



CHEBOYGAN AREA ARTS COUNCIL  
**2024**  
ANNUAL REPORT



# Dear supporters of the arts...

This year we celebrate the 40th anniversary since the Cheboygan Opera House was re-opened to the public in 1984. It may be hard to picture now, but for nearly 20 years prior to re-opening, our hometown theater was dark – no concerts or plays, no classes or community events. Only through a huge community effort beginning in the 1970s was this historic treasure able to be saved and expanded. Can you imagine the boldness it took to see this condemned theater, with its crumbling facade, and envision a vibrant center for the arts? And the grit required to bring this plan to fruition?

The Cheboygan Area Arts Council was formed in 1972 to make this vision a reality. Since 1984 the CAAC has managed the Opera House, which is owned by the City of Cheboygan, bringing artists and visitors together for unforgettable cultural events. As a result, generations of locals have benefited from this unique performance space, building connections and a vibrant community.

But in 2020 we were reminded of what life would be without it. When the Covid pandemic hit, the Opera House – like theaters all across the world – went dark once again for a period of 15 months. We were left to confront a terrible pandemic without the comfort that only live, shared experiences can bring.

It would be nice if life were a story of continuous progress, but we know that human history is filled with setbacks.

Fortunately, when we began presenting live events again in 2021, so many of you were ready to support us – whether you purchased tickets, gave a donation and became a member, or helped us spread news of our events. Because of you, the Opera House and our arts community have roared back to life. In just the last year, we hosted 80 events (including three sold-out shows), and reached 13,859 adults and 6,012 students – a 36% increase over the previous year's attendance.

Your support not only helps us bring incredible artistic experiences to our community, but it has an impact that goes far beyond the walls of our theater. We drive activity to restaurants, hotels, shops, and local goods and services. It is possible to estimate that impact thanks to data aggregated by Americans for the Arts, which is a nonprofit organization whose primary focus is advancing the arts in the United States. Plugging in our expenditures and attendance figures from last year into their Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 calculator, we can estimate that our total economic impact is at least \$1,076,546.

Now as we look ahead to 2025, we are ready to make our largest investment in the Opera House since our re-opening in 1984. You can read further in this newsletter about our plans to upgrade accessibility at the theater, thanks to a \$250,000 grant from the Consumers Energy Foundation, and important repairs that we will be making to the backstage areas.

If you're not yet a member of the Cheboygan Area Arts Council, please consider joining at any financial level. Your tax-deductible contribution is a big part of how we are able to keep the lights on for generations to come. Your investment

in the arts helps sustain a vibrant, connected community that we can all enjoy and be proud to call home.



Photo by Dan Wellihan

**—Owen Goslin**  
*Executive Director of the  
Cheboygan Area Arts Council*

*Owen Goslin*

# About Us

**The mission of the Cheboygan Area Arts Council** is to promote and encourage cultural and educational activities within the Straits Area of Northern Michigan, and to provide services that stimulate and encourage participation and appreciation of the arts within all segments of the community; and to showcase the historic Cheboygan Opera House.

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### **Brandie Ford**

Dance Director

### **Olivia Kitchen**

Dance Instructor

### **Sam Johnson**

Administrative Assistant

### **Daniel Mohlé**

Technical Assistant

### **Travis Neuman**

Technical Director

### **Makaela Willis**

Dance Instructor

# Financials

## FY23-24 Income



## FY23-24 Expense



(audited figures)	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total income	\$200,390	\$326,320	\$373,315	\$501,420
Total expenses	\$235,135	\$173,282	\$379,503	\$414,726
<b>Net profit</b>	<b>-\$34,745</b>	<b>\$153,038</b>	<b>-\$6,188</b>	<b>\$86,694</b>

## Balance Sheet

September 30, 2023

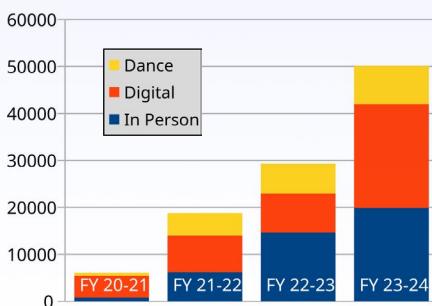
Current assets	\$464,915
Equipment, net	\$29,570
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$494,485</b>
Current liabilities	\$12,913
Restricted net assets	\$33,974
Unrestricted net assets	\$447,598
<b>Total liabilities &amp; net assets</b>	<b>\$494,485</b>

Figures for FY 23-24 are unaudited. All other figures are audited.

