



Buskers for Final Fridays Project

The mission of Busker Festivals, Inc. is to provide education and opportunity for artists to perform on the street. In Lawrence this has been put into practice with the Lawrence Busker Festival and the Busker Bootcamp professional artist workshop. We judge our success by the amount of local performers who have successful street shows and work year round. In the ten years of our existence over a dozen different new acts now work as buskers on a regular basis and make their living performing. We are told that we have had a direct influence on that choice.

Our secondary goal is to promote ongoing street performing in downtown Lawrence. The festival and workshop have succeeded in the primary goal but not our secondary. The Buskers for Final Fridays Project is designed to carry on the opportunities for performing, learning and promoting downtown venues past the festival weekend. The intent is to establish Lawrence as a recognized street performing area.

We have chosen Final Fridays as the ongoing event to help accomplish our goal. Final Fridays, the monthly art event in downtown Lawrence that has an established audience that street performers need. The monthly attendance is best measured as 2,000 to 5,000 with the crowds located in a relatively small area. Several buskers have already taken advantage of Final Fridays but their appearance is inconsistent and their quality is lacking, in our judgement. There is a need for more incentive and education before we can count on quality buskers consistently showing up at Final Fridays. The Buskers for Final Friday project is designed to provide that.

The Buskers for Final Fridays project partners with performers, the Busker Festivals, Inc., Downtown Lawrence, Inc. and Explore Lawrence to bring consistent and quality street performers to Final Friday events in June through October of 2017. This partnership brings in all the vested interests in Final Fridays, the arts, tourism and downtown business together to each partner's benefit.

Project Details:

- 3 performing acts will be selected each month, project will run June - October

Buskers for Final Fridays Community Arts Grant application

- A request for performers will go out and selection will be made by a committee made up of the partnering groups. Acts and artists will be chosen on locality, skills and experience
- Each act will be given a \$250 stipend, acts will be allowed to pass the hat for tips
- Each act will be given a block on Massachusetts street to work within. Generally, these will be the 700,800 and 900 blocks but may change from month to month.
- Each act will perform from 6-9pm or longer if preferred, length of shows and amount will be left up to the acts discretion.
- Busker Festivals, Inc will be the administrator of this program and handle the scheduling and financial duties
- Downtown Lawrence, Inc and Explore Lawrence will provide marketing support for the performers each month
- This program will run for 5 months – June through October, 2017

Cultural Plan Goals

By creating a program of street performers for Final Fridays this project meets the goals of the Cultural Plan to Build and Market a Creative Brand and Promote Lifelong Learning.

Goal – Build and Market a Creative Brand

By forming an ongoing partnership with Explore Lawrence, Downtown Lawrence, Inc., Busker Festivals, Inc. this project promotes the “Unmistakably Lawrence” brand more effectively. Street performers play a prominent role in the marketing of Lawrence to visiting groups because they are easily identified with a vibrant arts scene, an active commercial district and unique entertainment opportunities. It stands to reason that the more busking is present at events in Lawrence the more we are able to promote the brand of being unique, different and smart.

Goal – Promote Lifelong Learning

One of the criteria that Artists will be selected on will be their ability to perform and need for more experience. The Buskers for Final Friday Project will provide incentive for these performers to create better street shows with a consistent opportunity to try out material and skills. Learning will also occur through the community of performers who will be together working on the streets each Final Friday. We will also be drawing upon the students from the local Circus School who are ready to perform. This project will help enable the sharing among peers and contribute to each performer’s learning.

Conclusion

The Buskers for Final Fridays Project successfully meets the goals of the Cultural Plan in two categories. It promotes the Lawrence brand and meets the artists need for growth and opportunity. It also fulfills the mission of Busker Festivals, Inc. by providing education and opportunities to performing artists in the region. By awarding our grant request, goals from the Cultural Plan and the missions of the project’s partners are mutually extended and fulfilled.



Bios of administrating personnel and selection of performing artists

Partners – Busker Festivals, Inc., Explore Lawrence, Downtown Lawrence, Inc.

Busker Festivals, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose mission it is to provide education and opportunities for street performers. It's main project, the Lawrence Busker Festival is a 3-day festival celebrating street performing with acts from around the world and down the street. Over 25 acts perform on 5 different sites in downtown Lawrence each year to crowds estimated at 20,000 or more. The Lawrence Busker Festival has been recognized as the Best Event for 4 years in the Lawrence Journal World's Best of Lawrence competition. It is held as the quintessential event for the character of Lawrence.

Explore Lawrence is the convention and visitor's bureau for Lawrence Kansas. It exists to assist leisure travelers, meetings and events planners, sports events planners, groups, the media and Lawrencians, too. It promotes Lawrence with the Unmistakably Lawrence brand.

Downtown Lawrence, Inc. is the nonprofit membership association of downtown businesses that promotes events and happenings there. Sally Zogry directs its activities that include the sidewalk sale, movie nights, restaurant week and more.

Administration

Richard Renner will be administering this program. His duties include selection, scheduling, creating and coordinating marketing and paying the artist. His experience includes over 35 years as a performing artist, 20 years of owning and operating the Vodvill Entertainment Company and producing the Lawrence Busker Festival since 2008. His artistic career has taken him all over the northern hemisphere performing at festivals and fairs. As sole proprietor of the Vodvill Entertainment Company he has booked hundreds of performers in events and parties for both public and private entities. As the creator and producer of the Lawrence Busker Festival he has successfully grown it from a small event to a multi-day festival that is known around the world.

Buskers for Final Fridays Community Arts Grant application

Performing Artists – a small selection of potential performers

Jason D'Vaude – juggler, unicyclist, fire manipulator. Jason was one of the first acts booked at the Busker Festival in the first year and has been a favorite ever since. His skills in balancing, juggling and fire manipulation have grown since then. He now tours nationally to other festivals and busker events. Jason's extensive performance experience has given him a love of entertaining. Over the years Jason has honed his skills and pushed his luck with knives, torches, axes, and the dreaded stinky shoe juggling. From handstands to comedy, Jason has matured (a little) and so has his act.

Martika Daniels – circus sideshow performer. Martika performs with classic props and tricks of a Coney Island sideshow. Her skills include sword swallowing, fire eating, laying on a bed of nails, walking on glass and putting a nail into her nose/head. While the tricks may sound gruesome it is Martika's warm and delightful personality and presentation that keep the audiences engaged. Martika is a graduate of last year's Busker Bootcamp and has put her learning into immediate practice.

Zydeco Tougeau – Barry Washboard Barnes and Tommee Sherwood are the core members of this lively energetic band. It is quite possible the happiest music you will ever hear and your feet will automatically move to the beat. Barry plays the washboard with a performance flair that includes hat tricks and magic tricks. They are a mainstay in downtown Lawrence and drive the heartbeat of any event.

Alferd Packer Band – Another mainstay in the Lawrence music scene who entertain as well as play music. Their turn of the century look and clever lyrics gives them appeal to multiple generations. Funny music, great musicianship and silly jokes are on the song list when the Packers play downtown.

Sikah Ann Destroy and the Circus School – Sikah has created a great school that centers on circus skills and acrobatics. With over hundreds of students in the Lawrence area, The Circus School has had a direct impact on the performing arts in Lawrence. She will be providing a rotating troop of performers from her classes and teachers.

