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## Starlight Announces Uniquely KC Campaign Groundbreaking Celebration



*Historic Kansas City Landmark to Launch First Phase of Construction  
and New Programming from \$40 Million Campaign on October 9, 2024*

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Today, Starlight, the oldest and largest continually operating performing arts organization in the Kansas City metropolitan area, announced the groundbreaking celebration for its Uniquely KC campaign, which will be held on October 9, 2024, at Starlight’s Applause Club, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The groundbreaking celebrates Uniquely KC, Starlight’s \$40 million capital campaign revealed to the public last fall. The bold plan will further the organization’s mission to connect the community through live arts experiences that entertain, inspire, and engage and create accessible live arts experiences for all generations at one of Kansas City’s most unique outdoor venues.

"As we break ground on this exciting new chapter for Starlight, we celebrate the future of Kansas City’s iconic cultural landmark," Lindsey Rood-Clifford, Starlight President + C.E.O., said. "This project reflects our commitment to enhancing the arts, enriching community experiences, and preserving the magic of live performance for future generations. Today’s groundbreaking signals the beginning of a transformation that will ensure Starlight

continues to be a place where everyone feels welcome and inspired, reinforcing our shared love for the arts and this city we proudly call home."

The Uniquely KC Campaign will fund the following campus improvements:

### **CENTRAL CAMPUS**

- **A new state-of-the-art canopy** will extend over the front portion of Plaza seating, allowing Starlight to offer summer Broadway matinees for up to 3,200 attendees. This helps cool down the seating bowl and gives audience members who prefer an earlier curtain time the opportunity to get home before dark. Additionally, this improvement opens opportunities for other community daytime events and partnerships.
- **A new production and light bridge** will bring lights closer to the stage to enhance the production quality for summer performances for audience members (and the artists!). Additional new screens mounted to the bridge will make sure all patrons feel closer to the action than ever before.

### **WEST CAMPUS**

- **Renovated restrooms** will expand the number of stalls on the west side of the Starlight campus, resulting in shorter wait times. To support Starlight's commitment to accessibility, family restrooms will be added, adult changing tables will be incorporated for caregivers to safely assist those who need it, and Starlight's first-ever health and nursing rooms will improve the guest experience for patrons.
- **A new, accessible entry** will create the third accessible public path into the Starlight venue, joining ADA-compliant gate entrances at the northwest and southwest corners of the campus. This entry will also provide expanded storage for security and other entrance equipment.

### **EAST CAMPUS**

- **A new, larger kitchen** will replace Starlight's current small catering kitchen. The much-needed renovations to this area will upgrade food and beverage services and equipment and expand storage.

The Uniquely KC Campaign will also fund the following community programs including:

- **The Arts Bridge program** will leverage the power of the arts for community building in Kansas City. Through collaboration with arts and non-arts organizations, these innovative partnerships will activate Starlight's historic facilities for a variety of engagements, including community events, performances, town halls, festivals, symposiums, and more. This program has already been launched, establishing

critical partnerships with local nonprofits including Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey, Center for Neighborhoods, and HeARTland Arts KC.

- **Technical Theatre training** will expose high school students to the often-hidden career paths in the arts. Starlight will work alongside other performing arts and entertainment organizations to provide participants with hands-on training in various technical disciplines including lighting, costuming, scenic design, and audio. This program has already been launched to great success, thanks to partners IATSE Local 31, The Arts Asylum, and A to Z Theatricals, working alongside a full cohort of 20 students from 15 schools across the metro.
- **A musical theatre residency for elementary schools** will provide free resources and support to empower community schools to produce their first musical and create a sustainable arts program. Students from under-resourced schools will engage in a semester-long creative process that culminates with a performance for the community.
- **The expansion of Starlight's community tickets program** will offer free performance access to thousands of Kansas Citians. With a focus on addressing barriers to attend performances, this expansion will create more entry points to meaningful arts experiences.
- **Performances for Young Audiences Series** will provide the inspirational benefits of live theatre to community students and families. School matinee performances, weekend family shows, and sensory-friendly programs will ensure young people, and their families have opportunities to experience the magic of Starlight. This has already been launched which has allowed Starlight to offer field trips for the first time by providing free tickets to over 5,000 Kansas City elementary school students in an indoor setting.

The Uniquely KC groundbreaking celebration begins the first phase of the project with a groundbreaking for the two new towers that will support the production bridge and canopy. In addition, the celebration will include the launch of several new community engagement programs such as the Arts Bridge program, Technical Theatre training and the Performances for Young Audiences Series.

Uniquely KC has raised \$24 million of the \$40 million campaign with thanks to significant gifts from Sunderland Foundation, the City of Kansas City, Missouri, Hall Family Foundation, the State of Missouri, Levy Restaurants and many more.

Howard Cohen, Chair of Starlight's Board of Directors, stated, "Much has happened over these past 12 months after we publicly announced this campaign. We are confident that because of the hard work over this past year, the success of this campaign will allow even more members of the community to enjoy the Starlight experience so many Kansas Citians

have loved and celebrated as a tradition for decades. We look forward to creating new memories with the next generation of Starlight supporters when construction is complete in the spring of 2026!”

Starlight’s Uniquely KC construction projects aim to be completed in two phases. Phase 1 will be completed by the spring of 2025, prior to the summer season. Phase 2 is slated to begin in the fall of 2025 with an anticipated completion date of spring of 2026. Development partners include GastingerWalker&, JE Dunn Construction, and Legends Project Development.

For renderings and more information about Uniquely KC, visit <https://www.kcstarlight.com/uniquelykc/>.

### About Starlight

Opened as a theatre in 1950 and a nonprofit organization in 1951, Starlight is the largest and oldest performing arts organization in Kansas City, Missouri, and connects our community through live arts experiences that entertain, inspire, and engage audiences of all ages. Offering diverse programming year-round, Starlight presents Broadway musicals, concert events, creative programming, and extensive community engagement programs including classes, scholarships, and one of the largest high school musical theatre award programs in the nation. Located on 16 acres in Swope Park, the historic, city-owned venue is the second largest outdoor producing theatre in the country with almost 8,000 seats.

Follow Starlight on social media @kcstarlight and visit [kcstarlight.com/](https://www.kcstarlight.com/) for more information.

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