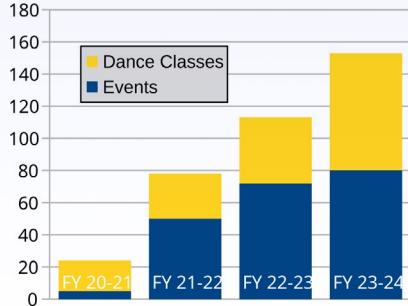
# Four years of growth...

The Opera House has transitioned out of challenging post-pandemic conditions and is once again a thriving oasis for the arts in Northern Michigan. We continue to evolve by offering a greater variety of digital/streaming events in addition to our regular programs. Our dance program, under the direction of Brandie Ford, has also grown every year since she joined the team.

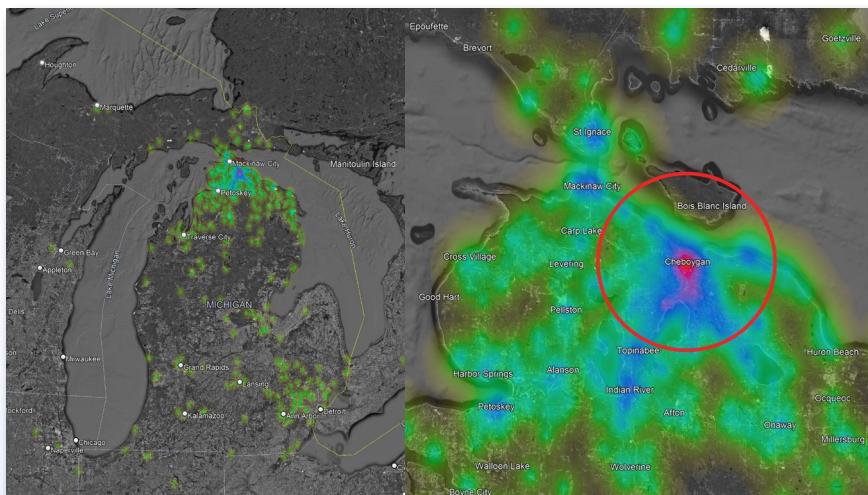
**Attendance**



**Number of Events**



The Opera House attracts patrons across Michigan! While most of our audience lives nearby, some people travel hundreds of miles to see our shows. Take a look at these maps to see our reach:



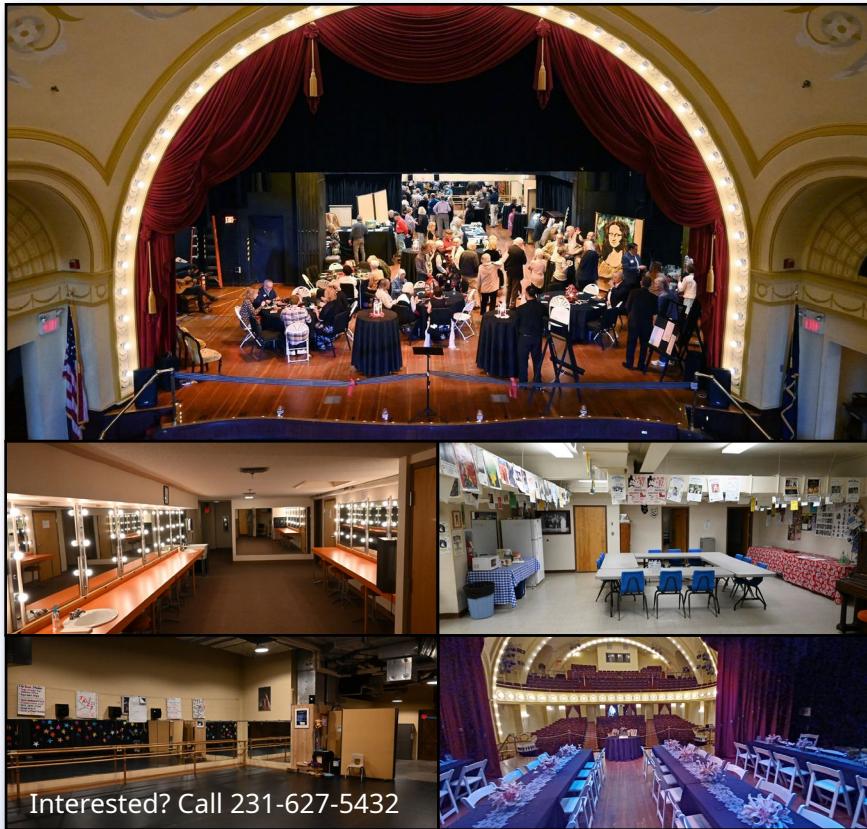
50% of our patrons live within 11 miles of the Opera House, inside the red circle.

