



**CULTURAL CORE
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, October 1st, 2024**

Committee Members in Attendance: Kathryn Carlisle-Kesling, Spencer Lawson, Lia Summers, Grace Lin, Isaac Gonzalez, Seth Brown, Mohan Sudabattula

Committee Members Not in Attendance: Felicia Baca, Matt Castillo

Cultural Core/Downtown Alliance Staff Present: Britney Helmers, Jessica Thesing, Carly Gillespie, Josh Jones, Kai Henriksen

Guests Present: Brad Wheeler, Lisa Zamora, Kary Billings, Steve Auerbach

The meeting was called to order at **9:05 am**. **Lia Summers** initiated the roll. **Lia Summers** made a motion to approve the minutes from August 6th, 2024 and **Spencer Lawson** seconded the motion.

Review of Public Comments

No public comments to review.

Current Business

Discussion: Board Members and Upcoming Board Positions

Lia Summers Okay, so we currently have one vacancy. This is my last board meeting so that will be another vacancy. And we have already filled those vacancies, so yay. Seth, thank you for being here. Mohan will be here shortly. And he is not official yet, but will be hopefully come January if the county agenda items will allow it. **Britney Helmers** I figured right now we would start. Seth, why don't you go ahead and introduce yourself. **Seth Brown** So I'm Seth Brown. I am originally from Salt Lake City. I went to school, graduated from Georgetown University in DC a few years ago. Moved back here. I currently work as a designer and creative strategist in augmented reality. And then on like my side gig, I guess, I work with Alleyways Amplified. So we've worked super closely with The Blocks in the past doing our main street fashion show at the Eccles Theater, which next year will be our third year doing that. I'm super excited to be here and contribute to the great work that The Blocks in the Downtown Alliance are doing. So thank you for having me. It's nice meeting all of you. **Lia Summers** Welcome to the board, thank you

very much. **Britney Helmers** So exciting. We're really excited to have you. And I know Seth has met Mohan, but Mohan will be here shortly. So we will maybe introduce him when he gets here. We're kind of loose today. **Lia Summers** Keeping everybody on their toes. Actually, now that we have a quorum, let's go back and do an approval of minutes. Has everybody had a chance to review the minutes? And if so, can I get a motion to approve? **Spencer Lawson** I'll make a motion to approve the minutes from last time. **Lia Summers** Great. Can I get a second? Thank you Kate. Any changes before we vote? Any discussion? Okay, great. All in favor say aye. A unanimous passing. **Britney Helmers** Lovely. Well, on current business, I just want to. So for everybody on the board, Lia has been involved with the Cultural Core for eight years. So today is her very last board meeting. We wanted to make sure to send you off big. So thank you for everything. For the past year and a half of being here you have been a shoulder to lean on. So thank you so much for everything. Enjoy the flowers. What are you going to do next? **Lia Summers** Well, I guess I'll just be waiting by the phone for anything you need. It will be weird to not be involved so call me anytime. **Britney Helmers** So we definitely have some big shoes to fill. So with that, just kind of an overall discussion on chair and vice chair roles, we will need to vote on a new chair and new vice chair in January. If there are any volunteers that are just dying to step into these roles and really, you know, take on the next step. We are accepting any and all applications. If you are interested, Spencer is currently the vice chair. If you would like to move on up, it is all yours. **Spencer Lawson** Big shoes to fill. **Britney Helmers** But I figured if there is anybody that wanted to volunteer today, you are more than welcome. We can put that to a vote in January or we can wait until January to move that forward. **Lia Summers** I know Grace has already taken a spin around the chair role. So non-Grace board members, it might be time to step up. I just want to throw out, because I know when we were looking for a vice chair, a lot of new board members felt like, "well, I'm new, I can't throw my hat in the ring". Yes you can. It's actually a really great opportunity to learn a little bit more in depth about the initiative of The Blocks and what's happening day to day. So don't feel like you need to have a ton of history on the board or a ton of backstory to step in, I mean, Spencer, I think you have the right to first refusal for it. But for the vice chair position, Spencer's been a great vice chair, so he'll be a good mentor to you. I volunteered him for that. So I just want to throw that out there for anybody who's like, "well, I don't know, I haven't been on the board too long. Maybe I don't want to step into that role". You can talk to Britney a little bit more about what that entails, but it's not too terribly much more than you're doing now. And a great opportunity to learn. **Spencer Lawson** Yeah, I'd be open to throwing in for the chair. **Lia Summers** Okay, great. I know it's a little awkward to say here so feel free to send an email afterward. I just wanted to throw that out there. **Britney Helmers** Grace any words of advice for future chair and vice chair? **Grace Lin** So, on that note, I think one of the benefits, one of the things that I enjoyed in the role was interacting with both the county and the city administrative elements. And just getting that visibility to how a kind of global government works. And one of the things I think is valuable if you want to continue to be part of engaging in your community is watching how these dialogues occur. And I think particularly as we all know, in the next few years of the development of the downtown district, I think there's a lot of opportunity just to see and observe how these decisions are made. And so for the folks who are new in the role, I think it's a great way to dive in. **Britney Helmers** Thanks Grace. **Seth Brown** That was pretty compelling. I might throw my name down. Obviously if anyone with more experience here is interested in it, I would defer to them. But it

would be cool for me. **Britney Helmers** Cool, I appreciate it. And maybe, Seth, if you wanted to grab coffee with Lia or with Grace, I think that would be awesome to talk more about those opportunities. Not to volunteer you guys. **Lia Summers** We're doing that today. **Seth Brown** I'll buy your coffee. **Britney Helmers** Cool. Again, Lia, thank you for everything. We're going to miss you. I don't know how I'm going to do this about you. **Lia Summers** I'm still in denial. **Britney Helmers** Awesome. Before we get into our awesome presentations, which I'm super stoked about, I did send out the quarter one estimates aligned with the budget per our accounting team. Quarter one will not be complete until October 15th. So if you'd like, we can review the estimates today outlined with the fiscal year 24 roll over equity, or we can wait to provide the actuals in January for quarter one. Happy to leave it up to you guys to discuss or we could go over the actuals in January. If you guys like what I will do is I have those estimates in the folder already, but what I'll do is I'll send out an email with the actuals by the end of October. Great. We are moving along. I was so nervous about how stacked the agenda was. So with that, we have some presentations from our recent programming partners. We had discussed like, how do we get this a little bit more interactive. So I am so excited to welcome four people today who have helped us partner this past summer. So with that, I'm going to kick it off to Lisa Zamora from Eccles for Steppin' on Main.

