



2023 Finalist Summaries



**Art Center Sarasota
Youth Digital Art Lab & Classroom Upgrade:
Building a Digital Arts Program + Expanding Classroom Capabilities**

ART CENTER



Art Center Sarasota's (ACS) mission is to bring together creatives and the broader public to increase understanding of the human condition, support well-being, and build community connection through the universal language of art. Their proposed **Youth Digital Art Lab & Classroom Upgrade: Building a Digital Arts Program + Expanding Classroom Capabilities** initiative will expand their youth programs to include digital technology to create art and will upgrade classroom space to allow for increased enrollment.

The total initiative budget is \$127,799, with funds beyond the Impact100 SRQ grant partially committed. The grant would fund \$46,000 for furniture, its installation and site preparation, to create innovative and efficient environments; \$27,000 for technology and equipment including video equipment, large format printers, computers and software; \$29,000 for the instructors and support personnel; and \$7,000 for other direct expenses that support the initiative.

ACS's addition of a digital arts program is a significant step in increasing visual art opportunities for youth in Sarasota, addressing the current imbalance between performing arts education and visual arts education opportunities. Digital and media arts play a pivotal role in society and are popular and lucrative choices for young people. Creating opportunities for students to explore photography, animation, graphics, visual effects and more can inspire a child to pursue digital art in college or as a career. Further, art experiences act as catalysts for discussion, enhanced critical thinking skills, and elevated social consciousness.

This initiative will enable 50 students to enroll in digital classes during the summer in addition to the more than 350 current summer camp enrollees. Scholarships are offered to provide access to all. During free Youth Saturdays, 312 students will be able to spend time learning digital arts. The classroom redesign will benefit more than 2,000 youth each year. The impact of the program will be monitored by the enrollment for classes and the development of new offerings connected to digital arts and classroom upgrades. ACS will measure satisfaction, effectiveness, and longevity through tools such as surveys and interviews.

The initiative and its impact will be sustained beyond the 24-month funding period through paid adult digital art classes and open studio hours. ACS's ability to maximize the size of classes offered at the Art Center will generate additional funds to support the digital art lab. The initiative will generate an additional 12 weeks of adult class instruction and 30 weeks of open studio time, resulting in a 42% increase to ACS's overall adult education offerings that include over 100 classes, workshops, talks, and events.

The incorporation of a digital arts program will further strengthen ACS's commitment to championing Sarasota's reputation as "Florida's Cultural Coast" and will inspire future generations of artists.



Venice Theatre
Curtains Up! A Grand Restoration!

Venice theatre

Since 1950, Venice Theatre has realized its mission of making a dramatic impact on all stages of life. But exercising their purpose to nurture creative expression, to foster human communication and understanding, and to delight and challenge audiences through theatre and the performing arts of the highest quality was halted when Hurricane Ian destroyed the 432-seat Jervey Theatre in September, 2022.

Their **Curtains Up! A Grand Restoration!** initiative will fund new and enhanced stage curtains as a self-contained project within the overall Venice Theatre recovery. The total initiative budget is \$117,531, with the amount beyond the Impact100 SRQ grant to be paid through their Restoration Fundraising campaign. The Impact100 SRQ grant will fund the construction and installation of drapery soft goods for \$68,440 and \$40,560 in necessary hardware.

The Impact100 grant will purchase the Grand Drape and auxiliary curtains including a traveler curtain, used between scenes to block elaborate scene changes from audience view until revealed; white and black scrim that extends across the stage to provide magical effects, scenic perspective, and a sense of time; a cyclorama curved curtain that creates depth and perspective; acoustic drapes that control sound; and a fire curtain.

These curtains frame the action of a play or musical; they are the transformative wall from stage to audience. And these curtains provide a safety barrier in case of emergency. They will create a versatile performance space and enhance the size and quality of the shows. They will feature updated technologies, an expanded fly system, and a variety of drapes and special effects options not previously available, as well as a safer environment for production teams and performers. Expected to last 15 to 20 years, they will provide dramatic impact to the estimated 100,000 patrons, performers and students who will attend performances as the Jervey Stage annually. Their impact will be measured through targeted surveys and personal feedback.