# The Opera House, all to yourself!

The Cheboygan Opera House offers rentals for events of all kinds, private or public: weddings, receptions, concerts, and more! You'll create unforgettable memories in our beautiful Victorian auditorium.

## Services and equipment we offer:

- Box office services (ticket sales)
- Stage and spot lighting
- Microphones, speakers & mixing board
- Technical support
- A gorgeous Steinway Model B grand piano
- A film screen and digital projector
- A Marley dance floor
- Filming, live streaming, and audio recording/editing



# Scholarships



**Rylee Velandia**



**Katelynn Cross**

We are excited to share details about our five 2024 CAAC scholarship recipients, ages 9 - 18!

**Rylee Velandia** is a 4th grade student at Cheboygan's Bishop Baraga Catholic School and received a **Moloney Scholarship**. The award will pay for her tuition to the Young Americans Summer Camp in Harbor Springs, where she will pursue her interest in dance and theater.

**Aralyn Mendez** is a 5th grade student at Bishop Baraga Catholic School and received a **Moloney Scholarship**. She plans to attend the week-long All Star Dancers 2024 New York Convention, where she will receive dance instruction.

**Katelynn Cross** recently graduated from Mackinaw City High School and received a **Moloney Scholarship**. Her award will support her participation in the Michigan Musicians Abroad program. She will join their band, on clarinet, for a tour of five European countries this summer.

**Alivia Doss** is a recent graduate (and 2024 Salutatorian) of Wolverine Community Schools. She is recipient of the **Irene Hubbel Fine Art Scholarship**. She will receive tuition assistance to attend North Central Michigan College, where she will pursue Creative Writing.

**Gloria Maltby** is a recent graduate of Cheboygan High School, where she was on the Honor Roll for all four years. She is the 2024 recipient of the **Wendy Caulkins Fine Arts Scholarship**. She will receive tuition assistance to attend Central Michigan University this fall, where she will major in Dance Studies and minor in Business.

These scholarships are offered on an annual basis, with applications due in April. More information about eligibility and criteria can be found on our website: [theoperahouse.org](http://theoperahouse.org). We are proud to support these talented students and look forward to following them on their journeys!

# James's Musical Journey (a Testimonial)

James and his family have been coming to Glenn Miller Orchestra every year they could for 6 years. Here's what his mom has to say about the Opera House:

"I suppose it was his first viewing of "Music Man" with Aunt Margaret that hooked James on the trombone. It was the summer after kindergarten and they watched on the couch of my mother's house. He absolutely howled at "Shoopie". What 5-year old boy doesn't love potty humor? But even more glorious were those 76 trombones leading the big parade.

Fast forward to the summer after first grade and we were moving into our new home in Cheboygan, once again with Aunt Margaret. On the eve of Independence Day, James first heard the boogie beats of "In the Mood", "Pennsylvania 6-5000", and "Chattanooga Choo Choo". Following the show, he fulfilled a Cubs Scouts requirement by meeting the band leader and requesting his autograph on the CD, so as to relive the live concert experience repeatedly.

During second grade, he played the double roles of conductor and constable in a local children's theater production of Music Man. He was one of those 76 trombones now. The pieces were starting to fall into place.

That following June, as we road-tripped through South Bend en route from San Francisco to Cheboygan, we stopped at a local music shop and picked up a cheap trombone. Almost all the pieces were in place. That summer, we found ourselves back in the Cheboygan Opera House for a July 24th appearance by the Glenn Miller Orchestra. It would be the last for awhile as COVID broke our pattern, followed by a later concert date in 2022.

But in that time, James moved into middle school and was asked to pick an instrument. The trombone from South Bend was dusted off and he began his participation in band. This coming year will be his fourth year of instruction and performance. Favorite pieces include Coldplay's "Viva la Vida" and Vangelis' "Chariots of Fire". But pop in that CD he got at his first Glenn Miller concert at the Cheboygan Opera House and the music and lyrics come right back! However, this time he's focused on the bass line with the most masterful trombone player, Glenn Miller himself."

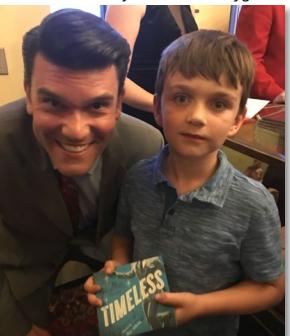
—Eileen Emerson-Boles, James' Mom



James first visits the Opera House, 2018



James picks up his trombone in South Bend, on his way back to Cheboygan.



