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## The Coterie to Expand Arts Education Programs for Kansas City Youth with Spencer Fane Charitable Grant

Spencer Fane LLP is pleased to announce [The Coterie](#), a not-for-profit professional theater for youth and family audiences, as the recipient of the firm's 2024-2026 Charitable Giving Program grant in Kansas City.

Spencer Fane will donate \$50,000 over the next three years in support of The Coterie's mission to deliver professional classic and contemporary theatre that challenges audiences and artists and provides educational, dramatic outreach programs in the community. With this grant, The Coterie plans to significantly expand the reach of its life-changing arts education programs, thus growing the organization's impact on underserved students and communities of color in particular.

"We recognize The Coterie's vital role in delivering theatre experiences that allow new generations to be seen and heard, and we're committed to values such as equity, inclusion, diversity, and justice both on- and offstage," said Jonathan Thomas, Managing Director of The Coterie. "To know Spencer Fane shares the same dedication to those principles makes us especially excited for this partnership, and we look forward to the new opportunities their support will provide across our different programs."

The Coterie was established in 1979 and has since earned a reputation as one of the top theatres for young audiences in the nation by publications such as *TIME* magazine. The organization seeks to open lines of communication between races, genders, and generations by redefining children's theatre to include families and diverse audiences. Not only does The Coterie present a prolific, six-production mainstage season annually, but its free outreach and in-school programming sets

the theatre apart as a true leader in arts education.

Funds from the Spencer Fane charitable grant will go toward these programs which include Project Daylight, Your Ticket to Ride, Project Pride, and Reaching the Write Minds / Young Playwrights' Roundtable.

Project Daylight is a free, interactive theatre workshop that introduces and destigmatizes mental health concepts for over 1,000 middle school students annually. The format creates a safe space for important dialogues and provides coping exercises and resources to the critically underserved ages of 11-14.

Your Ticket to Ride is The Coterie's bus subsidy program. By assisting qualifying schools with the cost of student transportation, the organization allows schools from more than seventy regional zip codes to attend their low-cost theatre performances.

Project Pride is one of the few LGBTQIA+ theatre troupes in the country. Comprising LGBTQIA+ and straight allied teens, the group devises a variety of performing arts pieces that give voice to their own experiences and celebrate their identities.

Reaching the Write Minds / Young Playwrights' Roundtable is a unique, invitation-only dramatic writing program for emerging teen playwrights. Through professional instruction and mentorship, participants hone their writing skills and also receive opportunities to have their work featured in front of live audiences. Past alumni include Janelle Monae and Tosin Morohunfola.

"As a past [show sponsor](#) and audience member, we've already been fortunate to witness the magic The Coterie brings to our community firsthand," said [Nate Orr](#), the lead attorney for the Kansas City Charitable Giving Program. "We're thrilled to now enter a long-lasting collaboration with the theatre that provides financial and volunteer support for their diverse, inclusive, and powerful offerings to the local arts scene."

The Spencer Fane Charitable Giving Program in Kansas City provides significant support to select local nonprofit arts organizations through a \$50,000 donation over three years. The program is designed as a rotation so that one new recipient enters the program each year, with another exiting upon completion of its three-year cycle. Current and past recipients include Band of Angels, The Folly Theater, Midwest Music

Foundation, 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 program's primary goal is to encourage long-standing relationships with nonprofit organizations and provide Spencer Fane employees with additional opportunities to become involved with the firm's charitable causes.