Although the cost of rebuilding the Jervey Stage is not within the scope of this initiative, the initiative cannot be implemented without the reconstruction. Of the total \$13,000,000 reconstruction budget, \$4,540,000 was received from the insurance company; a \$5,000,000 HUD award is pending; and they have also been approved for a \$5,000,000 bridge loan. Ongoing restoration fundraising to date exceeds \$2,500,000. The completion of the new 432-seat theatre is projected for January, 2025, allowing for this initiative's completion within the Impact100 SRQ 24-month grant period, ending November, 2025.

Venice Theatre is a centerpiece of community, culture, education, and resilience for the City of Venice and South Sarasota County. The second largest community theatre in the United States, Venice Theatre is globally respected for providing exceptional theatrical experiences. Their history of success, growth and community engagement will continue to embolden future success.



**Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida, Inc.
Girl Scouts Amphitheater on the River**



At Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida (GSGCF), girls appreciate everyone's unique value, celebrate differences, and support one another through obstacles and conflict, consistent with the Girl Scout mission to build girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place. At GSGCF, girls develop and maintain healthy relationships and trusting friendships as they step outside their comfort zones, develop skills, and become civically engaged with their communities. GSGCF's proposed initiative, **Girl Scouts Amphitheater on the River**, will support these goals by creating a new outdoor amphitheater at Camp Honi Hanta. The total initiative budget is \$149,000 for permitting, labor and materials, with the balance above the Impact100 SRQ grant amount fully committed.

The outdoor amphitheater at Camp Honi Hanta will become an outdoor classroom, offering a variety of science, technology, engineering, math and arts opportunities. It will also serve as an inviting pavilion for social and recreational opportunities, inspiring creativity and expression as well as socialization as an accessible and inclusive recreational and social venue. Currently, there is no outdoor venue for large group gatherings.

The addition of an amphitheater will encourage all Girl Scouts visiting Camp Honi Hanta to gather as a group for recreational, environmental, arts, and health and wellness activities during their camp experience. Well over half of the Girls Scouts who attend activities in the amphitheater will be the 3,000 Girl Scouts from the 109 troops in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. This will augment the existing camp amenities of walking trails, a sports field, a swimming pool, archery range, river access for kayaking and canoeing, a ropes course and climbing wall, an air-conditioned lodge with a small commercial kitchen, restrooms with shower facilities, and various sleeping accommodations.

As part of GSGCF's strategic plan for upgrades to Camp Honi Hanta, the outdoor amphitheater will provide a year-round outdoor venue that is easy to maintain and sustain, with a life expectancy of more than 20 years. GSGCF will track new reservations from Girl Scout Troops utilizing Camp Honi Hanta, specifically for use of the amphitheater, for overnight camping, multi-day retreats, and cultural activities (ex: theater, dance) and STEM (ex: astronomy). GSGCF anticipates an increase in utilization of the camp by 25% due to the addition of the amphitheater.

The addition of the amphitheater at Camp Honi Hanta will help girls discover who they are and everything they're capable of accomplishing today, tomorrow, and beyond.



Manatee School For the Arts Technical Theatre Advancement Project



The mission of Manatee School For the Arts (MSA) is to provide an educational environment that allows students to succeed and grow academically by acknowledging and accommodating different learning styles. This is accomplished by creating an educational program that infuses and integrates the visual and performing arts into core academic curriculum.

For students to acquire the skills needed to successfully produce their shows, concerts, and community engagement events, they need access to modern and advanced technology, especially in the theatre program, as proposed by their **Technical Theatre Advancement Project** initiative. The \$109,000 Impact100 SRQ grant would fully fund replacements for the MSA theatre program's failing lighting and broken sound equipment including overhead stage lighting, a lighting management console, and on- and off-stage sound equipment.

