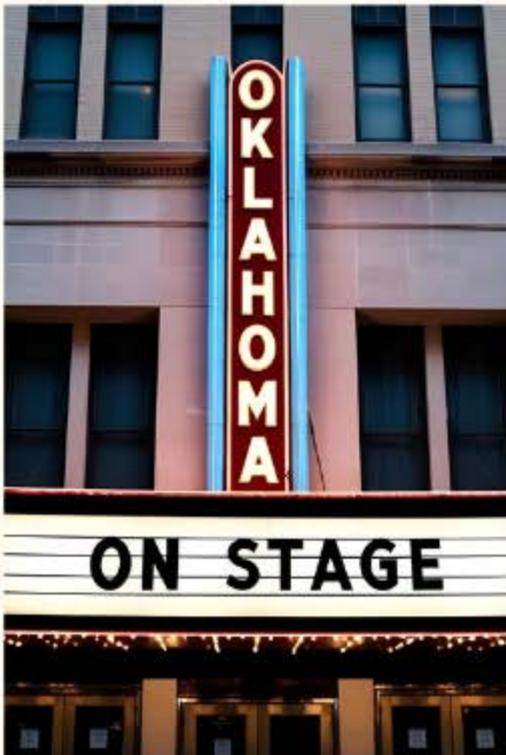




welcome to

Center Stage

OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Welcome aboard

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

First off, thank you for joining Oklahoma OnStage and for signing up for our monthly newsletter. We hope that you enjoy this little publication, and will encourage others to sign up for it as well.

If you are new, let us catch you up. Oklahoma OnStage is a grassroots organization created and designed to encourage, support and promote all things theatre in the great state of Oklahoma. With currently over 120 theatres in our network, we are sure that there is something for everyone, and that there is an overwhelming amount of talent within this artform within our state.

It is our hope to bring to our listeners and fans engaging content, supportive promotion of theaters and productions, and entertaining interviews with talented individuals from every corner of Oklahoma. If you like what we're doing, be sure and follow us on Facebook and Instagram, as well as review and rate our podcast. Thank you.

REINVIGORATED AND RECONNECTED: REFLECTIONS FROM THE AACT COMMUNITY THEATRE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE IN DES MOINES

**By Laura Hazen, Executive Director of Muskogee Little Theatre,
Muskogee, OK**

Attending the American Association of Community Theatre (AACT) Community Theatre Management Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, was more than just a professional development opportunity—it was a revitalizing reminder of why we do what we do. This conference coincides with "AACTFest" that takes place every other year. On the off years the CMTC portion is held via Zoom meeting. This was my first in-person experience with AACT's CTMC and it was nothing short of invaluable. *(Continued on page 3)*





Our Mid-Season Marathon

For many theaters in our state, the summer means a much-needed break, for others, it is business as usual. For Oklahoma OnStage, we are doubling our efforts in our Sizzling Summer Mid-Season Marathon. Normally, Oklahoma OnStage works to bring engaging and entertaining interviews every other Friday at 5 PM. For our Marathon, we are pumping up the podcast to one a week. That means a brand new episode of theatre talk will drop every Friday at 5 PM. This exciting adventure began on May 30 and will run through August 29. We have a great lineup for you, as well. So be sure and stay tuned!



SPOTLIGHT SUMMER CAMPS!!

Every year, theaters across the state provide students with opportunities in the summer months to attend camps. These camps are a great way for up-and-coming stars to hone their skills in areas they excel at, as well as learn some new talents as well. In some cases, students learn much needed theatrical skills that they may not have access to where they are. Thus, summer camps are an invaluable resource to young actors at many levels. However, these camps can be a big expense to both the theater and the student. Yes, students are generally charged a fee for attending, but that only covers a portion of what the camp costs. That is why theaters look to the community to help keep the lights on during the summer. So, if you are looking for a way to help theaters during the off-season, be a sponsor of a camp in your area. Also, if you have a young, would-be star, give them the gift of summer camp, and watch their star shine even brighter!! Look for a camp near you, or reach out to Oklahoma OnStage, and we can help you find one.

(continued from page 1)

Surrounded by passionate, innovative, and candid theatre managers from across the country, I was immersed in an environment of shared purpose, where ideas flowed freely, challenges were met with empathy, and creative solutions sparked new inspiration.

The value of being in the room with others who truly understand the unique highs and lows of managing a community theatre cannot be overstated. As the lone Okie in the room, it was interesting to hear how regional issues varied, but many common threads tied us all together. There's something deeply affirming about talking openly with peers who've wrestled with the same budget gaps, volunteer shortages, or programming dilemmas—and hearing how they've found ways forward.

Funding and Sponsorships: Sustaining the Art

A recurring theme throughout the conference was financial sustainability. Sessions on fundraising, donor cultivation, and local sponsorships provided actionable strategies for diversifying revenue streams. From tapping into small business partnerships to designing donor recognition that builds long-term loyalty, the insights shared were both practical and inspiring. Several attendees highlighted successful community campaigns that not only raised funds but deepened audience engagement.