Presentations from The Blocks Partners with Recent Programs

Lisa Zamora Good morning, everyone. My name is Lisa Zamora. I'm at the Eccles Theatre, Salt Lake County Arts and Culture. I'm the event activation engagement manager. So it's been a fun role that I took on what feels like relatively recently, but it's really been about a year and a half I've been in that position. And today it's my pleasure to share with you some highlights from our Steppin' on Main series. Steppin' on Main is an exciting and vibrant summer performance series at the Eccles Theatre which brings free live performances to the community. Now in its second year, the 2024 series ran on Friday evenings from July through September. An anchor point of the Arts District, the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Theatre, is perfectly poised to host these community activation events. Steppin' on Main performances take place in the Grand Lobby. The Nanadoors open at the front of the theater, I hope you've had the opportunity to see what that looks like and how it brings everyone into the space, into that lobby. And also on the steps out front of the Eccles Theatre, near Tin Angel. Steppin' on Main is a thriving partnership between Salt Lake County Arts and Culture, Eccles Theatre, The Blocks Arts District, and Tin Angel at the Eccles Theatre. The brainchild of these organizations, the series was designed to activate Main Street with the intent that would result in unmeasured, positive economic impact, especially for local artists and businesses, while sharing the message that Eccles Theatre is a place for all members of our community to be entertained. Filled with a diverse lineup of local artists, this 12 performance series included three events in the Grand Lobby, two events held in the Nanadoorway, and seven on the steps of the Theater, near Tin Angel because I don't know if you've heard of Hamilton, but that was here for five weeks this summer. We like to keep things active even when Delta Hall has popular entertainment or Broadway shows. So when the dining room is full at Tin Angel, they get to hear the music on the steps. We're going to spotlight three of these amazing programs. The first is the Mariachi Festival, and the Mariachi Festival was a partnership between The Blocks and the Mexican Consulate of Salt Lake City. They brought four Mariachi bands and renowned Mexican classical guitarist Sergio Fuentes Oseguera

together to perform in the Grand Lobby. With record-breaking attendance, attendees enthusiastically cheered on Mariachi Guzman, Mariachi Sol de Jalisco, Mariachi Fuego, and Trio Las Charros at this event. The energy, I can't even tell you, that lobby was full to the brim. It was a beautiful sight. Our next spotlight is on the trash pandas, and it illustrates how the steps, the Nanadoorway, the lobby, and even Main Street can be activated in one evening. The evening began with their unique percussion set in between the Nanadoors in that open space. Then the group paraded down Main Street, capturing people that were down by the mall and bringing them back to the space. The performance ended in the Grand Lobby when they invited everyone there to come and join them and be a part of the band. Everybody got a drum or some sticks and things that they got to be a part of things. Something really special happened that evening. The event was brightened by The Blocks having their branding launch party there as well. They had giveaways and The Blocks truck was parked on Main Street. Yet another way to really activate and bring people to Main Street and have a great experience while they're there.

Britney Helmers Lisa, I added a slide for you so you could talk about the cutest thing ever. **Lisa Zamora** It was extremely difficult to not include this little person on the far right side because he is special in my world and I brought him to every single one of the Steppin' on Main's. The entire summer, all 12 he attended. It's definitely an all ages show. We dressed him up for every event.

Britney Helmers Absolutely adorable. Again, just as Lisa said, all the kids that showed up and the excitement in the kids eyes and walking and finding a found moment on Main Street was just so fun and so beautiful. **Lisa Zamora** Definitely Salt Lake Synth Alliance you wouldn't on the surface think that show would be super kid friendly. All of a sudden there were kids everywhere. Having such an amazing time running up and down the stairs, back and forth. Again, that brings that great performance energy and it's very welcoming. If kids are having a good time in this nice safe place, that's something that really makes other people stop and enjoy themselves as well. **Britney Helmers** I had to include it when I saw that you didn't include it.

Lisa Zamora Our last spotlight is on the Susan Bush Band. It's an ideal example of how diverse attendees can be. Fans of the band filled the sidewalk. It was full of people. And then Hamilton patrons who were dining at Tin Angel and then also running past to try to get into the theater before the show started. They all had the biggest smiles on their faces when they realized there was live music playing. They might have recognized the song or just enjoyed the fact that there was something happening in the space. It changed their day from being stressed about finding parking and getting into the theater to having that "ah" moment that music can really inspire and like performances can inspire for someone lightning their load. And also, they get their ears filled with familiar tunes and they're inspired to stop and have a listen. They linger longer downtown and it's likely they're there longer than they intend to be. We have shoppers here with bags in their hands. They're headed to their next destination and they stop. They stop and they listen and their load is lightened. And I feel like that helps them be more inspired to purchase more downtown to have a better experience and come back. Their downtown experience was full and brighter because of that community impact. So this year if we just go by clicker counts alone, our ushers were counting people in the spaces. We're at 2,712 attendees. I don't even focus on that number because that number is quite low compared to the number of people who might have come past, who might have stopped for a few minutes. At Beer Hive on the porch across the street, right? A lot of other people were impacted by this event, but that's our official clicker count right there. And you can see how that breaks down in the different spaces. But this