The high-tech vertical console tower, replacing older technology, will integrate software and advanced lighting features, giving students the power to design and execute unlimited color variations and template patterns and to precisely control designed stage illumination. The new microphones, receivers and headsets will allow students to produce quality sound, control amplification and superior vocal and track output, generating a state-of-the-art theatre experience for student technicians, performers, and guests. Students will gain valuable hands-on experience in use, proper maintenance, up-keep and repairs of the new hardware. And student stage performers will have more confidence in performing before a public audience, knowing the updated equipment will not fail during performances.

With 55% of MSA's 2,000 students from under-served and under-represented populations, many may not otherwise have exposure to the performing arts. MSA's environment allows students to successfully thrive and be engaged in a creative environment, thus creating a sense of belonging and accomplishment. By infusing the arts in all academic programs, teachers allow students to relate to their coursework through many of the multiple intelligences. Further, many MSA students continue in the arts and technical theatre after graduation. The new lighting and sound equipment will enhance the students' education, skills, and experience and directly impact their future success in a multitude of fields. It also provides MSA the ability to achieve industry theatre operations standards that adhere to the Florida State Standards of teaching and learning.

The impact of this initiative will be measured through continued curriculum enrollment, shows produced and events participated in, and tracking graduates who pursue the arts and technical theatre in college or as a career. These upgrades will be utilized for many years, and they transcend across multiple course curricula utilized not only in theatre performance, but in classroom educational settings. With upwards of ten thousand individuals annually experiencing MSA's shows, the impact will spread beyond the students into the community for years to come.



**Master Gardener Volunteers, a Chapter of Friends of
Sarasota County Parks
Learning Florida Friendly Landscape Principles through an
Americans With Disability Act Compliant Sensory Garden**



The Master Gardener Volunteers, a Chapter of Friends of Sarasota County Parks' mission is to assist Sarasota County Extension in providing research-based horticultural education, particularly Florida-Friendly Landscaping(TM) principles, to Florida residents. Widespread application of these principles increases planting the right plant in the right place, water conservation and proper fertilization; reduces herbicide, fungicide and insecticide use; introduces integrated pest management techniques; and increases installation of wildlife-friendly landscapes.

The **Learning Florida Friendly Landscape Principles through an Americans With Disability Act Compliant Sensory Garden** initiative will expand their Educational Outreach Gardens at the Twin Lakes Park Extension campus to include an Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessible Sensory Garden, allowing county residents of all abilities to engage in hands-on learning of these sustainable landscape principles.

The total budget for this initiative is \$293,123, with the Impact100 SRQ grant funding \$109,000 of the Sensory Garden construction materials including the paint, stucco and waterproofing for the planters, the walkways, seating structure, railings and benches. The additional required funds are projected to be collected in 2024 from a variety of sources. MGVs will provide the plant materials.

The first part of Phase I of the Educational Outreach Garden is underway and funded, with installation of utilities and a greenhouse. The ADA-accessible Sensory Garden will complete Phase I. The Sensory Garden will include an outdoor classroom, wide permeable pathways, and raised beds containing plants, well-adapted to this region, that engage all five senses. Educational signage will be installed, highlighting insect life and pest management, the importance of landscaping with native plants, development of healthy soil, and smart water conservation. The raised beds and wide walkways will be ideal for filming demonstration videos, which they plan to share digitally.

The Sensory Garden's impact will be measured through visitation rates, surveys tracking behavioral changes and skills acquisition, and increases in course offerings and enrollment. As an enduring permanent structure, the Sensory Garden will be maintained and sustained by the MGVs who are committed to providing an ongoing maintenance fund and volunteer gardening hours.

Friends of Sarasota County Parks is the volunteer arm to the Sarasota County Extension, the park property owner. For over 25 years, they have positively change landscaping behaviors detrimental to our land and water resources. The need for this education continues to increase with the growth of Sarasota County's population and resulting strain on the environment. Additionally, increasing educational outreach to people with special needs will help those residents gain horticultural knowledge and life skills. The new Sensory Garden will help transform the Extension campus into a demonstration destination where residents of all abilities will learn how to protect Florida's precious land and water resources.