Meeting Nick Hilscher, Glenn Miller Orchestra band leader, 2019



At Glenn Miller Orchestra again, 2022

# Arts Education



**Chamberfest 2024** brought six outstanding chamber music ensembles to the Cheboygan Opera House, with award-winning musicians from around the world performing in our hall. Now entering its fourth season, the series is free to attend for students and youth. These concerts are only possible through your contributions. Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to all those who support this initiative. (See *membership section on page 14*)



**CAAC Dance** under director Brandie Ford has seen its biggest year yet, with over 1350 sessions taught, 8000 in attendance, and 155 enrolled students. This year's dance recital was a smashing success, which packed the Opera House with 850 people over 2 nights. Kids aged 5 - 17 danced a variety of styles, including ballet and hip hop. Direction and choreography by Brandie Ford.

# Student Events



You may be surprised to learn that some of our best attended events are performances that we put on just for students. In 2024 we had full houses for "Rainbow Fish", a puppet show based on the classic children's book, and the Grammy-winning Okee Dokee Brothers (pictured above) - among other events.

We partner with schools throughout the Northern Michigan region, who bus their students to events. For many students this may be their first time ever seeing a live performance. The events are free for students and their teachers to attend, thanks to the support of grants from the Straits Area Community Foundation, the Michigan Humanities Council, the Michigan Arts & Culture Council; and thanks to the support of our corporate sponsors Citizens National Bank and EDP Renewables; and thanks to the individual members of the CAAC.

# Art Splash



This year we reinvigorated Cheboygan's annual tradition of hosting an art festival, with **Art Splash**, which indeed made a big splash with its juried art show, live art contest, makers market, and drum circle. The event was hosted in the empty lot just north of the Farmer's Market, and had live music by the award-winning Pulse Saxophone Quartet from Michigan State University. They could be heard during the **Splash Down** art contest (pictured above), when 10 artists faced off, having 30 minutes to transform blank canvases into wonderful art in front of the crowd of tourists and locals. We hope to make next year's Art Splash even more vibrant and fun, so mark your 2025 calendars on July 18th and 19th!



## Consumers Energy Foundation Prosperity Award



Thanks to a Prosperity Award from the Consumers Energy Foundation, the charitable arm of Michigan's largest energy provider, the Cheboygan Area Arts Council has received **\$250,000** to make facility improvements for accessibility at the Opera House. Two grantees were chosen from over 100 applicants statewide.

The planned upgrades represent the biggest single investment in the Opera House since the renovations leading up to its 1984 re-opening.

In the coming months you will see several significant changes in the theater: a lift to make the stage and backstage areas fully accessible to wheelchairs, new carpeting, restroom upgrades, new accessible seating areas, and improvements to existing entrances and elevator. These changes will allow us to follow through on our commitment of making the arts accessible to everyone -- patrons and performers alike.

“...these grantees understand the importance of placemaking to facilitate community growth, and we’re looking forward to seeing the positive impact these two cultural amenities will provide for their regions.”

–Brandon Hofmeister, president of the Consumers Energy Foundation

# Further Improvements for 2025

On September 20 the Michigan Arts & Culture Council (MACC) announced its funding plan for fiscal year 2025 and the Cheboygan Area Arts Council was awarded a total of \$29,828 in grants—nearly double the amount in recent years.

The MACC grant will support several mission-critical areas: \$17,500 for operational support to cover staff salaries, \$9,238 for upgrades to our sound equipment, \$900 for professional development of staff, \$1,050 to cover bus transportation costs for visiting schools, and \$1,140 to support the annual Cheboygan Area High School musical production.

We are also excited to announce the first major improvements to our backstage area since re-opening in 1984. This winter repairs will begin on our flyrail, theater curtain and fire curtain, to enhance the safety of the theater space. These improvements (estimated to cost \$96,000) are funded thanks to the major support of the late Bud and Barbara Darnell, as well as the support of individual members of the CAAC.

