of civil rights into the musical’s depiction of the birth of rock ‘n’ roll in Memphis during the 1950’ s.
- **Saturday Session**
 - ✓ **Workshop** – A two-hour workshop is led by a highly qualified theater professional, focused on a topic specific to the production. For example, students in the *STOMP* workshop learned how to create their own choreographed rhythms and moves using household objects. The *Mary Poppins* workshop was a master class providing training in magical “tricks of the trade” used in theater production.
 - ✓ **Behind the Scenes Experience** – Next, the students get a behind the scenes look at the show’s production. During this segment, students learn what it’s like to live and perform on the road as a Broadway performer and what it takes to produce a Broadway show and adapt it to each venue. For instance, for the production of *Rock of Ages*, the students met with the company Stage Manager who took the students on a close-up-and-personal tour of the set. For *Shrek*, the students met with the company’s Prop Designer and Costumers that showed how Pinocchio’s nose was made to expand/retract and other tricks of the trade. The lead performers of *STOMP* met with the students and told personal stories of how they got their start on Broadway.
 - ✓ **Lunch** – Students then have a short break for lunch and a time for relaxation with other students.
 - ✓ **Showcase** – Students perform a short showcase for the public as they arrive for the matinee, highlighting the skills they learned during the workshop.
 - ✓ **Matinee** – Students attend the matinee of the Broadway performance with designated chaperones. Teachers are encouraged to attend with their students in order to provide a direct connection with the learning process. In addition, parents may buy tickets and attend with their student if desired.
- **Post-Program Education** – Arts Express follows up with each school to provide the tools for post-show discussion and assessment of the program.

Because of its wide appeal, Arts Express began the BTS program in conjunction with Broadway musical theatre productions. This experience provided Arts Express with a strong foundation to expand its programming into all genres of performing arts. UApresents is the ideal partner, bringing the world’s finest classical, jazz and contemporary musicians and other performers to our community.

	# Students	\$ of Scholarships
TUSD students qualifying for and receiving Behind the Scenes scholarships in 2012-13	47	\$3,055

V. Summary

In conclusion, please consider the continued waiver of rent for Arts Express based on the following benefits of TUSD's partnership with Arts Express:

Direct Benefits of TUSD's Partnership with Arts Express

- Arts Express provides quality arts education programs, including FAYA-Summer, FAYA-Saturday and Broadway Behind the Scenes.
- A majority of FAYA enrollees are TUSD students (84% in 2012-13)
- By keeping overhead low, Arts Express provides FAYA at a below-market rate (a savings of \$15,840 for TUSD students and families in 2012)
- Arts Express generates funds and awards scholarships based on financial need (in 2012-13, scholarships totaling \$14,622 were awarded to TUSD students).

	# Students	\$ of Scholarships
TUSD students qualifying for and receiving FAYA – Summer scholarships in 2012	53	\$10,202
TUSD students qualifying for and receiving FAYA-Saturday scholarships in Spring 2013	21	\$1,365
TUSD students qualifying for and receiving Behind the Scenes scholarships in 2012-13	47	\$3,055
Total for June 2012-May 2013 Period	121	\$14,622

As demonstrated above, the benefits that Arts Express brings to TUSD students and families far outweigh the proposed \$9,600 in rent. Moreover, any increase in the Arts Express overhead would have to be passed on directly as higher tuition for TUSD students and families. Given the current economic environment, such an increase would be extremely difficult for TUSD families to manage and equally as difficult for Arts Express to raise from other sources. Ultimately such an increase could be the demise of this relatively small but demonstrably effective program. Therefore, TUSD's support of this successful partnership by means of a continued waiver of rent is essential to the ongoing provision of this valuable arts immersion resource.