

January 19, 2015

Dear Councillors,

I am writing to you today in support of a funding request that is before you from the Palace Theatre. As someone who has volunteered for, performed with and worked for the Palace (through a Job Creation Partnership, or JCP), I can tell you that this organization needs and deserves our help.

Run largely on a volunteer basis, the Palace has very few salaried positions. Much of the money they make through ticket sales or receive through donations and grants goes back into the theatre itself to keeping it running and in a state of good repair. Often though there are shortfalls, which is why they are coming to you now. A leaky roof which has now been fixed has left some walls which were previously, painstakingly repaired in poor condition. The Palace wants to give their patrons the best possible experience when they come to the theatre, and the appearance of the theatre can enhance or detract from that experience.

Community theatre is an important part of the cultural fabric of a city. Community theatre is **our** theatre, and has a great impact on youth, the elderly, area businesses and a community's identity. It offers a gateway to new experiences and knowledge, whether it is on stage or behind the scenes. It gives local actors and crafts persons a chance to expose their talents and become a part of a production and community, and in the end giving them a great sense of accomplishment.

As you know, the Old East Village has been on a huge upswing over the last few years and the Palace has played a large role in this change. Through the JCP they were able to employ several people from the community to assist in various ways around the theatre and the neighbourhood. From maintenance personnel, to gardeners to my position which was acting a liaison between the Palace and local businesses to create an atmosphere of partnership and co-promotion, the Palace has always put the community first.

Please, put them first. They typically do not ask for a lot from the city and run the theatre with integrity, which I greatly respect. This is one time when we need to say yes to a request that will have not only an impact on the Palace itself, but the community as a whole. When one aspect of a community thrives, we all benefit. And as I demonstrated above, the benefits of community theatre are huge.

Thank you for taking the time to read my note in support of the Palace, and for taking their request into consideration.

Sincerely,

Jo-Anne Bishop