Tourism Grant Recommendation

DATE:    October 23, 2019
FROM:  Corey King, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resource Director

Background/Issue:
The Tourism Grant program offered by the Town of Matthews is designed to provide financial assistance to non-profit organizations that provide an event or program designed to promote visitation and tourism in Matthews. The grant is funded through hotel/motel occupancy and prepared food and beverage taxes. Permitted uses for these funds are defined by the State of North Carolina, and this grant program falls within the parameters of permitted uses. Partnering with non-profit organizations in these activities has been an efficient and effective method to boost economic development through tourism and visitation in Matthews.

The grant process includes application submission by requesting non-profit organizations, and evaluation of the applications by a sub-committee of the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resource Advisory Committee and department staff. Each applicant was asked to provide written details surrounding their project or event, and describe the impact that their program/event has on tourism in Matthews. The budgeted amount for FY20 tourism grant award is $83,000.

The Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resource Advisory Committee reviewed the applications and notes from the sub-committee evaluation to develop a recommendation for grant awards. The attached document displays the grant award recommended for each applicant.

Proposal/Solution:
Staff endorses approval of the grant award amounts recommended by the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resource Advisory Committee.

Financial Impact:
Financial impact would equal disbursement of $66,000 to the non-profit organizations awarded.
**Related Town Goal:**
Quality of life: To maintain our small town identity by providing a vibrant downtown, pedestrian friendly community, extensive greenspace system, and recreational and cultural activities.

**Recommended Motion:**
Approve recommended tourism grant award amounts to the selected non-profit organizations

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2019 – 2020 Tourism Grant Applications and Recommendation

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<td>Charlotte City Ballet</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
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<td>Special Olympics: Fall Tournament</td>
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<td>Matthews Kiwanis Club</td>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
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*See individual applicant information attached
Charlotte City Ballet Company is a pre-professional, community-based, nonprofit ballet company whose mission is to provide quality performance training and performance opportunities for aspiring dancers and to enrich the Charlotte-area through its public performances and outreach programs. The members of Charlotte City Ballet Company (CCBC) range in age from 13 to 18. The company is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that was founded by Claudia Folts and Beverly Barwick in 1985. Melissa Hale Coyle and Lisa Leone currently serve as artistic directors of the company, which is governed by a Board of Directors.

CCBC includes both classical and contemporary works in its repertoire. We’re proud to have performed with the Charlotte Philharmonic Orchestra, Carolina Voices, BalletFest Atlanta and Charlotte Civic Orchestra. Each year CCBC participates in the Festival of North Carolina Dance and while a member of the Southeastern Regional Ballet Association enjoyed honor company status.

In 2019, Charlotte City Ballet Company was featured in a television advertisement for Audi Charlotte. The ad initially aired during the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade on WCNC (NBC Charlotte) and was featured on the network throughout the holiday season.

In 2020, five Charlotte City Ballet Company members will compete in the Youth America Grand Prix. YAGP is the world’s largest and one of the most prestigious international ballet competitions. We believe this speaks well to the quality of dance education being offered by Charlotte City Ballet Company’s instructors, and the dedication of its dancers. In the 2019 YAGP regional competition, one CCBC dancer placed in the top 10 and two placed in the top 25.

CCBC is presenting two shows at Matthews Community Center’s Fullwood Theatre during its 2019-20 season. The first, Prelude to the Holidays, will be Saturday, November 9 at 1:00 p.m. and 4 p.m. The spring show, a storybook ballet, will be Saturday, May 2 at 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. These dates have already been secured with Fullwood Theatre.

Our performances enable the dancers to display their talents and while exposing residents in the Matthews area and across the greater Charlotte region to an element of the arts. CCBC’s dancers reside in Mecklenburg and Union counties. They promote the shows in their own schools, churches and communities. Together with targeted marketing tactics, this increases the attendance draw to Matthews from surrounding cities and towns, including those in which our dancers live.

Charlotte City Ballet Company presented one show at Matthews Community Center’s Fullwood Theatre during its 2018-19 season. Prelude to the Holidays, was on Saturday, Nov. 3 at 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Fullwood’s capacity is 378. CCBC had attendance of 188 and 221, for a total of 409 paid attendees at the two performances. There were an additional 100 attendees at each show from other outreach initiatives that are detailed below. Total attendance at Prelude to the Holidays was 609. Additionally, paid attendance at Prelude in 2018 was up 84% from 2017.

CCBC dancers visited the Brace Family YMCA Preschool Academy in October, gave a short performance and met the preschoolers. As part of this outreach, we distributed about 40 tickets to the preschool’s families, many of whom attended the November show. Complementary tickets were also distributed to the staff of Matthews Help Center, three church preschools in downtown Matthews (Matthews Presbyterian, First Baptist Matthews and Matthews United Methodist Church) and a local homeschool consortium. These efforts increased attendance at Prelude to the Holidays by an additional 100 people per show.
CCBC’s second show of the 2018-19 season, Snow White, was held at Cuthbertson High School in Waxhaw. Fullwood Theatre was not available, due to scheduling conflicts. Attendance at both performances totaled 362. We refined our social media campaign strategy to target Union County and doubled the number of tickets sold that could be attributed to that Facebook and Instagram campaign. Our plan is to promote both of the 2019-20 season’s shows to these families and draw them to Matthews to attend a performance. We have budgeted $800 per show during the 2019-20 season for paid Facebook/Instagram, and would increase that amount with additional funds from the Matthews tourism grant.

We are delighted to be back at Fullwood for both the holiday show and a springtime storybook ballet during the 2019-20 season, and that we have locked in a fall and a spring date at the theater for our performances in the future. It is the perfect venue for our performances and really feels like home our dancers and their families.

Audience members travel to the town of Matthews to see the show but while in town, they also eat at local restaurants for lunch and supper, shop at the resident shops and seize the opportunity to discover more about what the town of Matthews offers. In addition, CCBC has 15 families within our company that dine and shop in Matthews while the dancers are at the theater both on performance day and the day prior for rehearsal.

The winter performance is an annual event that will take place for the 16th season this year. This is also the 35th anniversary of Charlotte City Ballet Company. We enjoy our relationship with the Fullwood Theatre and its employees. They will speak for our etiquette and care of the theater when we use it. We are committed to the continuation of our relationship with the town of Matthews and the theater.

Our winter performance is the only one of its kind in the Matthews and Charlotte areas. Prelude to the Holidays consists of a first act of repertory pieces showcasing the versatility of the dancers plus original choreography by the company’s artistic directors, and a second act comprised of dances from The Nutcracker. It is the perfect entry-level ballet performance for families with children to attend. The running time of the show is about an hour and a half. With the help of the Town of Matthews tourism grant, CCBC has been able to maintain a low per ticket price of $12. This price point allows families with children to attend a pre-professional level ballet performance that otherwise may be cost prohibitive.

We encourage our youngest audience members to dress up like a prince/princess or ballet dancer when they attend a show and also to meet and have their photographs taken with the CCBC dancers following the performances. We strive to make our performances accessible for aspiring dancers and their families, offering discount programs to local schools and non-profit organizations.

