



## Midwest Music Foundation to Expand Support for Health Care through Spencer Fane Charitable Grant

Spencer Fane LLP is pleased to announce [Midwest Music Foundation](#) as the recipient of the firm's 2021 Charitable Giving Program grant in Kansas City.

As part of its charitable grant program, Spencer Fane will donate \$50,000 over the course of three years to support the Midwest Music Foundation's mission of uniting and empowering the Kansas City area music community by providing health care assistance, education and career development, events and resources.

"This charitable grant will allow Midwest Music Foundation to reach a broader demographic in and around the Greater Kansas City area, including those who might not be aware of the services we provide," said Rhonda Lyne, executive director for Midwest Music Foundation. "As Kansas City grows into an artistic and cultural epicenter, the need to support and sustain its artists grows — many of whom are self-employed or work multiple jobs. We want to equip musicians with the necessary tools and resources to further their careers, and we appreciate the support of Spencer Fane in this mission."

Midwest Music Foundation supports a healthy and vibrant music community in a thriving regional artistic economy. It supports area musicians, music fans and industry personnel, including sound and production engineers, venue employees, booking agents and management.

While primarily focused on the Kansas City metro area, Midwest Music Foundation reaches a diverse range of ages, races, religions and sexual orientations in other cities, including Lawrence, Manhattan, Topeka, and Wichita, Kansas; and St. Joseph and Columbia, Missouri. The organization also hosts an annual music showcase in Austin, Texas, during the SXSW Music Festival, which reaches a national and

international audience.

“The unfortunate circumstances in 2020 have caused many artists and music industry personnel to lose essential income,” said Julia Vander Weele, Office Managing Partner for Spencer Fane in Kansas City. “Our firm has a wonderful opportunity to help provide support to Midwest Music Foundation, and as an extension, the hundreds of musicians across the region whose livelihoods have been impacted by the pandemic. We look forward to maintaining this relationship now and in the future as this organization continues to serve as a valuable asset to our local arts community.”

Abigail Henderson formed a vision to create a health care coalition for her fellow musicians in Kansas City after experiencing severe abdominal pain while out of town to see a concert and being diagnosed with a hernia at New Orleans Musicians’ Clinic, a comprehensive health services provider for working musicians without health insurance. Her plans stalled when she was diagnosed with Stage III inflammatory breast cancer, but the local music community came to her aid through a benefit concert in 2008 called Apocalypse Meow, which gave Henderson and her husband and bandmate, Chris Meck, a platform on which to establish a coalition, now known as the Midwest Music Foundation.

In August 2013, Henderson passed away at age 36 after a long, hard-fought battle with cancer, but her passion for music is the deepest inspiration for MMF. Abby’s Fund for Musicians’ Health Care was established in her memory and dispenses funds to area musicians in need of emergency medical care.

The Spencer Fane Charitable Giving Program in Kansas City provides significant support to select local nonprofit arts organizations through a \$50,000 donation to each over the course of three years. The program has been designed on a rotational basis that allows for one new recipient to enter the program each year, with another exiting upon completion of its three-year cycle. Current and past recipients include Charlotte Street Foundation, Crossroads Preparatory Academy, Lyric Opera Kansas City, Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey, Heart of America Shakespeare Festival, ArtsKC-Regional Arts Council, and Kansas City Art Institute.

The primary goals of the program are to encourage a long-standing relationship with a nonprofit organization where the firm’s donation can truly make a difference,

and to provide Spencer Fane employees with additional opportunities to become involved with the firm's charitable causes.