series is designed to be inclusive and accessible with free entry, which allows people from all walks of life to come together and enjoy the arts. Who is this diverse audience comprised of? Some are members of the artist's following as we talked about. Others are coming downtown to attend a performance, dinner or other activity. And others are tourists who are pleasantly surprised by the offerings. Several tourists mentioned to me that they remarked that their eagerness to return to our fair city because of the pleasant surprise of a complimentary performance just around the corner. We're really making a difference. As you've seen, this encourages and supports inclusive programs, reflecting Salt Lake's diversity while creating an economic impact for the businesses along Main Street. Thank you for your direct and indirect support of the Steppin' on Main series. We look forward to collaborating to continue the valuable contribution and activation with which a third year of this series could bring to the artists, citizens, visitors and businesses in our community. And then if you have any questions about Steppin' on Main or how you can hold your next event at the Eccles Theatre, please reach out to me directly. **Britney Helmers** We are meeting on Thursday to talk about the future of the Mariachi Festival to see how we can make it bigger and partner with the University of Utah and also bring more students into downtown. So excited as well to make it bigger and better next year. I think even from last year to this year, we've already made it that much bigger. You've been a huge support in everything, so I appreciate you and thanks for coming to this. **Lisa Zamora** Thank you for the opportunity to present today. I hope you all have the opportunity to join us for at least one of those Steppin' on Main's. If you're here or from afar or just passing by. **Grace Lin** Will next year's be similarly staged in terms of artists and the period of time that it's coming in? **Lisa Zamora** We are negotiating when our dates look like. Next summer, the Eccles is a little bit tricky. We're doing some maintenance in the interior. So we're looking at what our exterior activation can look like and what we can do throughout that type of thing. **Grace Lin** Any challenges? Any things you learned about the experience of the last couple years that might be a little bit different? **Lisa Zamora** I think one of the big things is we were very music heavy. This year especially because of how many interior performances there were, it's really easy to have a musical performance on the steps. There was a bit of a lack of diversity in terms of the performers that we were bringing to the stage. So we might look at that in the future as we're planning the programming to ensure that it's not from the same genre. **Britney Helmers** Thank you. Next up we have Steve Auerbach. Steve, your slides do not come through, but I have some backup slides for you. **Steve Auerbach** Sorry. Really? **Britney Helmers** Yeah, it came in as a zero gigabyte powerpoint. **Steve Auerbach** Oh, I'm sorry. **Britney Helmers** It's okay. Don't worry about it. I have some backup slides for you. **Steve Auerbach** Good morning everybody. My name is Steve Auerbach. I'm a co-founder and serve as the executive director of an organization called the Salt Lake Academy of Music, or SLAM. We opened in January 2020, just in time for the pandemic. I don't suggest opening a nonprofit at the cusp of a crisis. We survived it and stabilized by January 2021. We now serve about 170 students, K-12, some adults, some professionals, and we teach classical jazz, rock, blues, electronic music, R&B, and bluegrass music, mostly those are the sort of genres that we focus on. We did an event at Open Streets with The Blocks Arts District and it was successful. And through Britney we knew about the upcoming Co-Create project and we applied and we were granted a partnership. And so we moved forward with Britney and her team who are just outstanding. I'm so grateful for all the work that you did and I want to talk about how we arrived at this. We a budget of \$30,000 that I

think has been previously discussed in meetings and how the money was provided. So I won't go into that detail. But what the mission of the festival was, it really should be called the SLAM Young Artist Music Festival. But that's a little long, so we went with SLAM Music Festival. The purpose of the festival was to elevate and amplify the voices of young creatives statewide who write and produce their own music. And this is for 20 and under. So no adults, well, at least 21 and over, because they can get a gig, right? There's not a lot of venues that can do this sort of thing for youth. And the idea was to put out the word, which we did back in April. And we started, we contracted in February, I believe, and then in April we got the word out through press releases through Josh, and our team as well. And we got 30 applicants, all from the age of 15 to 20. And the genres included jazz and rock and folk rock, singer-songwriters or country-ified stuff, and rap. And it was a really nice group of kids. I can't tell you how sweet they were to each other. Because we had them stay there. The bait was we were going to take a group photo at the end. So we wanted you all to stay through the end. And they were happy to do it. And they supported each other. We have some pictures of the kids. Yeah, so there's Manuel. He's from South Ogden. We drew from South Ogden. Well, the applicants came from four counties. You know, so it was a pretty impressive draw. The finalists were only six slots. City Weekly helped out with the advertising, and we gave them the state sponsorship exchange for some ads. It was held in Pioneer Park during the Downtown Farmers Market in the soccer field facing north about 75 feet downfield. So there was a little space for audience participation. And you got to blast the neighbors just a little bit this year. And it was a big success. You know everyone was so good natured. The kids were just amazing. And the acts all had a great time. Let's see, we go on to some more pics there. They were dancing. **Britney Helmers** I think that's all I have. I just threw it on there. **Steve Auerbach** Okay. So the production and the sort of on stage promotion banners and that kind of thing we handled. Brittany sourced the videography, photography, the graphic arts. But it went very, very well. I was completely blown away and honored to participate at this level with the city. And the Blocks Arts District was very instrumental for lack of a better word. It was just a big success. The concept behind this platform, it relates to our programs, it relates to the community on a larger scale. So let me kind of give you an overview of what our concept is. We can take a kid from their first dance lesson or their first instrument, then get them to an ensemble setting where they audition and they join a group of some kind and then perform. Then the next level is what we call our festival band, which is an audition based band that are like our ambassadors. They go out and play fairs and festivals and special events and galas and stuff like that. And it's mostly popular music. And then we have a recording camp and a songwriting camp in the summer where they get to learn to express themselves through songcraft. And then they get to document those recordings on media so that it can be heard and they can hear it back and go, oh, that was very good. And learn how to record themselves, which is of course perfecting their part and getting it committed to the medium. Then from there we have the penultimate goal, which is to have them find their creative partners. These were not our students. I mean coincidentally one of the bands had students of ours. But these were kids from all over the state. And the beautiful thing about it is that they were all from different genres, all from different areas, all from different backgrounds. I mean we had a very colorful, if you look at the picture of the whole group, it's a very mixed group. There was a group photo, but you just look at the group and it's just very, very diverse. And it was so satisfying to see these kids come from all over the four counties that they auditioned for. So now we've seeded this festival. And