With the requested grant, we plan to keep ticket prices low and increase our social marketing initiatives to grow our audience.

CCBC will continue to pursue targeted social media marketing during the 2019-20 season, with the assistance of the tourism grant. In September and October 2018, CCBC promoted Prelude to the Holidays with a Facebook/Instagram campaign that targeted over 50,000 people in Matthews and Charlotte. People were able to purchase tickets directly from the ad. By utilizing a tracking code set up in our online ticketing system, we determined that ticket revenue of $348 could be directly attributed to that Facebook/Instagram campaign. We continued to refine our social media campaign strategy for our
2019 spring show, Snow White, at Cuthbertson High School and were able to double the number of tickets sold that could be directly attributed to Facebook/Instagram.

CCBC has developed relationships within the Town of Matthews, and seeks to expand those relationships through both marketing and service opportunities:

- Offering free advertising to Matthews businesses in our programs. This season CCBC will continue to help market Matthews businesses in this way, with a focus on small businesses that do not have the complication of corporate restrictions on advertising.

- Driving attendance at the holiday performance by inviting Matthews businesses to display our event poster in their establishments, plus offering a discount on their services with a copy of the program from CCBC performances

- CCBC has developed a relationship with The Flower Boutique, a Matthews-based business, and will continue to market their flowers to CCBC parents via a pre-performance purchase program.

- CCBC plans to partner with the Brace Family YMCA to do a mini performance event in advance of our performances. The dancers will wear their beautiful costumes which will make it even more fun for the attendees.

- This year, CCBC is partnering with Matthews Help Center to help stock their food pantry. We are collecting donations of personal care items at our holiday gathering and spring party. These donations will be delivered to the Matthews Help Center by CCBC dancers.

Other marketing initiatives include:

- Discount ticket program for local Girl Scouts who are part of the Hornets’ Nest Council. Individual troops are invited to our performances at a reduced cost, a great way to meet an arts requirement on a badge, to introduce younger Girl Scouts to ballet, and to have a fun troop or mother-daughter outing. We also promote the show on the Council’s community calendar.

- Social media notices through CCBC’s social media pages: facebook.com/charlottecityballetcompany and instagram.com/charlottecityballet

- Targeting approximately 50,000 people in Matthews, Charlotte and Union County with a Facebook advertisement that will include a “buy now” button so that people can purchase tickets directly from the ad

- Inclusion in Charlotte Parent Magazine’s calendar of events, Charlotte Agenda’s “Weekender” listing, and various social media community sites targeting Matthews, Waxhaw and Mint Hill

- A homepage marketing banner on the CCBC website: charlottecityballet.org
• Ticket sales through Groupon for two months prior to the shows

• Electronic messaging to all students at Matthews Elementary and Elizabeth Lane Elementary promoting the performances and offering a ticket discount

• Promote events to past ticket purchasers using our ticketing system, Ticketleap

• Outreach to Matthews-area private and charter schools, including Covenant Day and Matthews Charter Academy in Matthews, Queens Grant in Mint Hill, with flyers promoting the show

• Outreach to church preschools in downtown Matthews (Matthews Presbyterian, First Baptist Matthews and Matthews United Methodist Church) and a local homeschool consortium

We thank you for your commitment to our organization for the past six years and the relationship which we have enjoyed. We sincerely appreciate your time and consideration for the 2019-20 fiscal year.
Matthews Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resource Department
Attention: Corey D. King
100 E. McDowell Street, Matthews, NC 28105

Dear Matthews Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resource Department,

Special Olympics North Carolina would like to request $7,500 for support for the upcoming Fall Tournament event on November 1-3, 2019. The 2019 Fall Tournament event will feature competition opportunities for more than 1,200 athletes. The event will also include another 2,000 volunteers, coaches, family members, spectators, and chaperones. The SONC Fall Tournament event is the second largest state-level competition opportunity bringing together athletes from nearly 65 counties in North Carolina. The Fall Tournament event is a culminating event for the athletes that have spent 8 weeks or more training to hopefully bring home the gold medal in their respective sport! The event returns to the Matthews area for the third year, and we would love to partner with Matthews Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resource Department this year on a Tourism Grant to promote the area and the event that will utilize a variety of venues and hotels in Matthews.

In 2018, the Fall Tournament event featured 1,085 athletes, 500 coaches, 400 family members, over 1,000 volunteers, and 75 Games Management Team members. Special Olympics North Carolina used 6 hotels in Matthews to total 491 room nights for the two-day weekend. Contracts are already confirmed for 4 hotels in Matthews to total over 200 room nights in Matthews in 2019 with more contracts in negotiation. On Friday evening, Special Olympics North Carolina will host the Opening Ceremonies event at the Matthews Sportsplex. The venue will feature a kickoff celebration for the athletes who will compete throughout the weekend to officially open the games. The Opening Ceremonies event has been moved to the outdoor venue in Matthews for the first time this year with the ceremony traditionally hosted indoors at Bojangles’ Coliseum for the last three years. Special Olympics North Carolina will look to engage the Matthews community at the celebratory event as “Fans in the Stands” to support the event and athletes in attendance. Over 3,000 spectators, coaches, volunteers, and athletes will be expected in attendance at the event in Matthews. Butler High School will also be the host venue for the sport of tennis throughout the weekend as well as the Olympic Town/Dance non-competition event host on Saturday night. Butler High School will also host the meal distribution location for the weekend from the Matthews campus.

On Friday and Saturday night, delegations that travel into the area will be responsible for dinner on their own in the area supporting the community and area restaurants. Approximately 600 individuals went out to eat on both Friday and Saturday night in the area in 2018. Special Olympics North Carolina will partner with the Matthews campus of Elevation Church to aid in volunteer efforts throughout the weekend with help in meal distribution. The number of individuals utilizing the area for meals on both Friday and Saturday this year should increase with athlete numbers increasing due to the addition of 5-v-5 basketball and cycling in 2019. Special Olympics North Carolina has agreed to host the event in the Matthews/Charlotte area for the next 3 years, so the partnership with Matthews would be vital to the support of Special Olympics North Carolina’s efforts to remain in the community to build sustainable partnerships around the Fall Tournament event. Special Olympics North Carolina has been hosting events such as the Fall Tournament event in North Carolina for the past 51 years. Marketing efforts through social media, local media outlets, and billboards will take shape throughout the month of October leading up to the November event.
The mission of Special Olympics North Carolina is to provide year-round sports training and competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the communities. Through continued financial support, our athletes compete year-round with no fee charged to the athlete or his or her family allowing all individuals with intellectual disabilities to participate in our programs.

If you have any questions about Fall Tournament or the tourism grant proposal, please contact me directly at (704)301-1253 or sdoggett@sonc.net. Special Olympics North Carolina is a 501c3 with id number 56-1149607. Thank you again for your consideration in choosing Special Olympics North Carolina’s Fall Tournament for support.

