



# Annual Report 2023

## The Blue Door Theatre

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2023 was an exciting year of optimism, growth, and change for the Blue Door Theatre (BDT). We opened the Spokane School of Improv and introduced new adult, teen, and kid classes and camps. We brought Improv League into the high schools, where students learn about improv and being part of an ensemble. We reached out to other organizations and businesses to develop new partnerships and we kept offering high-quality, low-cost entertainment for our region every Friday and Saturday night.

Along with those changes, we made the very difficult decision to move from our Garland location, which we called home for 20 years, to a new location. The decision was made to accommodate our growing courses, community work, shows, and future growth potential. After looking at several possibilities, we selected 319 S. Cedar St, the historic Benewah Milk Bottle building. Do not worry, Mary Lou's Milk Bottle on Garland Ave is still offering their incredible ice cream, shakes, hamburgers, and other options. Our new space provides us with the opportunity to have two theatres, multiple classrooms, and chances to engage with other small theatres in the region.



# BY THE NUMBERS

**27%**

Friday Show 2022-23  
Attendance Increase

**22%**

Saturday Show 2022-23  
Attendance Increase

**273%**

Adult Class 2018-23  
Participation Increase

**106%**

Teen Class 2018-2023  
Participation Increase

**4 new**

Kid (8-12)  
Monthly Classes

**2 new**

Kid (8-12)  
Summer Camps

**75**

4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Graders  
Taught Improv & Poetry

**3**

Teen Summer Camps  
Sketch and Improv

**6**

New Adult Classes  
Introduced

**5**

Improv League Middle &  
High School Teams Formed

# EMBRACING CHANGE



In 2022, the BDT Board of Directors decided it was time to expand our course offerings and open the Spokane School of Improv to create an organized and comprehensive educational program that consisted of one-time classes, multi-week courses, camps, and special offerings. In January 2023, we opened the Spokane School of Improv and have been expanding our educational options for the Spokane region every since.

The second major change for us this year, was deciding it was time to move from our Garland location that we called home for 20 years and find a new home. The Board of Directors made this decision after realizing that we needed more space to accommodate both our theatre and school. After we looked at numerous possibilities, we found the perfect location for an improv theatre and school - the downtown Milk Bottle on 319 S Cedar St. This milk bottle should not be confused with the milk bottle on Garland, which continues to serve ridiculously delicious ice cream.

Though we encountered a lot of change, we have also experienced a lot of growth. Continue reading to learn more about what we accomplished.

# THE 2023 PERFORMANCES

The BDT produces 12 unique Friday shows a year along with our staple Saturday show, Safari. All our shows are improvised and created on the spot based off of audience suggestions. We had a different theme for every show - game shows, newspaper clippings, role playing games, psychological analysis, reality television, mysteries, astrological predictions, and holiday shows.

To make the season happen, we brought back a few of our Friday audience's favorite shows that included Choose to Lose, I Saw You, Blue Doors and Dragons, Ink Blot, The Real (Blanks) of (Blank)-ville, No Clue, and Ha!!Mark. We also introduced 5 new show themes including Detective Do-Rights, You've Been Con'ned, Your Mama, Medium-At-Large and Say What.

We are also proud to sponsor the longest-running improv show in Spokane, Safari. It happens every Saturday night and consists of improvisers engaged in fast-paced games that keep the audience laughing. Every week highlights different games and cast members so you never see the same show twice.

We believe that live entertainment can be low-cost and high quality, so we keep our tickets affordable at \$9 per ticket. For less than a movie, you can see local performers creating incredible entertainment every Friday and Saturday. The audience provides the suggestions and the improvisers create a whole new world right before your eyes.

*Our shows are more than laughter - they are stories unfolding in the moment. We craft narratives, create characters, and take you on a journey where every scene is unique and unpredictable.*



# SPOKANE SCHOOL OF IMPROV

Through the Spokane School of Improv, the Blue Door Theatre is bringing together its 25 years of experience to benefit the Spokane community by teaching the craft of improv and applying improv principles to everyday life. Improv provides a proven methodology for personal and professional growth. It provides skills and strategies people can learn to get themselves through difficult situations, advance at their job, or generally enjoy life. It opens us to possibilities, growth, and transformation. We are taking our years of performance and education experience and applying it to our curriculum to develop exciting and supportive educational opportunities.

In 2023, we offered a diversity of courses for **adults** including:

- Intro to Improv
- Character and Narrative Development
- Pun Workout
- Improv and Self-Care
- Improv for Lawyers
- Improv and Poetry
- Yes, And; If Then\
- Storytelling

We also introduced and expanded **kid and teen** classes and camps including:

- Two new summer camps for kids aged 8 to 12
- Added monthly classes for kids aged 8 to 12
- Continued the intro to improv teen summer camp and added an advanced improv camp and a sketch camp
- Continued monthly teen classes



## Improv League

This year, the BDT produced Improv League which is a transformative program developed and taught by Spokane School of Improv faculty in the high schools. The intent is to provide high school students with comprehensive improv experiences. Improv lets students celebrate spontaneity, collaboration, and quick thinking, resulting in unique and hilarious performances.