now the question is where do we go from here? Because my goal has always been to give youths in our community a platform where they can be heard. And where they can have the opportunity to learn about music as an industry and as a craft. So we want to grow this festival from just more of a colloquial thing to maybe regional or maybe even national over the next year or years. And we'll be looking for funding and partners to help us do that for brands and other things because we're a non-profit so we can get some funding. And the idea is to maybe build a scene on the national scale where we attract creative music schools and create a young artist music festival which really does not exist exclusively for kids. There are a few things, Berkeley does something in the summers with the high schools with jazz. There's some other programs, but there's really nothing like this where you can be your own truth, creating your own music. And then the idea is to bring A&R, artists and repertoire representatives from record labels to distribution, to bring in manufacturers and sponsors, to bring in people from all over the country to take up nice hotel rooms in Salt Lake City and fill a multi-venue festival that can elevate these kids. And to give them the skills before they're 21 including social skills and not just business skills but skills for self-reliance and resilience to some of the pitfalls that are in the music business. So it's a real privilege to have done this and I'm very, very grateful. We had City Council Chair Victoria Petro open the event. And yeah, it was really a wonderful event and I'm so very grateful. Thank you. **Britney Helmers** I think the biggest thing that I saw in the crowd is literally how the kids were supporting each other. It was so cool. Josh, you and I were dancing in the crowd and I was like, look at all these little youngins just like having a good time. **Steve Auerbach** They would get off the stage, put their gear away and then they'd come in front of the stage for the next act. They'd just like dance and cheer them on and they were all different genres and they didn't all know each other. And they all got a bunch of gigs out of it. Michael Feldman was there from Feldman's Deli and he has acoustic acts. Derek Wright was there, he books Pat's Barbecue. So it was really nice to see these kids get gigs right out. They went "what's your number? Give me your information. I want to book you". So it was a really great platform for local kids to have an opportunity to really express themselves and grow their craft. **Josh Jones** Steve, I learn how to sell things after things. And so when we do this next time, what I learned is that we sold it as a music festival and in doing so, people think it's going to be amateur, and there was nothing amateur about it. And these people, Scarlett Catherine, one of the singers, if there was a recording executive there, they'd want to sign her. She was absolutely stunning. I could not believe I was listening to her for free because she was so outstanding. **Steve Auerbach** The outreach, I've worked with the PTA statewide for the Battle of the Bands. They do this Battle of the Bands that goes from the school, right? You've got the two or three bands. Then you've got your region, you've got your ten bands. And then it goes all the way up to the statewide championship. And Scarlett Catherine won the singer songwriter first place. And then Riffwood also put together one and then when they applied amongst all the applicants, like 30 applicants, they went to the top of the heap and they were among the 6th and 7th selected. So it was really nice to have this sort of representation. And I appreciate your feedback. That's really great. They were rather awesome. The coolest thing is like, the Jazz act was not like the typical Jazz act. They had no string instruments. They had synthesizer, bass, keyboards, sax, vocals, and drums. It was just so cool. It was just a really different approach. All of it was very interesting. **Britney Helmers** We also tried to make the kids feel like rock stars. So we made some lanyards for them and put "performer" on them. And I'll tell you what, we

gave them these lanyards and the one band, Unseen, in the upper right, I think they almost started crying. They felt like we truly elevated them. And it was the sweetest thing ever. And then there's a video and I will make sure everyone gets it. But Manuel on the left, his family made handkerchiefs to hand out for one of his songs, titled Chalk It Out. And one of the women who was in Unseen was in the front while Manuel was playing. And he hands her a handkerchief and she just goes, "AAAAHHH". It was next level. Like rock stars, superstars, sort of feeling. And I think that was one of the coolest things of like seeing that. **Steve Auerbach** Any of those songs could be played in front of thousands of people. **Britney Helmers** Absolutely. **Steve Auerbach** Unfortunately we didn't have thousands, we had a big crowd but they all could have done well in front of 10,000 people. Which makes me really proud and makes me think like all the talent's out there. Well, we've known that for years but they're out there. You just gotta get them. Did you have a question? **Grace Lin** I did. You said only one of the acts was actually from your ongoing program. How many folks are actually in that program currently? **Steve Auerbach** 170. That includes some adults. And it's K-12. You know, if they start on violin when they're four or five, and we do have those kids. They get free instruments, it's a free to fee sliding scale. I don't know if you know about this, but everything we do is on a free to fee sliding scale. So if a parent goes to Uncle Joe's for Thanksgiving, and the kid picks up an instrument and starts playing it, or sits down at the piano and starts playing it, and then the mom or caretaker goes, "honey, where'd you learn how to do that?". Kids just do stuff, you know? And then maybe the parent doesn't think they have the resources for an instrument or instruction. They can come to us and get a free to fee sliding scale instrument on what we call a learn to earn basis. And so that could be a one-tenth scale violin. They're so cute and they actually play. And they're all quality instruments that we've gotten donated by the community. Because lots of people have old guitars and ukuleles, and stuff in their closet, and they just sit around, and they just give it to us, and we give it to the kids. So it's a really nice cycle to see how they're recycling the instruments. And then the instruction and the programs as well, a free to fee sliding scale. I'm very fortunate to have support from foundations and the county. We've been around since 2020, and it's been a great ride so far. And this helps us elevate both our program and local artists to another level. And the industry as it were, they always want younger recruits. And you know, we're out to protect them by giving them all the ammunition they need in terms of experience and training. In the future, we want to do this with workshops and all kinds of other things. We're talking to the arts festival about maybe working with them. Trying to find, you know, how we're going to finance this for the next year. The \$30,000, the allocation to the marketing. At first I was shocked at how much we were spending on marketing. But then I realized that, yeah, you need to get the word out. So, thanks everybody. **Lia Summers** Well, thank you so much. Thanks for being here. **Britney Helmers** Next up we have Kary. **Kary Billings** Hi, I'm Kary Billings, executive director of the Gina Bachauer International Piano Foundation. One of those names that is way too long so we just call it the Bachauer Foundation. We're coming on to our 49th season, so 50 year celebration in 1976. We're excited about that. We're known for a number of components, but the three main components are competitions, concerts, and outreach. And we hold concerts throughout the year at the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center, and we have outreach programs. We take a grand piano right to cafeterias in front of kids and assemble the piano. They're in awe that this piano is living in their cafeteria for the moment, and they're sad when it leaves, unfortunately.