With kind regards,

Susan Doggett
Special Olympics North Carolina
Vice President of Development
2019 Tourism Grant Application – Attachments

1. **Description of Events and benefits to Matthews:**
   ArtFest of Matthews changed to ArtWalk & MusicFest of Matthews two years ago. It has been produced by the Matthews Chamber of Commerce for thirty four years. This year on top of it being a arts and crafts festival; we added more live music all day with a main stage and performing arts stage; an expanded children's art area; an artisan market and a craft beer, mimosas & wine sip-n-stroll. This event was held in downtown Matthews on the Town Green with over 60 artists & vendors. They were all displaying and selling their artwork to over 5,000 attendees of all ages.

   This event draws artists from all over the Southeast, Ohio, Washington, Virginia, Pennsylvania and their clients who come to the show and stay in Matthews hotels and eat in Matthews restaurants. Our hotels and restaurants offer discounts to the artists and their families and the show does not have any outside food vendors, except an ice cream cart and specialty popcorn maker, to encourage everyone attending to eat in local restaurants. Our artists are well known in their fields and bring large crowds into Matthews for the weekend. Many of them stay in local hotels which give them discounts for the weekend stays.

   The Chamber will also donate a portion of the proceeds from the event to a local non-profit. The festival features a High School art scholarship exhibit and competition. High school rising seniors from local schools and home schools enter the competition for college scholarships of over $1,000. This artwork is displayed in the Depot building throughout the week prior to the event and draws over 1,000 to the Visitors Center.

   During the festival our expanded Children’s Art Area features crafts for all age children to participate in. This area features a local arts professionals teaching them arts and crafts that they can make and take home and over seven hundred plus children on average participate in this part of the festival.

   This year in addition to our artisan market which incorporated more crafters who make handmade soaps, lotions, beadwork, quilts, etc.; we also felt it necessary to open it up to other areas of art such as the performing arts. We had a special place for the Matthews Playhouse to set up close to the children’s area to talk about what they do for children and adults. We also had performances during music breaks, by some of our local dance schools. It was great way to incorporate more of the local businesses and also the community into the event itself.

   Live Music and performing arts are performed during the festival all day in two different areas to ensure sound captures the whole audience. These musicians are published entertainers who play background music enjoyed by the artists and attendees, many of whom come just for the musicians. Also, there is the main stage farther away from the artists that perform more intently for larger crowds.
The addition of the craft beer & wine garden was to attract more people to the event and also give them more of an event experience with hopefully them bringing a chair to sit, sip and listen to music after browsing the art vendors. We had a bus tour of over 50 people that came specifically for the event because of this added feature.

Advertising for this event is done months in advance in artist and festival publications as well as the Charlotte Observer, CLT Section, Charlotte Agenda, Eventbrite, many online social web calendars in our area, posters, brochures, the Matthews Mint Hill Weekly and the Mint Hill Times along with many magazines.

2. **Long range Funding Plans:**
   ArtWalk & MusicFestFest (formerly ArtFest) of Matthews is produced and promoted through sponsorship dollars and the Tourism Grant from the Town of Matthews. The money is spent on the festival and the tourism dollars go directly into advertising for this event as well as the other costs involved.

   The Chamber has produced this event for thirty four years and is looking to grow this event even more. The Chamber relies on the generous partners and sponsors to keep it funded.
2019 Healthy Living Expo

The Matthews Healthy Living Expo brings in over 75 health and wellness vendors to Matthews during Beachfest weekend. We purposely held this event on the same date of Town of Beachfest weekend to help promote more tourism in downtown Matthews. We had approximately 2,000 attendees and many of them visited the local business in the downtown area before and after the event.

This third-year annual event was specifically created to help bring more awareness of health and wellness to everyone in the community and outside of our community. It was open to everyone all ages and even pets were invited! Novant Health provided free A1-C screenings, we had a blood drive and we also had a mammogram bus for the event. We had live cooking events, healthy living coaches, life coaches, and yoga and crossfit demonstrations for adults and children to enjoy.

Live entertainment was provided for this event and the DJ made sure all special announcements were made to ensure local businesses were being recognized and demonstrations were occurring on time for people to see.

The event does not have food vendors and people are encouraged to eat at the local restaurants. We provide each vendor and participant of the event, a list of restaurants and what specials they are running for the event. We also provide them ahead of time a list of hotels and motels in Matthews.

The event is run by over 15 volunteers who assist the Chamber staff with all of the necessary tasks needed to run the all-day show. Many of our non-profits were involved and they invited their staff, families and clients to participate.

The Matthews Chamber wants to continue this event in Matthews for many years to come and expects to continue the event in the coming years with help from the Town of Matthews through tourism dollars that pay for the advertising of the event. We place ads in the local newspapers and in the Charlotte Observer and this year printed over 500 flyers & posters that went with volunteers and non-profits to places of business in the Charlotte area for over 2 months before the event.
2019 The Matthews Auto Reunion and Motorcycle Show

The Matthews Auto Reunion and Motorcycle Show brought in almost 200 vehicles and motorcycles to Downtown Matthews on Labor Day Monday. We had well over 3,000 attendees and many of them visited the depot/visitors center during the event.

The depot Building was manned during the Matthews Alive Festival that weekend by our employees and saw traffic from newcomers and people wanting to relocate as well as residents. We greet each and every one of the visitors and answer their questions giving them valuable Matthews information.

The Auto Reunion does not have food vendors and people are encouraged to eat at the local restaurants. We provide each car owner a list of restaurants and what specials they are running for the event. We also provide them ahead of time a list of hotels and motels in Matthews. For all of our events, the local hotels give our artists and car show attendees special rates for the event dates. This year we had a special visit from the “Hot Rodders” Magazine tour which travels the entire country. They made it a point to attend our event for the mid-atlantic region with over 30 participants from all over the country following the tour in their classic car. This brought in more foot traffic than ever before and the tourism dollars brought into our community from these folks was of course greatly appreciated.

The Auto Reunion and Motorcycle show is run by over 25 volunteers who assist the Chamber staff with all of the necessary tasks needed to run the all day show.

The Matthews Chamber has been producing this show in Matthews for almost 30 years and expects to continue the event in the coming years with help from the Town of Matthews through tourism dollars that pay for the advertising of the event. We place ads in the local newspapers and in the Charlotte Observer and this year printed over 500 flyers that went with volunteers to the car clubs, motorcycle groups and car and bike shows for over 2 months before the event. We have a team of supporters who provide the manpower and enthusiasm to promote the show on the ground level! This year we were able to attract more car clubs than ever and with the excellent reputation of the show and its judges, we will continue to build it in the years to come.
**Project Information**

The Matthews Kiwanis Club has produced the Labor Day 5K Race for more than twenty-five years. In recent years, the race has attracted 150-200 participants. We attract elite runners who have a history of running our race as well as casual runners interested in supporting the Kiwanis Club and its fundraising efforts. Many of the runners are supported by family members who attend the event. The race is advertised to a wide audience through online marketing and timed by a professional timing company.

