

LITTLE THEATRE OF BEDFORD



SUSTAINING HOOSIER COMMUNITIES

2017-2018

A partnership between AADM-Y650: Arts Administration & the Little Theatre of Bedford





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Acknowledgements

This project was completed as a collaboration between the students in AADM-Y650: Arts Administration and the Little Theatre of Bedford as part of the 2017-2018 Indiana University Sustaining Hoosier Communities (IUSHC) initiative. IUSHC is a program within the IU Center for Rural Engagement (CRE).

This report represents original student work and recommendations proposed by the students in AADM-Y650: Arts Administration for the Little Theatre of Bedford. The contents of this report represent the views of the students in AADM-Y650: Arts Administration and do not reflect those of IUSHC, CRE, Indiana University, or the Little Theatre of Bedford.

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About Sustaining Hoosier Communities

Indiana University Sustaining Hoosier Communities is an initiative that partners with a local community within south central Indiana to explore, understand, and resolve challenges and projects identified by the community. Based on a tested model for university/community engagement that has been successfully implemented by over 25 universities and their community partners, Sustaining Hoosier Communities is a yearlong collaboration between Indiana University and a single community partner.

Indiana University’s faculty who opt in to Sustaining Hoosier Communities match their courses to the projects based on their areas of research, expertise, and teaching. Each course uses a cross-disciplinary approach to explore and solve sustainability issues identified by the community partner through project-based research. Faculty and community stakeholders agree before classes begin on a scope of work and deliverables for each class, and project liaisons are identified by the community and the university to coordinate this unified effort.

Sustaining Hoosier Communities is just one example of many types of community engagement Indiana University plans to pursue as part of the Center for Rural Engagement. By harnessing the research, expertise, energy, and service of Indiana University’s faculty, staff, and students, Indiana University and our local partners work collaboratively to improve the health, prosperity, and vitality of southcentral Indiana.

To learn more about IU Sustaining Hoosier Communities, visit www.shc.indiana.edu.

To learn more about the IU Center for Rural Engagement, visit www.rural.indiana.edu.

Sustaining Hoosier Communities Project Process





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About the Course

AADM-Y650: Arts Administration is the last course in the Master of Arts in Arts Administration program and serves as a capstone course. The students acted as a consultancy firm addressing five primary areas of concern of the Little Theatre of Bedford (LTB) by dividing into the following teams: strategic communications team, finance operations team, governance team, artistic-education team, and development team. Students spent time both researching and working with board members and other LTB constituents in best formulating recommendations as well as instruments and tools for LTB to implement for sustainability and future growth. LTB board and constituents met with students on campus and on site in Bedford to assist in the students' reports and recommendations.



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About the Little Theatre of Bedford

The Little Theatre of Bedford (LTB) is an established community theatre in southern Indiana with a rich history and offers performances and educational programs for the surrounding counties year-round. LTB opened its doors in 1960 and has produced plays performed by devoted volunteers and community members for several years. The challenges identified by LTB were the following: board governance, fundraising and development, strategic communications, finance and operations, and artistic and education programming. LTB expressed interest in partnering with students in AADM-Y650: Arts Administration to address these issues and create solutions that would ensure the longevity and the sustainability of LTB for years to come.



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The Project: Connecting Course & Community

Students in AADM-Y650: Arts Administration spent time conducting field work (i.e. observations, attending performances, discussions both formal and informal with constituents, interviews, surveys, etc.) with the Little Theatre of Bedford and its stakeholders. Both class time and outside of class time were used by students to develop outreach plans, fundraising strategies, educational materials, and marketing for LTB to consider implementing. The product of this collaboration was an extensive feasibility-study with robust research on LTB and small/rural theatre management in general, as well as abundant deliverables for LTB to implement moving forward. The consultations between students and LTB likely resulted in a monetary value between \$10,000 and \$12,000.

Among the class's final deliverables were final reports addressing the Little Theatre's five target areas: board governance, fundraising and development, strategic communications, finance and operations, and artistic and education programming. Each report provided templates for programming, grants, press releases, and social media posts, the financial stability and framework of LTB's sustainability, and activities for a board retreat. These materials can assist in maintaining the vitality and sustainability of LTB's presence throughout south central Indiana.



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Student Outcomes

- Produced five final reports addressing Little Theatre of Bedford's five target areas, templates for programming, grants, press releases, and social media
- Wrote the beginning of a board handbook for LTB's board members
- Created activities for a board retreat
- Assessed the financial stability and frameworks for LTB's sustainability
- Estimated costs and benefits for CRM/technology platforms
- Provided artistic and educational programming recommendations
- Gained professional, hands-on experience working with clients in a rural community
- Participated in on-site visits, attended LTB's performances, and worked with LTB's board members to synthesize final deliverables

Community Partner Outcomes

- Student-generated solutions to perceived challenges to Little Theatre's sustainability as voiced by board members
- Resources for developing workshops and trainings for board members
- Recommendations on finding funding resources and implementing outreach and marketing strategies, increasing public awareness, and educational programs



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