We do outreach around the valley and the area. But, competitions, we have three levels. And this last year was our adult level, the artist level, for ages 19 to 32. When we started a couple years ago, we received over 300 applications, 40 countries represented. And we narrowed it down to 120 pianists, we went to Germany, Hong Kong, New York, and Salt Lake City. And then we invited 35 to come to Salt Lake City. So this last year we had two weeks of competition, and we had finals with the Utah Symphony, and three winners from Korea and China, and Canada and the US. We had a great time. We knew all these wonderful pianists were coming to Salt Lake City and one of our goals was to make sure that word was out about them and to make people excited about what would be offered in Salt Lake City through international events. So we knew that we would have banners down Main Street, and Abravanel Hall, and on UTA buses, and we thought what else can we do to have a presence in Salt Lake City? So one idea, it's not a new idea, is to have pianos redecorated, revamped into our pianos and have them around the city. One idea was to go around the city and just have the pianos here and there. But we knew this would take some money and some planning, and I knew Josh from being a neighbor, and I thought, what could The Blocks and the Downtown Alliance help with? So we just thought, let's go to them and pitch our idea and see what they could do. So very quickly miraculous things happened. We applied and we had received funding to make this happen. We went to our partners, we went to the Mundi Project, who we know could help find pianos for us, and got the pianos donated. We went to our partners, UMOCA, and we found artists that were excited about these pianos. The tricky thing was time, we didn't have much time. This was just started in March, and we had to get pianos to the artists by April or May, so we had little time. So very quickly, things just came together, and we thought, rather than going around the city, let's make the pianos central to Salt Lake City. So we thought this lovely plaza outside Abravanel Hall would be a great place for these pianos. So we thought, we'll put them outside. The trick was, obviously, they're exposed to the weather, and obviously exposed to the public, and what else could happen to them? We had horrors of what could happen to them. Nothing horrible ever happened, which is amazing. And so we found this combination of people to come together. So the artists had literally about three to four weeks to create these pianos, and they came together. We warned them that they were going to be outside, so as weather proofed as they could. But knowing that they would start looking great, and by September, they would not look amazing, and that has been true. But we also wanted to activate the plaza and have concerts throughout the summer. So we had some of our competitor's shows in town, we had some of our guest artists, and we had monthly concerts outside Abravanel Hall. We had a great time. We had our last concert just last week. So can we watch the video first? We did a video which will show you what we did and how this all came together. So we had so much fun. Again, it's kind of miraculous how quickly it's going to be done. We just had the idea in March, and by June we had pianos in the plaza. We had a big time. We love the name Key Changes, very literal and figurative. You may have wondered how we did these concerts. This is not one of our pianos, this is one of the nice pianos for the symphony. The question came up, and that's a good point, is should these pianos be playable or not? We left that up to the artists. So a couple of them were playable. We had a grand piano in the center. But when I say playable, that's a loose term. The keys worked and it functioned, but not beautiful sound. So we definitely brought in a Steinway grand piano to each one of the concerts. We lucked out on the weather I have to say. Every time was amazing weather. Maybe a little warm, but The Blocks brought in

umbrellas, we covered the pianist and pianos, and we heard some gorgeous things on those pianos. Every day we thought, do we dare bring a very expensive piano into the elements and it worked out beautifully. Really, one day, I think an hour later maybe, I felt a little bit of raindrops so, we had a great time. Some of the successes, well, we had some of our medalists perform. Last month or two we did move into the lobby of Abravanel Hall just because of weather, and this last Friday turned out to be one of the days of Fanx. We thought, we could have been outside, but oh, all these people were in costumes. It was a crazy, fun day. There was so much traffic. Yet, some were playing and some were stopping, but their focus was not on the piano, they were focused on getting into the convention. But it was great exposure. What's fun is I live downtown and I drive by and walk by. Almost always there's someone at these pianos in the plaza playing around. And their shape, they started out, a couple of pianos were very playable. And I'd go back and check on them, still playable. Sometimes a key might be a little loose or something. But this grand piano in the center, this one with great magentas and blacks and whites, I thought, man, this is staying in really good shape. How's this piano staying in such good shape? And one of the days this person rode up on a bicycle and said hey, yeah I've been taking care of your piano all summer. Did you know that? So he's been coming to tune the piano. And I said well, are you a pianist? And they said no, I'm just learning as I go on your piano, I'm practicing. I said well, thank you. He says yeah every time I come down there's some things to work on, it's getting some rain in there, but I'm doing the best I can. And he's playing it, he's playing a little Bach. So this is one of our new friends. It's amazing. He's an amateur pianist and he brings his little tuning kit on his bike and just rides up once a month. So, he's one of our new friends. This is Steve. He is so fun to talk to, he is actually going to adopt this piano and take it to his home. I thought, what a great thing. Because these pianos, after this, they're not in great shape necessarily. But this one is in pretty good shape. So he is taking it home. And he just bought a beautiful real grand piano that's playable for insight. This will be his outside porch piano to practice on. It's a wonderful thing. **Brad Wheeler** I just have to say this, as a musician it's amazing that piano can be played after sitting out in that sun. I don't know if everybody in here understands what the sun is doing to that piano. **Kary Billings** Well yeah, let's just say there are many components of a piano. And let's say the soundboard alone. And we did great on no rain until monsoon season at the end and then it was tons of rain. So that piano is really just a talking point at this point. But for the first month or two, it was playable really good. And I thought, how is this thing in such good shape? This lovely person came by and told us what he was doing. And we still, even now, the piano, yeah, the keys are, you know, but it's still playable technically. But we see people even in Fanx, they're stopping by in their costumes to sit down and try the piano for a bit. And there's one of the uprights that's very playable. Some of the others, you can see the one in the background there. It wasn't playable in the sense. It is activated by solar panels. So little activations would go across the strings and make more of a percussive kind of music. And one, not playable but the one side is Maurice Abravanel, and this is Carolyn Abravanel his wife, who came to that first concert. And on the back panel of that piano is Gina Bachauer herself. And Maurice Abravanel and Gina Bachauer, they were great friends. And that's why we thought we had a great collaboration. The symphony and Gina Bachauer go back decades. And she died just as we were starting out. So we named it after her. But Gina Bachauer herself helped get Utah Symphony one of the first European tours and get them international playing. So the discussion now is what happens to these pianos. We