The race takes place on Labor Day Monday during the Matthews Alive Festival. It is not formally connected nor organized by Matthews Alive, however it is well known in Matthews and the surrounding area that our race takes place within the festival grounds. Therefore, participants and their families often remain in town after the race to visit the festival, spending on food and activities.

We are requesting this grant in order to pay the cost of law enforcement, public works and emergency medical personnel. 2019 was the first year we faced this expense. Previously, these personnel were made available free of charge since they were generally onsite due to the activities of the festival. However, a new expectation was initiated this year that Kiwanis should pay the individual town employees who provide service regarding the race.

With this being a relatively new expense, the Kiwanis Club has not found an additional funding source to cover the costs. Our club members have discussed the possibility of discontinuing the race if grant money is not available.
INTRODUCTION - Marketing and Production Support
Matthews Playhouse “Mainstage Productions” (MPH) seeks funding to supplement our 2019-2020 season. Without the generous support from the Tourism Council our Mainstage Productions will perform with a deficit. Even with our numerous fundraisers and sponsors, terrific ticket sales, support from the Arts and Science Council, our full length and 1 hour Mainstage shows would be financially impossible to produce. We are the only children’s and full-length theatre group in our region.

I. EFFECTIVENESS/LEVEL OF IMPACT
A. Benefits That Matthews Playhouse Bring to Township
The theatre brings out of town guests to Matthews, through family members and friends traveling here to see the productions. Many stay at local hotels, eat out and shop here in Matthews. This fall and winter our cast of THE ADVENTURES OF MADELINE, IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE, MAMMA MIA and PINOCCHIO will boast casts of more than 100 actors. Next spring our production of GUYS & DOLLS will have a cast of approximately 40.

Many younger cast members do not drive, and each will come to Matthews daily for 6 weeks. While here, they and their families eat, shop and relax/recreate. Additionally, our educational programming thru our SCHOOL OF THEATRE (w/summer camps and year-long classes) also serves Matthews Tourism well, as parents will shop & eat while waiting for their children to be dismissed from Playhouse programs.

Our marketing strategy also keeps the monies spent on theatre-services almost exclusively in Matthews. We use a local printing company to print and distribute our brochures. Our Over-the-Road Banners are created by a local sign-maker. Our web-master is located in Matthews. Technology Support Services is Matthews-based. Matthews Playhouse supports the local economy by making a majority of its purchases for supplies within the Matthews Community. We must purchase a large range of supplies including lumber and building supplies for sets and props (where we have an active charge account at Home Depot in Matthews). We purchase office supplies locally (whenever possible), craft supplies for shows, food and beverages for our staff, actors, events, etc. from local establishments.

The Playhouse will bring in visitors from the surrounding communities. Evening and afternoon performances encourage patronage of area restaurants, lodgings, and retail shops. The Playhouse offers an introduction to music, drama, and dance and features our own local Matthews talent. The public is thrilled with the accessibility and convenience of the Playhouse, the caliber of talent here, all without having to travel to downtown Charlotte. This is borne out by some of our survey results (SEE ADDENDUM for OVERALL IMPACT AND SAMPLING OF THE RESULTS FROM OUR GREY GARDENS POST SHOW SURVEY).

Survey results indicated that:
• Many (48%) had dined at a local restaurant before OR after the performance,
• Just over one-third (34%) reported that this was their first production at Matthews Playhouse
Other survey results were also very positive....
• Much of the commentary centered upon BOTH the quality of the production and the convenience of attending theatre in Matthews, AND
• (100%) of the respondents would recommend Matthews Playhouse to others
B. **Local Corporate Sponsors** who have generously done their part to support the Theatre over the past year (Sept. 1, 2018 thru Aug. 30, 2019)

**Business Sponsors/Partners 2018-2019**

**Restaurant Sponsors & Partners**
Nothing But Noodles
Chick-fil-A Matthews
Mario’s Italian Restaurant
City BBQ
Jet’s Pizza

**Advertising Sponsors**
Aaron’s Quality Signs
Carmel Christian School
Caroline Calouche
Fast Frame Matthews
Fabrication Associates
Foundation for the Carolinas
United Faith Academy
Matthews Animal Clinic
Paper & Inc. Printing
Premier Martial Arts
Sterling Financial Group
Slipstream3Creative
Tate Realtors
Tom Henderson Photography

**Show Sponsors**
McClintock Heating and Cooling
Cosmetic & Family Dental Center
Starr & Dickens Orthodontics

**Other Partners (non-profits in/around the Matthews area)**
Big Brothers/Big Sisters
Bright Blessings
COS Kids
Girl Scouts (Hornets Nest Council)
Matthews American Legion Post #235
Matthews Chamber of Commerce
Matthews Human Services Council
Matthews Woman's Club Service League
Matthews Free Medical Clinic
Matthews Help Center
Matthews Kiwanis Foundation
Matthews’ Helping Hands
Turning Point (Union County)
Union County Chamber of Commerce

OTHER
4-6 Theatres (including Theatre Charlotte, CPCC, UNCC, Davidson Community Players, Actors Theatre, Old Courthouse Theatre, etc.) with whom Matthews Playhouse cross promotes. AD SWAPS with other theatres in the region (w/five playbill programs/season) bring visitors to Matthews that heretofore might NOT have had exposure to Matthews Playhouse AND the downtown Matthews area.

II. VIABILITY
A. History of Success w/MPH Programming

October 2018—Mainstage Children’s and Family Production
We began our 24th full season in October 2018 with the enormously important and popular play based on the book: **100 Dresses**. This story is the tale of a school age girl being bullied by her peers. This book and play are both a timely and vastly important subject for children in our times. The cast included a group of young people and adults. (Even in our Children’s productions we cast children as children and adults as adults.) This was a Mainstage production, and was designed for children and families with a one hour run time, suitable for all ages.

December 2018--Mainstage Family Production
We welcomed in the holiday season with the classic play based on the movie of the same name: **The Miracle On 34th Street**. This production proved to be a huge hit with families, adults and children of all ages. The cast included a large number of adults, and a group of teens and children, and a compliment of singing and dancing elves.

February 2019--Mainstage Adult Production
We began the New Year with our musical for “mature” audiences: **Grey Gardens The Musical**. This production slot (February) is usually reserved for edgier productions (designed for adults/young adults). This past year we chose a production that had NOT been performed anywhere in our region for over 10 years.(Grey Gardens is the story of the Bouvier family, cousins of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy and their decline in East Hampton NY) We were able to draw actors of a caliber we normally cannot obtain, and we also drew larger audiences than we have had for the winter musical slot.

February 2019—Special One-Night Performance Sweet Jenn: A Living Exhibit
This event was chosen to celebrate black history month. This one-woman show took us back to the antebellum south a few years before emancipation. An historic, moving and educational piece, the evening was enjoyed by all ages.