The Paul A. and Veronica H. Gross Wildlife Center of Southwest Florida
Help Florida's Raptors Soar – Construction of a 100 ft. Flyway for Raptor Rehabilitation



The mission of the Wildlife Center is to protect and preserve Southwest Florida's native wildlife through rescue and rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned wild birds, land mammals, and reptiles. The **Help Florida's Raptors Soar – Construction of a 100 ft. Flyway for Raptor Rehabilitation** initiative will construct a 100-foot flyway at the Wildlife Center to rehabilitate eagles and other large birds of prey.

The only local facility dedicating 100% of their resources to rehabilitation, the Wildlife Center treated 300 raptors last year, including 13 eagles, and expects 400 this year. Those numbers continue to grow due to a variety of factors, including deforestation, hurricane destruction of nesting sites and human-related injuries and poisonings. This flyway is necessary to continue to rehabilitate birds of prey and is now a Florida state requirement to continue eagle rehabilitation.

The construction of the 20 ft x 100 ft x 60 ft flyway, complete with proper hides and perching, will be large enough and high enough to allow the patients to rebuild their strength and test their soaring and maneuvering skills before being released back into nature, leading to an estimated 25% increased survival rate of raptors rehabilitated in this facility. It would also eliminate the need to transfer patients to another facility for test flying, which is traumatic for the animals.

All inhabitants of our community will benefit from having a strong and healthy raptor population. Vital to the health of our ecosystems, raptors reduce the spread of disease by controlling rodent population, removing carrion, and serving as a barometer of our ecological health.

The total cost of the initiative is \$116,521, with the Impact100 SRQ grant funding the majority of the materials and labor cost for the structure. Donated funds will pay for the amount exceeding the Impact100 SRQ grant. Sturdy and hurricane-proof, this facility will be long-lasting and need minimal upkeep, and it will allow the organization to rehabilitate the animals to a greater degree with less personnel than currently required.

The Wildlife Center will track successful outcomes through their database of patients' diagnoses, treatment plans and progress, medications and release. The impact will be seen in an increase in the number of successfully rehabilitated and released eagles and other raptors because they will be stronger and better prepared to return to the wild.

In their 20 years, the Wildlife Center has treated more than 75,000 animals. Their impact on our community is significant, and they are often called upon by Florida Fish and Wildlife, other organizations and concerned citizens to rehabilitate an animal in need. This initiative will enable them to provide a critical rehabilitation flyway for birds of prey.



**Legal Aid of Manasota, Inc.
Legal Lifeline For Youth**



For 33 years, Legal Aid of Manasota (LAMS), has fulfilled its mission of providing free civil legal aid to thousands of low-income residents in Manatee and Sarasota Counties. For almost four years, LAMS has been the only local agency providing sustained and intense legal advocacy for foster children and youth aging out of foster care through its Legal Lifeline for Youth Project, handling over 100 cases with one children's attorney. This **Legal Lifeline For Youth** initiative will expand their program by funding a second children's attorney to assist children in foster care at every stage of the legal proceedings. The total initiative budget of \$109,000 will fund salary, benefits, training, and other direct operating expenses for this attorney for 18 months.

Over 1,400 children in Manatee and Sarasota Counties need foster care services. Additionally, approximately 600 children age out of foster care yearly in the 12th Judicial Circuit and need a Transition Plan before entering Independent Living Court. Judges appoint LAMS' children's attorney to provide legal help to pending cases. But the caseload far exceeds one attorney's capacity.

With a second children's attorney, LAMS will give 50 more foster children and children aging out of foster care overall protection and expansion of their rights. Like the current attorney, the second will keep children informed, give them a voice, help them understand their options, coordinate with community agencies, and ensure their needs are being met. The added capacity will permit more personally tailored service plans, increases in visitation and parenting time if appropriate, and expedited permanency where applicable. Reduction of time children are in long-term care, at \$150 to \$200 a day, will lead to state cost savings. Foster youth in legal trouble will be represented in Crossover Court, with the intention to keep them out of the Juvenile Justice System. As children age out of the foster care system, they will have an effective Transition Plan, paving the way for their safe and successful futures.