CAAC's mission would not be possible without the support of the following organizations:



**MICHIGAN  
ARTS &  
CULTURE  
COUNCIL**



**NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT for the **ARTS****  
[arts.gov](http://arts.gov)



**MIHumanities**



**THE CITY OF  
Cheboygan**

# Upcoming Events

**“One Hit Wonders”**  
**Dale Rieger & Friends**  
Friday, January 17

**Missoula Children’s Theatre: “Wizard of Oz”**  
Saturday, February 15

**Deep Freeze Winter Jam**  
with The Lonely Pines & Alter Ego Rehab  
Saturday, February 22

**Cheboygan High School Musical: “Oklahoma!”**  
March 7-9

**School Bands Festival**  
Mackinaw City Bands - March 12, 2025  
Cheboygan Concert Bands  
Cheboygan Jazz Band

**Jig Jam: Irish Bluegrass**  
Saturday, March 22

**Rivertown Follies**  
April 10-13

**Simply Streisand...A Tribute to Barbra Streisand**  
Saturday, April 26

**The Beach Party Boys**  
Friday, May 2

**WindSync**  
A Chamberfest 2025 Series Concert  
Sunday, May 4

**Rumours: The Ultimate Fleetwood Mac Tribute**  
Thursday, May 15

**Avery Gagliano (solo piano)**  
A Chamberfest 2025 Series Concert  
Friday, May 16

# Cheboygan Area Arts Council Membership

(12/3/2023 through 12/9/2024)

*\*Chamberfest Concert Series Sponsor*

We extend special thanks to those who made gifts and in-kind contributions over the last year. The support of our members is vital to bring quality programs and performances to Northern Michigan.

## **Benefactor (\$2000 or more)**

Anonymous  
James & Barbara Darnell  
Lloyd Fell & Kathy Lieder\*  
Bruce & Rosemary Gauthier\*  
Richard & Margaret Johnston

Susan Kowzan  
Diane Morand\*  
Madeleine Peterson &  
Mark Andreeae  
Rob Ross & Kimberly Liedel-Ross\*  
Cathleen Zepelin

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## **Guarantor (\$1000 - \$1999)**

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In honor of Dale Rieger:  
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## **Sponsor (\$400 - \$999)**

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**Supporting (\$25 - \$74)**

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Jim & Alice Barron  
Sally Bataran  
Linda Bedell  
Taryn Bednarz  
Chuck & Diane Burgtorf  
Ronald & Constance Byrnes  
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Kendra Cleary  
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Bob & Patty Corkwell  
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Kara D'Andrea  
Margaret M. Daly  
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David & Kathleen Engelhardt

Carolyn & Norbert Evers  
Mike & Karen Fornes  
Paul France  
In honor of Martha Orloff:  
Carol Sue Hagstrom  
Carol Hennessy  
David & Karen Hill  
Karen & Hank Jallos  
Sandra Janzen  
Ed & Sandy Jeannotte  
Deborah Keller  
Lori Kindsvatter  
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Dr Dennis & Cathi Sczechowski  
Janet Shoemaker  
Matthew & Joanne Skiera  
Sally Slominski  
Rev. Duane Wachowiak  
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**In memory of**  
**Thomas Bussler Sr.:**  
Debra Schryer

**In memory of**  
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Bob Solt & Anne Couture

**In memory of Ron Crandell:**  
Jeff & Laurie Dykehouse

**In memory of Billie Lyon:**  
Linda Bedell  
Lola Ermisch  
Paul & Peggy Nordman  
Midge Shaw

**In memory of Wendy Nieland:**  
Linda & Michael Konicki

**In memory of Michele Peters:**  
Lola Ermisch

**In memory of Leola Ross:**

Carolyn & Norbert Evers  
Bill & Rene Garrity  
Diane Morand  
Amy & Andrew Ross  
Vicki Ross-Rhoades & Steven Ross

**In memory of David Garthus:**  
Linda & Michael Konicki

**In memory of Nancy Goslin:**  
Judy Benton  
Bob & Patty Corkwell  
Kara D'Andrea  
Margaret M. Daly  
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Karen Luttman-Shamanoff  
Marcia Makela  
Pam McCabe  
Carolyn Penniman  
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Matthew & Joanne Skiera

# Business Honor Roll (\$2000 or more)



## MACKINAC ISLAND FERRY COMPANY

### Business Honor Roll (\$1000 - \$1999)



### Business Honor Roll (\$400 - \$999)

Cheboygan Fraternal Order of Eagles #1282

Pat's Posey Patch



### Business Honor Roll (\$200 - \$399)

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Archambo Electric	Kokosing Industrial, Inc.
Audie's Restaurant	Mulligan's
BHHS Michigan Real Estate	The Otto House Inn
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**CHEBOYGAN AREA ARTS COUNCIL**

(The Cheboygan Opera House)

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*Art, History & Community*

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[theoperahouse.org](http://theoperahouse.org)

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