February 2019—Mainstage Children’s and Family Production
We chose an educational and a wildly popular show for schools as well as the public: **The Jungle Book**: A Musical. This was a remount for us, and allowed us to use more of our budget for new and added set and costume pieces. Our School Show sales were one of the largest we have had.

June 2019 Mainstage Family Production
For our summer musical, we chose an older and classic musical theatre production: **A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum**. Although this show was stacked with local talent, a classic title with recent Broadway remounts with stars like Whoopi Goldberg and Nathan Lane, our audiences were dismal. We anticipated audiences made up of senior citizens
and Broadway fans, but this time we missed the mark. We had large number audition for the show, and the attendees loved the show, but we just never found our audience.

Our past seasons have included:
Rodgers and Hammerstein’s
• Oklahoma
• White Christmas
• The Sound of Music
• King and I
• Cinderella
• South Pacific
Other musicals:
• Wizard of Oz
• Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
• Will Rogers Follies
• Urinetown
• West Side Story
• Scrooge
• Shrek
• High School Musical
• Music Man
• Footloose
• Clue
• Godspell
• Grease
• Peter Pan
• Oliver
• Nunsense
• Guys and Dolls
We have successfully produced many classic plays including:
• Arsenic and Old Lace
• Freedom Train
• To Kill a Mockingbird
• Steel Magnolias
• Our Town
• The Miracle Worker
• The Diary of Anne Frank
• The Odd Couple (female version)
• The Best Christmas Pageant Ever
• It’s A Wonderful Life

The last 24 seasons we have seen our audiences increase year by year. We began in 1995 by producing 1-hour productions strictly for young people. About sixteen (16) years ago, we added the full-length wing of our theatre, which includes the shows listed above. Ten seasons ago, we were the first theatre in our region to do the full flying version of Peter Pan. We were also the first theatre outside of the touring company to bring the performance of White Christmas to the region. At the time, White Christmas was the most expensive show (to be produced) in the history of Matthews Playhouse. The Wizard of Oz (2015) has since surpassed White Christmas, and The Wizard of OZ became the 2nd best-selling show (in terms of ticket sales) in our history. It was only surpassed by High School Musical. Again, we were the first to do High School Musical, and
we had a record number of audience members for this show.

Five years ago we continued the tradition of bringing new theatre to Matthews and we were the first in the region (outside of local High Schools) to produce the full length version of Disney’s SHREK (2014). During the 2015/2016 season, we continued our tradition of firsts by producing James and the Giant Peach and Junie B. Jones The Musical as regional premieres. Not only did we attract large huge numbers, but we also had audience members who had never been to Matthews Playhouse before. Junie B. Jones was so successful that we remounted the show in July 2016 with the same cast and performed for groups and the public to sell out performances yet again. We then added the play Junie B Jones Is Not A Crook, to our season last year. In 2018 We produced the School of Theatre Production of The Lion King and again, re upped it in July for summer audiences with stellar audiences and full houses. Over the last couple of years, we’ve offered regional premieres of Urinetown and Bonnie and Clyde. These “edgier” shows have attracted hundreds of new patrons who had not been to Matthews before. We are trying to retain these audience members and convert them to regular theatre-goers for the Matthews region.

The Matthews community has come out in record numbers to see our musical productions. We have learned that our audiences prefer musicals over plays 2 to 1. Musicals take 3 times as long to rehearse as a play, and cost more than twice as much to produce. Musicals require more staff, more sets, a larger cast, and paid musicians. The royalties required by the theatrical rights companies are also more expensive.

B. Financial Viability – 24th Season Matthews Playhouse

In January of 2019, we began our 24th year for Matthews Playhouse of the Performing Arts. For our Mainstage productions this season:

- The Adventures of Madeline --October 2019 (a classic and award winning book that has been made into a play)
- It’s A Wonderful Life--December 2019 (based on the movie of the same name)
- Mamma Mia --February 2020 (a Broadway musical more famously made into a movie with music by the ever popular music group ABBA)
- Pinocchio--February 2020 (based on the famous story)
- Guys and Dolls --June 2020 the musical written by Frank Loesser and an award winning classic

Over the past twenty four years we have learned that without a huge endowment, a sizeable grant from ASC, or a huge increase in ticket prices and sellout performances, we will never be able to produce full length plays and musicals and break even. We are lucky if we can have the cost outlay for our next production as we finish the current one. Ticket income will never meet the cost of a production.

On the other hand, we are proud, that with the generous support we have received in the past from the Tourism Council, we are still here, still able to produce professional plays and musicals for the enjoyment and education of those that live in the Matthews region. To date, we have received our third operational grant from The Arts and Science Council (ASC). We are the only arts organization in Matthews to receive an Operational grant.

Matthews Playhouse mainstage productions obtains income and in kind assistance to pay/produce their productions from:

- Matthews Playhouse Ticket Sales
- Matthews Playhouse Summer Camps and Classes
- Tourism Grant
• ASC Operational Grant
• Individual donations from Patrons and Sponsors
• Smaller grants
• Restaurants and other vendors

Using these revenue streams/in-kind assistance, we are able to balance our budget at the end of each season. Without the generous support of the Tourism Council, we will be unable to produce the big musicals for adults and families that our community enjoys and supports with full and sold out audiences year after year.

The income from Summer Camps and School of Theatre subsidizes the loss of income for our Mainstage Productions. Our Mainstage productions will never be able to pay for themselves. Our Mainstage shows cannot be supported by ticket sales and patron contributions alone. We will always need grants, corporate sponsorship and town support to exist. Our Mainstage Shows need Tourism funds in order to operate.

The Playhouse Board has identified several revenue streams to boost the economic success of our Mainstage productions. This includes corporate sponsorships, a modest ticket price increase, advertising sales, Every Little Bit Helps donations at performances and individual patron contributions. These are all recognized as important facets of our success. Rather than becoming easier, however, corporate sponsorship has become more and more difficult to obtain. In order for Matthews Playhouse to grow and achieve financial stability, we need to get our message out to a larger demographic base beyond Matthews proper.

We have developed a full-season marketing campaign beginning in the early fall and will continue through the summer, encompassing both Mainstage and School of Theatre.

C. Viability-Organizational Operations
In order to entertain visitors we bring to Matthews, we strive to produce professional quality productions. We hire professional set designers, costume designers, choreographers, lighting designers, musical directors, and orchestra members to achieve the highest level of quality possible. In order to perform school shows we are now offering a stipend to adult actors who perform for our school shows. In addition, we often pay a stipend to leading actors for their performances.

Matthews Playhouse has a staff of:
• Part Time Administrative Manager/Marketing Director
• Part Time Production Manager
• Part Time Technical Director
• Part Time Front of House Manager (NEW)
• Webmaster
• Full Time Box Office Manager/Education Director
• Full Time Financial Manager/School Show Manager
• Full Time Artistic Director/Executive Director

Additionally, this past year we undertook some preliminary efforts to upgrade/invest in some of our business platforms. These efforts will allow us to be more responsive to our program participants.