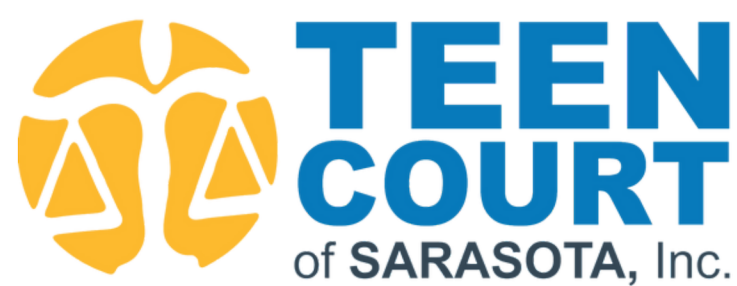
Data collected in LAMS' Legal Server case management system will track how each child has been protected, specifying the areas of success for each individual, including safety, housing, education, mental health counseling, and health care.

To sustain this expansion, LAMS' annual fundraising appeal is being redirected to "Children's Legal Issues," incorporating the case data to illustrate its success. In addition, LAMS will identify funding from local and state granting organizations, the Florida Bar Foundation and other legal service funding opportunities.

The Legal Lifeline for Youth initiative will provide much needed assistance to high-risk youth at pivotal times in their lives. With Legal Lifeline assistance, the trajectory of the lives of youth in crises will be measurably, positively changed.



**Teen Court of Sarasota, Inc.
Empowering Families through a Second Chance**



As the entity that serves first-time misdemeanor youth offenders in Sarasota County, Teen Court of Sarasota's mission is to create a second chance for at-risk youth. Their **Empowering Families through a Second Chance** initiative will expand their services. The total initiative budget of \$109,000 will fund an additional client coordinator and support program coordinator for a year, giving more support to first-time misdemeanor youth offenders and their families.

Teen Court has seen an increase in referrals of 128% in the last four years, serving more than 800 this year, a challenge to manage for their existing four case managers. The additional staff will allow Teen Court to manage the increasing case load more effectively, reducing their ratio of client manager to participant closer to their goal of 1/100, which will lead to additional successful outcomes and community benefit.

With a Teen Court referral, young people in Sarasota County receive quality services and meaningful consequences with an assessment and individualized success plan. Students learn law-abiding behavior, coping mechanisms, de-escalation tactics and are empowered with peer-on-peer responsibility. The success plan could include the Peer-on-Peer Justice for Youth-by-Youth court process, Mental Health Counseling, a Social Media responsibility group, or a Life Skills Class.

Referrals come from school administrators and counselors, law enforcement agencies, parents, and school resource officers. For the over 70% of referred individuals who live on or below the poverty level, their services are free of charge.

The annual Teen Court recidivism study reflects a 90% success rate. Success means students do not re-offend after receiving Teen Court services. The individual, family, school, and community benefit. Schools can focus more on educating than behavioral issues. Law Enforcement officers have fewer minor juvenile crimes. Parents have support when their child acts out. And most importantly, local youth can misstep and still have a bright future. When they complete Teen Court successfully their case is dismissed so there is not a record of a conviction, charge, or arrest. They still qualify for college, scholarships, and the military without the stigma of a tarnish on their record. Success is also measured through evaluation forms filled out by the student and parent, which address changes the client and family are experiencing in and outside of their home.

Teen Court will sustain its success after the Impact100 SRQ funding period with continued mission-sharing, fund-raising and applying for grants.

Teen Court provides services to teens that change lives and support healthy outcomes. Last year alone Teen Court saved Sarasota County over 3.5 million dollars by diverting clients out of the Juvenile Court system. By using restorative strategies and introducing participants to volunteerism, they create a win-win in this community.



**Easterseals Southwest Florida
Bringing the Magic of Gardening to Children, Teens, and
Adults with Disabilities**



To better support their mission to provide exceptional services for persons with disabilities and their families across a lifetime by empowering individuals to live their lives to the fullest, Easterseals Southwest Florida proposes their **Bringing the Magic of Gardening to Children, Teens, and Adults with Disabilities** initiative. This initiative is for the development of a new, wheelchair accessible Grow and Learn Garden, where the 1,300 clients they serve will have experiences in nature that augment their work in class, therapies, and other trainings.