Through weekly workshops, shows, and inter-school competitions, students enhance their creative thinking abilities, cultivate soft skills, experience personal growth, develop relationships with peers from different schools, and have fun. Students also get to perform shows for their peers and the community.

We were able to offer Improv League in the following high schools: Mount Spokane, Rogers, Ferris, and The Community School. We are also serving middle school students at Otis Orchards Elementary School.



“Ever since we started improv, I’ve been more able to step out of my comfort zone - say what I think, take charge when no one else does, and now instead of being small, my comfort zone is huge and there is hardly anything I won’t do.”

-Student talking about their experience.



# TESTIMONIALS

Below is an overview of testimonials to the power of improv and how people have experienced our programs. The first one is from a student in one of our adult courses. Next, there are quotes from parents and youth students.

## Adult Student

“I was never interested in becoming an improv player. I have watched others perform, enamored by their quick wit and humor, and I could never imagine myself in their shoes. My wit appears about three days after it is needed, unlike the outstanding improv players I have seen who can think cleverly on the spot.

In January 2023, my 12-year-old daughter, Midori, decided to take a 2-hour improv class for fun, and the teachers put on a show that night. We attended the show, and I was mesmerized, not just by their talent but by their ease and how much fun they seemed to be having. They informed the audience of the Blue Door Theatre's brand-new Spokane School of Improv, and I immediately signed up for an 8-week Improv 101 class.

At the time, I was going to school to become an American Sign Language interpreter. While I gained many skills with ASL and interpreting, my fear of being in front of any audience larger than one person terrified me. My voice trembled when I spoke to interpret what was signed, and my hands and body visibly shook, even long after I sat down. I decided to take an improv class for this very reason. It frightened me! But I knew it was the challenge I needed to overcome my fear of being in front of an audience and thinking quicker than a 3-day turnaround.

Driving to my first class, I kicked myself for signing up. My hands shook as I drove down Garland Avenue. I wondered what on earth I had been thinking when I spontaneously signed up that night. Who pays money to be scared and act like a fool in front of strangers? I held back the urge to turn around as the Blue Door Theatre came into view. I wished I had at least signed up with a friend so it wouldn't be as scary as going alone. However, I knew the reason for that. I wanted the challenge of being entirely out of my element with no safety net in a friend.

I nervously entered the theater, unsure of what to expect. The teacher, Clarissa, welcomed me with a warm smile. I sat silently, waiting for the rest of the class to arrive. Was everyone

else as scared as I was? I didn't know anyone, but they would soon find out how awful I was at improvising and forming coherent sentences. Would they all cringe when they had to do a scene with Delayed-Wit-Becky? My entire body trembled, and I started to sweat despite being cold at the same time. The class started, and Clarissa invited us all to the stage. I was shocked by what happened next. Within ten minutes, all my nerves and fears had vanished. The shaking and nervous sweating had stopped. I was laughing harder than I had laughed in ... I can't even remember the last time I laughed that hard. I left that night feeling like a kid who got a "like" from their favorite TikTok star. This school's ability to quickly vanish my fears was, hands down, the best magic I have ever witnessed.

Week after week, I attended the 101 class. There were nights I was exhausted with too much on my plate and considered skipping. But I was committed to the process and went regardless of my packed schedule. I always showed up knowing that every time I left the Spokane School of Improv, I had the most significant energy boost and feelings of euphoria. These classes hooked me from day one. I have since taken four additional courses beyond 101, and each teacher I have worked with so far, Frank, Annica, and Jake, was just as incredible and warm as Clarissa—each person creating a safe environment for inclusion, acceptance, and growth.

I am completely in awe at what improv can do for people beyond entertainment. I am proof that improv does so much more than entertain. It has given me confidence, calmed my nerves, and made me feel safe to be my genuine, authentic self. It has shown me that I belong, regardless of how I compare to others. It has also taught me to work with numerous personalities, have a voice, and truly listen. These empowering, positive skills transfer beyond the theater and into my daily life with my family, friends, and community.” —Becky Torvik



## From Parents and Youth

Improv camp was a perfect place for my tween-kid to be authentic and goofy with peers. At an age when 'fitting-in' or 'seeming -cool' feels important, it's so valuable for them to learn that playing, being creative, and thinking collaboratively IS cool.

Parent

Ever since we started improv, I've been more able to step out of my comfort zone - say what I think, take charge when no one else does.

Youth

A fun, safe environment for shy kids to learn and practice interpersonal skills.

Parent

Improv brings my life joy and helps me fight the bad things in my life.

Youth

My daughter thought Improv Camp for Teens was very fun, engaging, and had good teachers and she made new friends!

Parent



# THE MOVE

The BDT moved to 319 S Cedar St, the downtown milk bottle building. Here are some pictures from December as we built our new stage and painted rooms. So many people volunteered to make the space happen.