During the past season, as in previous seasons, our actual costs exceeded our budget estimates. The investment to upgrade business operations, staff additions and the production costs for a full-length show with professional sets, costumes, props, lights, royalties, orchestra, and occasional paid guest artists is formidable. We also realized we needed more time on the stage to
mount the sets, props, and costumes creating additional costs, e.g., for stage rental. Adding Mainstage productions also increased the rental cost of additional classrooms for rehearsal. The Town receives this income directly from our expanded efforts.

III. INNOVATION
A. Marketing/Development Efforts To Assist With Tourism in Matthews (Ongoing, Expanded and New) over the past year (Sept. 1, 2018 thru Aug. 30, 2019)

Ongoing Efforts
1. An annual mailing brochure announcing the Upcoming Season and Yearlong Classes to a mailing list of ca. 7,000-8,000 households (August).
2. An annual mailing that highlights Summer Camp information to a mailing list of ca. 7,000-8,000 households (February).
3. Print/Digital Advertising in the local news sources: Charlotte Observer, Carolina Weekly (3), The Charlotte Post, Queen City Nerve, Charlotte Agenda, etc.
4. Overstreet banners in downtown Matthews (for Mainstage Shows, Summer Camps and Special Events).
5. Hand Delivery of show information (poster deliveries and post cards to area businesses).
6. Social media with over 5,100+ followers on Facebook (12% increase from last year) and targeted email newsletter blasts to ca. 6,000 households (1-2 e-newsletters/monthly).
7. “Show Sponsor”, "Restaurant Partner Program" and our "Non-Profit Partner" programs where we spotlight a minimum of one (1) Show Sponsor, (1) restaurant partner & one (1) non-profit per production.
8. Radio ads with: WDAV.
9. When possible arrange for interviews (w/print, audio, video, etc.). NOTE: This past season we were able to obtain two television guest appearances last year (WBTV and FOX46-Charlotte) AND online/print exposure for some of our productions (w/articles in the Charlotte Observer, a podcast w/the Charlotte Post and articles w/Charlotte Media Group-Local News Weekly).
11. Whenever possible we market to special interest groups...targeting these groups using a combination of snail mail and digital platforms. For example, we contact elementary schools and high schools, colleges, senior citizen organization, parents of children involved in our programming, Girl Scouts, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, veterans organizations, etc.

Expansion Of Ongoing
As cited in last year’s Tourism Grant Application, Matthews Playhouse has needed to adjust to an ever-changing marketing/promotional landscape. More people are obtaining their arts-related news AND what is being offered in the communities in which they live, work and play differently than previous generations, and Matthews Playhouse has needed to adapt accordingly.

--We expanded targeted marketing to NEW organizations this past year: Jack & Jill-Charlotte, women’s groups, historical societies, museum patrons, etc.

--MPH continues to leverage our impact via social media/digital marketing with continued, consistent use of digital platforms (FB and Instagram) to spread awareness about event specific AND non-production-related content. Expansion of these initiatives has also been driven FB ad boosts, e.g., running specific campaigns to promote MPH, AND using video and other eye-catching content on FB, e.g., show content with sets and costumed actors. We also began this past season to spend some advertising dollars w/online web calendars that cater to Adults (Charlotte Agenda, Queen City Nerve, Charlotte Five, etc.).

--MPH altered some of our program benefits for existing sponsors/partners to retain their loyalty and engagement. For instance, we have expanded our sponsor/partner program to include opportunities to partner with MPH on “special events” that we began offering last season, AND we continue to look at expanding our presence in the Matthews Community and region to include new festival events and other community events to extend awareness of our program offerings/ and to grow and diversify our audiences.
NEW Initiatives To Assist With Tourism

MPH continues to build upon relationships within/among business owners and non-profits in the community. We have done this thru a consistent presence at the Matthews Chamber of Commerce Meetings AND the Matthews Human Services Council meetings. MPH also recognizes that businesses (both for-profit AND non-profits) can promote shows through ticket giveaways and by making information available to their customers/clients.

Importantly, MPH recognizes that cultivating new, impactful, relationships with others not currently connected to Matthews Playhouse is a crucial component of our long-term growth/sustainability and important to the requirements needed to maintain funding from the Township of Matthews. To this end, this past season MPH to assist Matthews Tourism, and ensure its own growth and sustainability, did the following:

Special Events/Partnerships
1. We have this past season offered some FREE Opening Night events for members of the community. These events have helped to attract new patrons to the theatre.
2. MPH engaged a Guest Artist for a Special One Night Performance (Sweet Jenn in Feb. 2019) at Matthews Playhouse. This performance included an Opening Night reception, a partner event with The Charlotte Post and a Talk Back after the show.
3. This past season MPH partnered with the Matthews Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resource Department on TWO events which helped to broaden our reach AND MPH met w/the Matthews Cultural Diversity Council Advisory Committee to begin to explore opportunities to partner together, so as to engage new and diverse audiences to the theatre going forward.

Grant Sourcing - MPH is actively sourcing/researching grant-funding with NEW funders as a way to supplement resources. This past season MPH received a small, community grant (thru the Matthews Kiwanis Foundation). The funding will allow us to supplement our SPONSOR-A-STUDENT program at MPH with book purchases and to prepare a study guide for teachers to use with their students.

Recruitment - Additionally, this past year we have actively recruited new community volunteers. We have added 5 new Board Members (with specific skills in Community Outreach, Digital Marketing Experience and Grant Writing) to assist MPH staff in its efforts to better serve the community. Also, MPH has:

Business Operations
1. Matthews Playhouse added a part-time employee to aid with Front of House efforts to manage some of the volunteer efforts for our public productions.
2. This past year we undertook some preliminary efforts to upgrade/invest in some of our business platforms. These efforts will allow us to be more responsive to our program participants.

All of the above efforts -ONGOING, EXPANDED AND NEW- have resulted in additional marketing costs related for print and digital advertising AND additional costs related to staffing and business operations—including time and energy. Matthews Playhouse is always looking to further develop our program offerings for the community of Matthews and its environs and at ways to partner with others in/around the region, to bring tourism to Matthews, and to ensure its own sustainability and growth.

B. 2018-2019 - Publicity that serves the TOURISM GRANT requirements for the Town of Matthews was generated via a wide variety of resources over the past year (Sept. 1, 2018 thru Aug. 30, 2019).