The Grow and Learn Garden will be fully funded by the \$109,000 Impact100 SRQ grant as follows: construction of the new garden and storage shed at \$48,000; trailer and utility vehicle at \$30,000; supporting staff at \$18,500; and other combined project expenses including curriculum material, benches, tables, work stations, and a sunshade at \$12,500.

To be used by clients from Easterseals' Lily Preschool, K-12 Academy, and the Adult Program, the Grow and Learn Garden will be a means for these children, teens, and adults with intellectual and/or physical disabilities to achieve improved moods and decreased anxiety through the therapeutic benefits of outdoor gardening. Clients will experience improved self-esteem from learning new skills. Garden-based lessons and curriculum will provide nutrition education while supporting fine and gross motor skill development. The produce from the Garden will then become a healthy addition to meals at Easterseals, creating additional kitchen learning opportunities for clients.

Gardening, food and nutrition will be built into educational curriculum and lesson plans weekly. As therapists, doctors, teachers, parents, and caregivers meet to discuss clients' progress toward therapeutic and education goals, they will use reports of gains made to understand the impact of the garden program in the progress each client makes.

With the Impact100 SRQ grant funding the staff, plantings, and maintenance to the garden for the first 24 months, Easterseals will have time to engage with donors interested in sustaining the garden activities and to include the garden needs in future budgets. Local farmers, volunteers, caregivers, staff and client families have offered hands on help once the garden is in place and growing.

The Grow and Learn Garden project will become another Easterseals program that will move clients toward independence and help them live rewarding and fulfilling lives. When clients thrive, their families and caregivers benefit not only from their loved ones' practical gains but also from positive interactions, leading to an improvement in the entire family's mental health.



Jewish Family and Children's Services of the Suncoast School and Family Wellness Support Services



The mission of Jewish Family and Children's Services of the Suncoast (JFCS) is to empower individuals and families toward well-being and self-reliance by providing mental health and human services on a non-denominational basis, inspired by the Jewish tradition of helping all people. JFCS has identified that outcomes from treating mental health needs of youth and teens improve if the needs of parents, guardians and siblings are included.

The **School and Family Wellness Support Services** initiative proposed by JFCS will expand their support of the JFCS Youth/Teen program with a Family Support Team providing counseling and wrap-around programs. The total initiative budget is \$257,749. The Impact100 SRQ grant will fund \$75,000 for salary and benefits for a new Family Health Clinician for a year and \$31,250, half salary and benefits for 18 months, for a Case Manager to coordinate wrap-around services. The \$2,750 balance of the Impact100 SRQ grant will purchase laptops and cell phones for the new employees. The JFCS Development Team will implement a strategy to raise funds above the grant amount.

JFCS's 37-year history of mental health counseling consistently shows that treating only the child is insufficient. Existing JFCS youth teams including Adolescent Diversion Program, Camp Mariposa, Community Youth Well-Being Connections, and School Based Counseling have articulated a need to focus on families as well as youth. The Family Support Team will increase clients served across all youth programs.

The School and Family Wellness Support initiative will improve youth/teen client functioning by including the entire family's emotional, social, and physical well-being. Families may struggle with unstable housing, substandard employment history and poor financial practices, leading to issues with parenting abilities, divorce-related conflict, depression, anxiety, stress, and anger control. As families receive care and support, the stressors and tensions in the home will diminish and the outcomes for youth/teens will improve. Mental and emotional well-being will lead to improved coping, communication and problem-solving skills, stronger family relationships, more consistent and effective work and school performance, and improved physical health.

This initiative will allow JFCS to reach at least 25% more, an additional 15 - 22 youth/teens and their families in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. With the additional clinician, JFCS can provide 500 more clinical sessions annually; the case worker will provide 200 wraparound services. Client and team reporting and feedback will demonstrate improvements in the well-being of youth receiving treatment and their families. Every case will be audited quarterly by the county to ensure accountability to mental health performance measures.

The estimated cost to Sarasota County of untreated youth mental health issues is \$86M. This initiative will be an impactful step towards transforming the lives of youths and teens and their families.