knew this is a temporary exhibit in the sense that these pianos probably already have lived their use as pianos. So now they came to our projects. But the plan now is to take components of them. We'll keep these panels of Maurice Abravanel and Gina Bachauer. This other grand piano will go to Steve. And we'll take pieces of them and probably make a new display. I'm not sure where that'll live. Maybe Rose Wagner, maybe in our office. Maybe it'll come out for competitions. We'll have components of them. And then the rest, sadly, will probably just dissolve into the ether and it'll go away. But we have great memories. And we felt like the exposure of what a great piano scene Salt Lake City is to help demonstrate this. Because people walking by, reading about key changes and the fact that Abravanel Hall is a treasure for the city. And I think people became very aware of the Abravanel Hall through this. **Brad Wheeler** I wanted to say, to me, that was one of the most important things that you did. And I don't know how they started talking about closing Abravanel Hall. All of a sudden, there's the Gina Bachauer thing going on at the same time they're having these news conferences. But you did an amazing thing to have it at that time. I don't know how. **Kary Billings** We were staying neutral on the talking but the exposure to Abravanel Hall will be valuable. But we had a great time and I love that picture of one of your Downtown Alliance ambassadors playing the piano. So, a great time, and we felt like it was a great success. And the question is, can we do it again? We love the idea of doing concerts at Abravanel Hall. And whether we can recreate our pianos is a discussion we'll have to have about timing and budgets and those kind of things. Because it did take a fair amount of time to coordinate all these elements. But having great partners of Downtown Alliance, UMOCA and Mundi, just everything came together. And I'd like to thank county arts and culture for letting us use Abravanel Hall. Just again, it came together so quickly and wonderfully. So I'm really excited about how that turned out. **Britney Helmers** Two big things on this. I think one is that we truly activated that plaza, where it is not activated normally. And the fact that Salt Lake County Arts and Culture allowed us to do that with these pianos from a visual arts perspective. And then people just wandering over there to play them was absolutely amazing. Two, Kary, you've mentioned as well that your ticket sales have gone up. Is that correct? **Kary Billings** Ticket sales have gone up. We had a great time with the finals at Abravanel Hall and our concerts. But the finals were well attended. We had the best ticket sales we've had. Well, we hadn't had a live competition for six years. But I'd say ticket sales were about double what they were six years before. But one last point is, we had horrors like, what's going to happen to these pianos? Are they going to last? Except for the weather which came mid-July and August, people were respectful. These pianos held up beautifully. I would go back and sometimes a black key would be loose or maybe missing as a souvenir. But overall, I think one of the pianos had flowers on it and some bees had taken up as residents temporarily. Other than the bees and the weather, they held up really well. So I wanted to applaud the people of Salt Lake City. They were respected and I think really treasured. So that was something that was quite wonderful. **Kathyn Carlisle-Kesling** That's cool you can find another home for them, I'm thinking like The Blocks or elsewhere. Maybe my law firm would take it in our lobby. **Kary Billings** I can't say that you really have playable pianos anymore sadly. But we still have them and they're great points about how piano and art can be transformed. **Brad Wheeler** Are you going to activate the plaza again next year? **Kary Billings** Well, that's the question, we haven't had that discussion yet so we'll have to see. At least every two years, we have competitions every two years. So at least every two years. And if we do it every year, we love to

explore that possibility. So we don't know yet. **Steve Auerbach** Question. Did you say that one of the pianos had solar activated strings? **Kary Billings** Yeah, the one upright in the background. It had the solar panels on top and wires going down to just kind of ting the strings so we had kind of tinkling music when the sun was out. **Britney Helmers** Richard Taylor.

Absolutely amazing **Kary Billings** The artists were Ryan Harrington, Chuck Landvatter, Evan Jed Memmott, Richard Taylor, Kalani Tonga-Tukuafu, and Ben Wiemeyer. So, great time.

Britney Helmers I think another big thing I just want to pinpoint with this project too, is, Kary, you just shared a story with me earlier that you had 25 people in the audience and 20 of them were new? **Kary Billings** Yeah. We just had a concert last Friday in the lobby. And I asked, how many had been here before? Only two raised their hands. Which was exciting because I knew what a busy day in Salt Lake City that was with FanX and everything going on. I think we would have more people but people were avoiding downtown in some ways. And I was excited just how many people had just heard about it through emails and were in the street. And they were coming back for this concert. So it was fun. **Lia Summers** That's fantastic. Well, let's give you a round of applause. **Britney Helmers** Bad Brad. **Brad Wheeler** My name is Brad Wheeler. I'm a musician and promoter with over 35 years of experience. I live and perform and work right here in Salt Lake City. For the past four years, I've collaborated with The Blocks on various events. I'm here today to emphasize how vital this initiative is to our city's cultural and economic future. Let me start by clarifying that I'm aware that The Blocks is not a government entity or traditional arts organization. Instead, it plays a unique and powerful role as an extension of the Chamber of Commerce, dedicated to fostering the arts and culture in Salt Lake City. As a performing artist, I can attest that no organization does more to support and promote the performing arts in our community than The Blocks. Several years ago, I was invited to travel to Austin, Texas, with a Salt Lake City delegation that included members of the City Council, the Downtown Alliance, and the Visit Salt Lake Convention Bureau. Our mission was to learn from the event promoters and producers behind the city's success stories, Austin City Limits and South by Southwest, among others. The goal was simple: to see how Salt Lake City could position itself for growth, both for our residents and tourists, just as Austin had. We learned that the key to Austin's thriving economy was understanding that the 9pm to 5am economy was as important, if not more so, than the traditional 9am to 5pm. By creating and nurturing entertainment districts, Austin had successfully fueled its growth. The Blocks embodies that same vision here in Salt Lake City. It recognizes that arts and culture aren't just luxuries but essential to our community's health, vibrancy, and economic success. Last summer, I worked with The Blocks, the Utah Film Center, and Broadway Theater to transform their outdoor plaza into a live music venue. This partnership breathed new life into the space, showing that a theater can be more than just a place to see movies. It can be a hub for community engagement. I don't know of any other organization that could have helped the theater creatively and meaningfully attempt this effort. I've also had the privilege of booking music for the Farmer's Market. If you've never experienced how music can transform a space, I encourage you to join me there. The atmosphere shifts the moment we turn on the sound system—like when The Wizard of Oz goes from black-and-white to color. The community comes alive. I've heard firsthand from partners like Level Crossing how much they've benefited from The Blocks' collaborations, particularly with developing this year's Beer Garden and Performance Stage. As a promoter, I rely on The Blocks to help me navigate community partnerships, urban logistics, and permits. This enables me to present events like

Official Pie and Beer Day and Sundance Music Cafe. The Blocks has also connected me to governmental and business partners I wouldn't have had access to otherwise, opening doors for bigger and better events. If anyone doubts The Blocks's value to our community, I encourage you to attend one of its events. I'm consistently impressed not only by the way the team supports our city, its artists, and businesses but also by how effortlessly they seem to execute their vision. The team's culture of collaboration and innovation keeps our arts scene vibrant and forward-moving. In my opinion, The Blocks is doing the heavy lifting to keep Salt Lake City's cultural landscape alive and to position it for growth. Let's continue to support this incredible initiative as it shapes our community's future. Questions? **Lia Summers** That was great.