Business Networking – w/Staff or Board Representation (whenever possible)
Matthews Chamber of Commerce
Matthews Human Services Council
Union County Chamber

Other Promotional Marketing/Development
a. Community Engagement and Outreach - This past season, MPH ramped up its promotional marketing via Engagement & Outreach w/special events at the Matthews Community Center and in/around the region.
-ON-SITE events included (an Art Contest, special pre-show workshops, Talk Back after a Show, four (4) FREE opening night Meet & Greet events w/ food, & beverages, etc.),
AND
-OFF-SITE visits/events were done w/COS Kids, Matthews Heritage Museum, ASC’s Connect with Culture Day at the Charlotte Museum of History.
b. Our Sponsor/Partner Programs with Businesses, Restaurants, Non-profits, etc.
-Promotion of for-profit businesses that “sponsor” Mainstage shows and promotion of area restaurants and non-profits that highlight ONE business sponsor, ONE restaurant, and ONE non-profit partner for each show.
-Food Truck Fridays (Promotional materials provided for display on Town Information Table)
-Matthews Alive Festival (Participated in the Parade/manned Information Table throughout the Festival weekend),
-Art Walk/Music Fest (Participated w/manned Information Table)
-Tree Lighting (We have participated in the Tree Lighting every year since inception. We are traditionally the last performance before Santa)
-Breakfast w/Santa (MPH partnered w/ Matthews Parks/Rec w/ 4 performances every December for attendees)
c. Targeted Promotion to Schools, Senior Citizens, others w/special interests, e.g., arts-savvy populations
-Promotional materials were given to schools for distribution to students to take home (Union County and Mecklenburg County).
-Targeted mailings/promotions done, e.g., w/senior citizens AND arts-savvy populations VIA Carolina Tix (180,000 targeted subscribers)
-Promoted offerings via ASC (Connect w/Culture Day) at Charlotte Museum of History.
-Cross promotion with other theatres in the Charlotte Region (via swap ads in theatre playbill programs)
d. Print Advertising - Charlotte Observer, Queen City Nerve, The Charlotte Post, CMG (Charlotte Media Group-The Weeklies)
e. Feature Articles (print) – The Charlotte Observer, CMG (Carolina Weekly), Queen City Nerve
f. Podcast Interview w/an MPH Guest Artist - The Charlotte Post (for special one night event, Sweet Jenn in Feb. 2019)
g. Radio – WDAV
h. Television Features - WBTV and FOX46 (2 guest features in total during the past season)
i. Free Digital Event Calendars – ca. 10 in total
j. Fee-Based Digital Calendar Postings – NEW past year (Charlotte Agenda & QCity Nerve
k. Snail Mail/Email, Posters, OTR Banners, etc.
- email newsletters (1-2 per month to a database of over 6,000 subscribers)
- snail mailings to our database of ca. 7,000+ patrons (February and August)
-Posters, flyers distributed throughout Mecklenburg/Union Counties for each Mainstage show
-OTR banners hung in two locations in Downtown Matthews (for Mainstage & summer camps).
l. Social Media (FB, Instagram, Twitter)
To promote OUR offerings & to cross-promote PARTNERS' offerings in the community (w/slogan – “WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER”).

C. Matthews Tourism Opportunities (as yet untapped)

With the continued population growth in/around the region, MPH with its 24-year history and successful track record w/its dual-focused programming (educational programming for children/teens AND its public shows) is uniquely positioned to assist with tourism for/with the Township of Matthews. We can assist tourism by:

Increasing Our Community Engagement Efforts

While Matthews Playhouse staff continues to spent time/energy in connecting with new partners, there is, as yet, untapped potential for Matthews Playhouse (especially with the continued population growth in the region), to itself expand and to assist tourism by increased engagement w/the communities of South Charlotte, Union County (especially Waxhaw/Marvin), and Cabarrus County (Harrisonburg/ Concord).

We can assist with Tourism by:

1. With any new relationships/connections made, MPH’s publicity/marketing can include general information about the Matthew’s Community, its festival events, restaurant and brewery options, etc.
2. Pop up performances – we are looking at “pop-up and special performances” to pique interest in MPH (and by extension Matthews) in/around the region (as we did last season at the Charlotte Museum of History at Matthews Playhouse).
3. Expand Targeted Marketing to more diverse groups/populations (Black, Latina, etc.). MPH has actively sought teaching staff AND guest artists from diverse backgrounds over the last couple of years. Additionally, building upon MPH’s engagement of partners such as The Charlotte Post and the Matthews Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee, will allow MPH to expand to more diverse populations.
4. Continuing to Attract Skilled Artistic Talent

Our participants come from all over Mecklenburg, Cabarrus and Union Counties. College students from outside our area are learning about Matthews Playhouse as a quality theatre in our area AND we are the only theatre in the Matthews region that offers performances.

The young people that have grown up in/at the Matthews Playhouse are attending colleges in North Carolina (including the prestigious NC School of the Arts in Winston-Salem) and as far away as U-Arts in Philadelphia, New York City (NYU school of Performance) and University of California. These schools are very impressed by the caliber of students/performers that have come through the Playhouse, and they should be keeping a keen eye on the upcoming talent for their schools. The goodwill generated for the Playhouse and the Town of Matthews does not go unrecognized. We have had students appear in Broadway and off-Broadway productions.

The Matthews Playhouse not only utilizes local talent, but also draws professional actors, directors, choreographers, musical directors and designers from all over the region. In turn, the public is thrilled with the local accessibility and convenience without sacrificing the level of talent and entertainment at an excellent entertainment value (see survey results for recent GREY GARDENS show in ADDENDUM)
IV. Summary
We cannot continue our marketing and audience development OR to attract skilled talent with our current level of funding. And while increasing ticket prices helps, Matthews Playhouse Mainstage will not be able to continue to operate without additional financial support.

For instance, over this past years, Matthews Playhouse has seen increased costs associated with:

1. Staging productions (w/increased costs for personnel such as guest artists, directors, set builders, stage management, etc.)
2. Community engagement (e.g., table sponsorships w/Matthews and Union County Chambers, other types of community events, etc.)
3. Hiring a Part-time Front of House Mgr. (new this past season)
4. Print and digital advertising (especially with fee-based digital advertising—new this past year)
5. Costs associated with upgrades to/investment in some our business platforms to better serve and engage our patrons.

Additionally, the Township’s own programs (via Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources) has, itself, grown its own programming over the last few years, and competition for both time and space (at the Community Center) is more pronounced. That being said, Matthews Playhouse will continue to work with the Town’s staff at the Community Center to ensure that MPH continues to serve Matthews and its environs with quality educational programming and public theatre performances as it has in the past.

In conclusion, the Board and Staff of Matthews Playhouse of the Performing Arts are dedicated to maintaining a premiere arts environment in the Matthews region. We aspire to reach audiences and individuals that have never come to Matthews to shop, eat or seek entertainment. Serving all ages, adults and children alike, we will strive to be the premiere semi-professional theatre organization in this region.
## OVERALL IMPACT

(last 3 Seasons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Activities</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
<th>2017-2018</th>
<th>2018-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Productions</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performances</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camps</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Playhouse is maxing out on programming capacity within its existing facilities at the Matthews Community Center.