# OPEN HOUSE

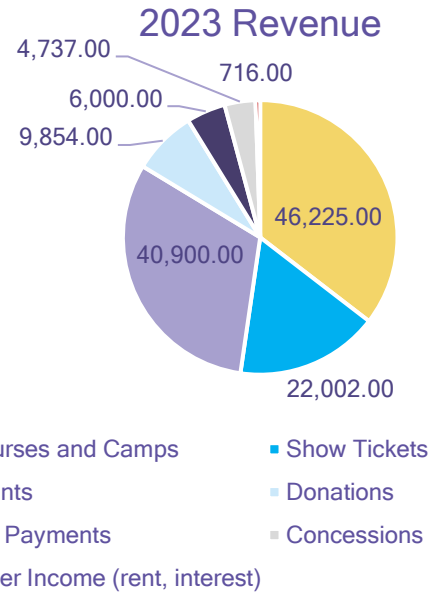
On December 12, we sponsored an open house for the public to see the space and how we were turning the milk bottle into an improv theatre. You can even see the stage before it was completed.



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

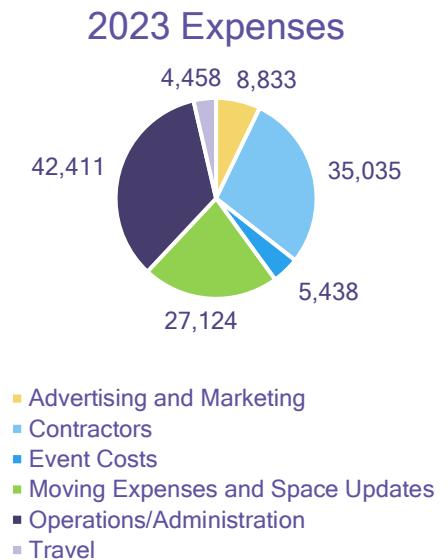
2023 was a good year for bringing in new revenue. The new Spokane School of Improv did better than expected bringing in \$46,225 in its first year. We are excited to see how our courses and shows continue to progress in 2024.

2023 Revenue	
Courses and Camps	\$46,225
Show Tickets	\$22,002
Grants	\$40,900
Donations	\$9,854
Gig Payments (off-site shows/courses)	\$6,000
Concessions	\$4,737
Rental Income	\$716
Interest Earned	\$256
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$130,178</b>



## Expenses

2023 Expenses	
Advertising and Marketing	\$8,833
Contractors (faculty, director, and gig performers)	\$35,035
Event Costs (shows, camps, Board events, concessions)	\$5,438
Moving and Space Update Costs	\$27,124
Operations/Administration (rent, utilities, taxes, professional services, office supplies, bank fees, insurance, repairs)	\$42,411
Travel (professional development and mileage reimbursements)	\$4,458
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$123,299</b>



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023



## Executive Board

James Mohr (Board President)  
Danielle Burris (Board Vice President)  
Victoria Quael (Board Treasurer)  
Josh Scheel (Board Secretary)

## Board Members

Clarissa Bundy  
Grace Leaf (Corporate Education Director)  
Philip Lindsey  
Crystal Murray-Wesson (Theatre Operations Director)  
Caleb Strine  
Heather Tillery  
Michael Winser

## Additional Leadership

Kait Concilio (Marketing Director)  
Michael Glatzmaier (Spokane School of Improv Director)  
Alex Kwamina (Tech Director)  
Frank Tano (Artistic Director)

# BENEFACTORS

Your support of our theatre, school, programs like Improv League and Improv in Prisons, and our shows continue to thrive. Consider making a [donation](#).

## Improv Enthusiast \$35

Annica Eagle  
Briessa Sanders  
Jana Wipf  
Kellie Neville  
Kendra Kurz  
Kiana Conant  
Marilyn McGee  
Marti and Dennis Martin  
Michael and MaryAnn Carey  
Ryan Jacobson  
Tay Robinson  
Wendy Williams Gilbert

## Laugh Ambassador \$500

Erin OHALLORAN-FOERG on behalf of the Foerg Family  
Anonymous

## Improv Champion \$10,000

- [V.I.P. Production Northwest](#)



## Comedy Contributor \$100

Anne and Trevor Breese  
Becky Torvik  
Brock Kowalchuk  
David Fournier  
David and Sabrina Keckalo  
Elizabeth Schroeder  
J G  
Lars Gilberts  
Lawra Gosselin Harris  
Mark Robbins  
Nicole Thomas  
Peter Hendricks(in honor of Brett)  
Pete Porter  
Sarah Doxey  
Tim Gerlitz  
Anonymous Donor  
Anonymous Donor

## Laugh Leader \$1,000

James Mohr  
[Valley Electric](#)

## Improv Hero \$20,000

- Be the first to join at this level.

## Laugh Advocate \$250

Gib and Beth Rossing  
Jim Furry  
Malena Walley  
Matt Paulson **Highstreet Insurance**  
Neil Claflin

## Improv Storyteller \$5,000

Fund for the Improvisational Arts

## Content Creator Ask us about opportunities.

- Be the first to join at this level.



We look forward to seeing you in 2024!



Thank You to Our Audiences