Britney Helmers Brad, what have you seen change, like since we've been doing Locally Made, Locally Played? I've seen a lot of people interested, like artists, are they caring more about programs like this? **Brad Wheeler** Artists are caring more about programs like this, and I've watched artists get opportunities out of programs like this. It was amazing to sit out there and to sit at a place that nobody ever thinks about anything going on, and to slowly grow it, to see the people hanging out of the Copper Common, to see people coming out of the theater going, "what's this? Oh my God, we're gonna stay longer". Or people just walking by and just grabbing a chair and sitting down and becoming a part of an audience. **Britney Helmers** Carly, have you seen changes at the farmers markets since we've been doing that on Saturdays? **Carly**

Gillespie Yeah, obviously I love working with Brad, I love having live music. You know, I think having Locally Made, Locally Played and SLAM music fest at the farmers market is like the perfect intersection for these Downtown Alliance business units, right? We see the farmers market as an incubator. We have this platform where we're offering tens of thousands of people each Saturday downtown, and it's an audience that we have not been doing a great job at necessarily activating with performing arts. And so, having these live music opportunities and watching artists being incubated at the farmers market and watching the vibe change in the food fairway where we've been having the concerts and people dancing and gathering and staying longer, and we see the sales for our vendors that are selling prepared food in the beer garden going up because people are hanging out. And even when it's hot outside, sitting in that sunshine, staying and eating food, because there's something happening. And so many times, especially that first week that we did it in June, I heard so many people say like, this is the city I want to live in. This is the city that feels so great to me, like community around music, community around food, and watching everyone really support each other. I think it's been really incredible and I hope people do more of it. **Brad Wheeler** It's true, people wanted it every week didn't they?

Carly Gillespie They wanted it every week for sure. And we used to have live music every single week at the farmers market. **Brad Wheeler** And there's still a lot of performers around the edge. **Carly Gillespie** And we still have eight busking spots that are pretty activated, two different shifts each day, but having that live music element, having the stage, having it a little more formalized, you can see what the audience stuck around for it. And it was really, I thought it was super fun and I can't like to do more of it. **Steve Auerbach** Brad, what did you have to shade? **Brad Wheeler** We had it right under the trees at the edge of the beer garden. **Carly Gillespie** Yeah on the food fairway. They were on the south end of where the food carts are, right next to the beer garden. **Steve Auerbach** Was is mostly semi acoustic or acoustic? **Brad Wheeler** No, we had one acoustic guy but the rest were electric. **Carly Gillespie** But a much smaller stage than y'all had for SLAM. What size were we making it?

Britney Helmers We used three panels that are each like four by eight. But I want to give props as well, just from some of our Blocks initiatives to Brad for the booking that he does and who he's working with is all of these artists have come from a different part of the county and into Salt Lake City and bringing them out of the, again, in the county into downtown Salt Lake City to perform. We are currently putting together an overall impact report from these projects, from those 10 days of activation this past year of Locally Made, Locally Played and the way we're able to support these artists has been huge. And we didn't even know this was happening until we started putting together the report of where and how and the different types and different demographics. It's been pretty amazing to see. **Brad Wheeler** It's fun too to transform a place that you would never think of like the movie theater. Putting music in the movie theater. I'm looking forward to discussions about seeing if we could put music inside the theater on the hot days and we have bands play before the films or trailers, maybe some music and popcorn, you know, but yeah, I'm very grateful for The Blocks. I'm continually impressed by what this group does for our city. Like to me, that's the biggest reward is collaborating with The Blocks. **Britney Helmers** Than you guys. You guys are great. **Grace Lin** Thank you guys for coming in. I've been a student of The Blocks for many years as a committee member and we've got lots of reports and PowerPoints and slides, but having the representatives come in and articulate your enthusiasm for the work you've done and the impact that we've brought just by funding. Very small dollar amounts because a huge part of it is the talent associated with it. This is amazing. I really appreciate how you guys organized and came in. So really, thank you. **Britney Helmers** I love it. You guys are more than welcome to stay but if you guys have other things, feel free to head out. Thank you so much for presenting and Grace, thank you for that. That was awesome. We are going to kind of whiz through a few other things, but I just want, not only did we have these four amazing programs going on this past summer, we've done a lot. So I wanted to make sure I cover and or just like throw a quick little message on some of them.

Report on Recent Programming

Britney Helmers So we presented Business After Hours in partnership with the Salt Lake Chamber. We've received a lot of good emphasis on this project. We had 75 people in attendance. Mohan, Seth, you guys were both there, but it was great to have collaborators, arts organizations and donors from the Chamber all in one room. I think the biggest thing that we did with this program was I had multiple people from the Chamber walk up to me and say, where's FICE? I've never been to FICE. I've never heard of FICE. **Brad Wheeler** They don't know about the time Michael Jordan was back there signing shoes? **Britney Helmers** Can you believe it? They don't know that there's like the most concentrated location of murals in all of Salt Lake City behind FICE Gallery. So yeah, bringing 75 people together. Again, donors and arts organizations all in the same room, having a good time. I thought it was quite a success and we'd love to do more networking events like this in the future. I had one person come up to me from the arts and cultural organizations saying that was the best chamber event they've ever been to. So I'm also gonna give some mad props. We were able to attend the Utah Cultural Alliance Culture Connect conference this year. Annie DeMartino is the new director for Utah Cultural Alliance. I got to spend some time with her. It was absolutely amazing. And I wanted to highlight, although I know Felicia is not here today. She was the art awards recipient. So big kudos to her. We also had some great conversations, great networking. And just, I don't know,