*SPECIAL EVENTS (2018-2019 Season)*
- Matthews Alive Parade-
- Guest Artist w/Mobile Art Truck (w/Mathews Parks & Rec)
- Art Contest for Students-
- Halloween Haunted Trail-
- Breakfast with Santa-
- ASC’s Connect With Culture Day (at Charlotte Museum of History)-
- Talk Back (Feb. 2019)-
- Opening Night Partner Event (The Charlotte Post & Matthews Parks & Recreation)-
- Special Girl Scout Events (2) & Event with Martial Arts Studio (1)-
- Opening Night Community Events (3)-
  Non-profits site visits (3)-
- Other Events with Restaurants-
## Attendance/Enrollment

(last 3 Seasons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Productions+ (excluding classes/camps and Haunted Trail)</td>
<td>21,142</td>
<td>20,894</td>
<td>21,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstage</td>
<td>9,056</td>
<td>8,889</td>
<td>8,418</td>
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<tr>
<td>School of Theatre Productions</td>
<td>2,032</td>
<td>2,433</td>
<td>1,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/Camp Shows (Field Trips)</td>
<td>10,054</td>
<td>9,572</td>
<td>11,156*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haunted Trail (new 2018 event)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>1,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camps</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>1083</td>
<td>947**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>252†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-Total (Camps/Classes)</td>
<td>1,119</td>
<td>1,364</td>
<td>1,199</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Mainstage, School of Theatre and School/Camp Shows
*Includes the 2019 Summer Show (July 2019)
**Camp Enrollment for Summer of 2019.
†Class Enrollment for upcoming 2019 Year-long School of Theatre classes as of 9.26.19
Tourism Funding Award: Charlotte Junior Rugby Association

DATE: October 23, 2019
FROM: Corey King, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resource Director

Background/Issue:

The Charlotte Junior Rugby Association is a non-profit that has applied for funding through the Town of Matthews Tourism Grant program for multiple years. To date, the same event “Ruggerfest” has been the event listed on each application. Ruggerfest has proven to be a successful event, drawing rugby players, families and attendees from multiple regions of the US.

The FY20 Tourism Grant application from the Charlotte Junior Rugby Association (CJRA) was not received by the submittal deadline. In effort to protect the integrity of the Town Tourism Grant process, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee did not feel as though the CJRA application should be considered for award as part of the Tourism Grant process with applicants that submitted information correctly.

The Parks and Recreation Committee also believes that Ruggerfest is a successful event, and has demonstrated value to tourism and visitation to Matthews. The committee asks the Town Board to consider awarding funds to the CJRA through an appropriation from Town tourism funds. The committee recommends an award of $17,000 to support Ruggerfest.

The P&R Advisory committee was impressed with the application that was submitted. Some aspects of the event that were shown as additions and improvements even in comparison to the success of previous years were: uncapped number of teams this year (previously capped), utilization of 11 fields at the Sportsplex, compared to use of 5 fields in previous years, and the anticipated increase in attendance and spending by players and attendees.

Proposal/Solution:

Award of $17,000 in funding from tourism to support the Charlotte Junior Rugby Association and the Ruggerfest event held in the Matthews Sportsplex.
**Financial Impact:**
Financial impact would equal disbursement of $17,000 to the Charlotte Junior Rugby Association to support Ruggerfest event that will take place in March 2020 at the Matthews Sportsplex.

**Related Town Goal:**
Quality of life: To maintain our small town identity by providing a vibrant downtown, pedestrian friendly community, extensive greenspace system, and recreational and cultural activities.

**Recommended Motion:**
Approve appropriation of $17,000 to the Charlotte Junior Rugby Association to support Ruggerfest event that will take place in March 2020 at the Matthews Sportsplex.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charlotte Junior Rugby Association</th>
<th>FY20 Request</th>
<th>FY19 Tourism Award Amount</th>
<th>FY 20 Committee Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruggerfest Event</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>$13,000</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See individual applicant information attached*
30 September, 2019

To Town of Matthews Staff & Grant Committee

First & foremost, thank you for your past support of Carolina Ruggerfest. Although the tournament predates our partnership with the Town of Matthews – it has been our move here that has allowed the event to grow into the National phenomenon it is today. We are proud to be one of the first large, marque tournaments to be held at the Matthews Sportsplex the year it opened and have been an annual fixture ever since. For 2020, we are expanding as we have outgrown the five fields we traditionally have used. We will be taking over the entire Sportsplex in 2020 – 11 fields and the stadium – for two days (March 7, 8).

Since our move to Matthews six years ago, Carolina Ruggerfest has become the largest youth rugby tournament in the United States. We draw teams from 15 states and Canada. The last two years, we have had to turn teams away as we exceeded our cap. This year we are removing the cap and expect in excess of 120 teams to attend. I’d like to share what that looks like in terms of impact:

Effectiveness:

- A conservative estimate of last year’s impact of visitation for Matthews for Ruggerfest puts out-of-town attendance & overnight stays at around 7,000 people – we will exceed 10,000 this year.
- All of these people, plus thousands from the greater Charlotte area in general will be spending 2-3 days in Matthews playing, eating, drinking, shopping and enjoying themselves.
- We have built relationships with local merchants – old and new and expect the impact on hotels, restaurants/pubs, gas stations, shops, etc... to be enormous. We estimated last year that in hotels and meals alone, Ruggerfest attendees spent in excess of $1,000,000.00 over two days. We expect that number to rise with our increased capacity at the SportsPlex.

Viability:

- Carolina Ruggerfest is a known quantity. In the rugby world, it is THE youth event and known throughout the country. Likewise, Matthews is known as a rugby town. Over the six years we’ve hosted the event here, the sport and the town have become linked in people’s minds around this huge event.
- Based on 17 years of holding the event, with the last 6 in Matthews being successful, we are confident we will meet our goals and deliver our best event to date in 2020.
Similarly, we continue to build on the legacy and history of success that will make this event, in Matthews, viable for years to come.

Innovation:

- Attaching itself to a growing yet underrepresented sport like rugby is very smart for the Town of Matthews. The community of rugby people rival NASCAR fans with their loyalty to “brands” that support the sport. The Town of Matthews’ facilities, people, hospitality, and sense of community is already well known and loved by rugby folks all over the country. Continuing this relationship with an entire sport – as an epicenter for it - is brilliant.

- As a niche (but large and growing) sport – we know and utilize specialty websites, social media, and rugby publications to advertise the event. We also have built a relationship with local media and are proud to say we have had television and news coverage of the event every year it has been in Matthews.

- Last year we started livestreaming events and are expanding on that this year. The livestream is watched by people from around the country and beyond – The Town of Matthews is mentioned in EVERY match broadcast. We also offer the town space in EVERY match broadcast to run a tourism video during breaks (like a commercial) to further increase the impact and reach of the event on tourism to Matthews.

We are asking for a $20,000 grant this year as we are increasing in size – our costs also increase. Each year we have exceeded expectations and have grown and had more of an impact from the previous year. While we are excited about growing this year – growing the event by more than a third does come with some nervousness and challenges. We are ready to meet those challenges but can NOT do it without the support of the Town of Matthews.

CJRA is a 501c3 non-profit in good standing. While we do hire day of staff, officials, and medical personnel - we are a volunteer organization otherwise and do this for the love bringing wholesome athletics to kids, the love of the game, and the love of where we live.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Erik Saxon, Director CJRA, Secretary NCYRU