Ticketing and Marketing: Meeting Audiences Where They Are

Marketing and ticketing strategies were another hot topic. In a digital world where attention spans are short and choices are endless, theatres must be savvy about messaging and accessibility. We explored the latest ticketing platforms, dynamic pricing models, and creative marketing campaigns—like storytelling through social media and audience-generated content—that have proven successful in different markets.

Volunteer Management and Burnout: Caring for the People Behind the Curtain

Volunteers are the lifeblood of community theatre, and yet managing them can be a balancing act. Sessions on volunteer recruitment and retention emphasized relationship-building and recognition as key drivers of long-term commitment. Equally powerful were honest conversations about burnout—both among staff and volunteers. It was comforting to hear others share how they're navigating this difficult terrain, and encouraging to learn new strategies for sustaining energy and morale.

Grants and Strategic Planning: Thinking Long-Term

Grants remain a critical funding source, but finding and writing for the right ones can be daunting. Several panels demystified the grant application process and shared resources for finding local and national funding opportunities. Paired with discussions on strategic planning, these sessions encouraged us to think beyond the next production and toward a sustainable future—with clear goals, metrics, and mission alignment.

Programming with Purpose: Season Selection, DEI, and Education

Programming emerged as both an opportunity and a responsibility. Choosing a season isn't just about filling seats—it's about representing the community, telling diverse stories, and balancing artistic ambition with financial realities. Many conversations centered on DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), and how theatres are working to better reflect their communities on stage and behind the scenes.

Education and outreach were also highlighted as powerful tools for engagement and long-term sustainability. Whether through youth programs, school partnerships, or community workshops, the takeaway was clear: when we invest in education, we cultivate not only future artists but future audiences.

A Shared Stage, A Shared Mission

What made this conference truly special wasn't just the content—it was the people. The generous sharing of struggles and solutions created a sense of solidarity that's rare in our often-isolated roles. We left with new ideas, new friends, and a renewed commitment to our mission.

As I return to my own theatre, I do so not just informed, but reinvigorated. I'm reminded that while the work is hard, we are not alone—and together, we are building something truly extraordinary. I encourage everyone in community theatre management to consider joining AACT. There are many perks to having your theatre be an AACT member including virtual round tables, resources, and a discounts. Please visit www.aact.org for more information and I hope to see other Oklahoma theatre managers at the next CMTC!

WANT TO BE A PART OF OUR TEAM?

HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT WORKING WITH US?

If you would like to join Oklahoma OnStage in its endeavor to encourage, support, and promote all things theatre in the state of Oklahoma, give us a shout and let's see where we can plug you in!

LET'S CHAT!

oklahomaonstage@gmail.com

WWW.OKLAHOMAONSTAGE.ORG

JULY PRODUCTIONS

POLLARD THEATRE - THE SHARK IS BROKEN - JULY 3-5

LYRIC THEATRE - BEAUTIFUL: THE CAROLE KING MUSICAL - JULY 8-13

CHICKASHA COMMUNITY THEATRE - LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS - JULY 10-13

TAHLEQUAH COMMUNITY PLAYHOUSE - FRISCO FIASCO - JULY 11-12

ARTWORKS ACADEMY (NORMAN) - THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA - JULY 11-12

AMERICAN THEATRE CO. (TULSA) - 5 LESBIANS EATING A QUICHE - JULY 11-13

UPSTAGE THEATRE (EDMOND) - RIDE THE CYCLONE - JULY 11-13

SOUTHWEST PLAYHOUSE (CLINTON) - MATILDA THE MUSICAL - JULY 11-20

3RD ACT THEATRE CO. - A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DRINK - JULY 11-26

CARPENTER SQUARE THEATRE (OKC) - SHE KILLS MONSTERS - JULY 11-27

SPOTLIGHT PRODUCTIONS (OKC) - ANASTASIA - JULY 11-12

NORMAN FAMILY THEATRE - A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM - JULY 18-26

CENTRE THEATRE (EL RENO) - BRIGHT STAR - JULY 18-27

ARTWORKS ACADEMY (NORMAN) - MEAN GIRLS JR - JULY 18-20

GASLIGHT THEATRE (ENID) - THE DROWSY CHAPERONE - JULY 18-26

KISMET ARTS (OKC) - DARE TO DREAM JR - JULY 18-20

HIDDEN GEM (OKC) - A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM - JULY 18-27

INSPRIED THEATRE (EDMOND) - ROCK OF AGES (TEEN) - JULY 18-19

JEWEL BOX THEATRE (OKC) - CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF - JULY 18-AUG 3

OKLAHOMA CHILDREN'S THEATRE - LITTLE MERMAIN JR - JULY 24-27

STAGE 405 (EDMOND) - 25TH ANN. PUTNAM CO SPELLING BEE - JULY 24-26

ARTWORKS ACADEMY (NORMAN) - THE WIZARD OF OZ - JULY 25-26

STORYTELLER THEATRE (OKC) - THE WNDRFL WIZARD OF OZ - JULY 25 - AUG 3

RED CARPET COMMUNITY THEATRE (ELK CITY) - ADDAMS FAMILY - JULY 25-27

LYRIC THEATRE - OKLAHOMA! - JULY 29-AUG 3