all around good event for the day. So Lisa, Steve, you guys were all there. I thought it was really great this year. In working with more musicians, we were able to work with real estate services from the city. And we sent out a large Google form to artists, musicians, buskers, street performers, and asked some of their opinions on how we can make this a better process for Salt Lake City. So I would give a big kudos to Miranda. However, she's not here, but we were able to put together a whole document from the surveys and the responses. Although the responses were weak, we were actually very impressed by some of the responses that came out. How can the city's guide for entertainers and artists be more clear and easier to navigate? Got a lot of good feedback, information, what needs to be modified, what needs to be updated. So I will share this with all of you. Things that could be limiting, where they can play, what's kind of interesting, what frustrates you when performing downtown. People have to pay to perform to be a busker, right? So how can we make life a little bit easier? And in working with the city and real estate services to make this process easier for our artists, one of the big pieces of feedback, if you make it easier for creative people to show their love for the city, you'll find more of them doing so. So I thought that was extremely impactful just by being able to put that survey out. Another one of our Co-Create partners that I wish could have been here today, but Derek Robinson, we were able to put on the Beehive Battle over at American Towers Plaza, again, hitting some of the core pieces of the Cultural Core Action Plan is activating underutilized spaces, promoting artists and promoting downtown as an arts district. Man, was this a cool event. American Towers Plaza was used for the Olympics in 2002. And they do not have a lot of activations there currently. So we asked if we could do this. It was a \$200 rental fee. We provided Pushing Ahead, which empowers kids through skateboarding with \$10,000 through the co-create program. And it was an awesome, awesome event. There were skateboard shops represented from Layton to Orem, all around town. We're guesstimating about 400 people show up to this event. And we had artists design these ramps and or features and then paint the ramps and the features. We had great responses back from the Hilton, from visitors, from residents. And again, it was just another really cool stumbled upon moment. Skateboarding isn't necessarily allowed everywhere downtown. **Brad Wheeler** I'm still tripping out that you said Hilton said it was awesome. **Britney Helmers** They loved it! They loved it. There were people actually on the third floor of the Hilton working out and watching the skateboarding show. So it was really, really cool. It was amazing to be a part of it. The raffle, that was awesome. We also created a couple skateboard decks for Pushing Ahead to be represented and sent out to some of their partners. So we had a blast building that. Kai crushed it. It looks so good. And we did hand out three of them. But we wanted to keep one as well for us as a memento. Our Main Street Fashion Show that we worked with Alleyways Amplified on. I believe I sent out the link to the Impact Report for everyone to see. But Seth, who's been a part of this for years now, if you want to talk about that in the Impact Report, I can bring it up. **Seth Brown** Yeah, I'll go really high level. And I implore you guys to read this. It's more well written than I am well spoken. But the high level is in 2023 we came together to do a fashion and music experience at the Eccles Theater. We had a great first year, good crowd, good reach. The second year, I think we did a little bit better. We reached the numbers we got from Eccles were 1,600 people in attendance. And we had about 1.6 million impressions on social with \$0 of ad spend. So we were hugely proud of that. From year one to year two, we expanded our talent pool. So year one, it was just Salt Lake City fashion designers and musicians. Year two, we pulled some people from Provo.

We had some people from New York City who were originally from Salt Lake City. So they came in. We actually had a model who drove from Pocatello, Idaho to be in the show. And so we're really proud of that because we feel that it enhances Salt Lake's brand as a cultural and creative destination. Not only along the Wasatch Front, but trying to get that appeal to a national audience, which we feel that we did. Economically, I mean, Dee Brewer, he told us that some of the bars downtown had some of their best nights of sales, the night of the show. So we're just really proud of the ability to platform these artists that's huge for us. One of our designers that we had, he had never done a fashion show before we reached out to him. And now he's got NBA players, NFL players wearing his clothes. So we feel like that's huge for Salt Lake, for these people to represent Salt Lake, not only downtown, but along the Wasatch Front and nationally. And so we're excited to keep doing this. We're kind of exploring how we're gonna grow the scope and continue to have that social and economic impact downtown. But it's been a fun journey and we're excited to keep going. **Britney Helmers** So cool. Thank you. I feel like I'm just throwing a whole bunch of things at you, but again, it was just so busy. Another thing we did was our Urban Plein Air event. We've talked a lot about performing arts, but we did quite a bit with visual arts this past year. Again, partnering with the farmers market was so fun. We hired 11 artists to paint in plein air around the farmers market, and each of these artists had a blast. There are two of them that are represented right there in the middle. Oh, oh. Emily and Watson. But we did \$150 to each artist, \$2,250 total to the overall program. About \$1200 came in from purchased artwork. artwork. They all had such a good time and also are asking when's the next one. So we will definitely make sure that we get to do that again. Pablo's art in the upper left hand corner, Jake Gooch, and then our friend Trevor Dahl, who also helped us put this on this past year, was really, really great to see. They were able to take them home and finish them shortly after, so you'll see Emily on the right in process, and then that was her finished artwork. We've actually asked her if we were able to use that as our holiday card this year. So, just another really fun way of how we're not only supporting these artists, but using their artwork to create more visibility for them in the future. **Carly Gillespie** I just feel like one thing to mention, the reason that there's a difference between how much money they raised and what went to the artist is because a portion of each sale was donated to the farmers market, which again was an excellent way for us to partner. It really added to the atmosphere at the market, having folks around painting it was a really fun day. **Britney Helmers** It was also really fun to do the silent auction. So it was week one, they were able to paint in plein air, and then week two, we asked them to come back, and we did a silent auction with all of their work. Seeing a silent auction also happening at the farmers market was fun to see how people interacted with it, right? Just a little different than just coming for your produce. It was like, "oh, I wanna stay, and I wanna walk another lap so I can see if I won". But it was really cool to see that. **Brad Wheeler** Hanging out with Merinda while the patrons were coming to pick up the art was pretty powerful too. It felt like they just got the best deal in their life. **Carly Gillespie** Some of them did. **Britney Helmers** They did. Our annual show with SB Dance and Curbside Theater also happened on top of the Pierpont parking garage this year. I realized when we were putting this together, we always showcase some of the pictures looking out towards Broadway Media. We were supplied this picture in the lower left-hand corner from Stephen Brown, but just like the crowd, and people interacting with this show is absolutely amazing. So we did sponsor this again this year at \$1,600. I could not be more thrilled from this show. Every year it's just so amazing, and so it just

gets better too. And to see more people show up, and again, finding that found moment that we're using a parking garage, I will say Vectra who owns the parking garage has been another phenomenal partner that we've worked with all summer. We'll talk about that in the future because we have another project that will be happening up there shortly. We have been working with Utah Black Artist Collective. We partnered with them on a back-to-school drive. So with some of our new assets that we created this year, we did create a donation of 30 water bottles, 30 tote bags from the farmers market, 30 new notebooks, and then 60 packs of sidewalk chalk. I wanna continue figuring out how we highlight them and how we create more of this and more partnerships with them in downtown Salt Lake City because we do need more artists like this. We did partake in the Zepstone Arts Festival as well with a donation of \$1,500 for sponsorship. So you see in the right-hand corner, our logo was on multiple different back drops for the four-day festival. We were also able to partake in Arts in the Community Panel alongside Amanda Madden from the Artist Foundry Manager who works with Utah Film Center and Wynter Storm who is the UBLAC founder. We were able to also provide a sponsorship for the Rose PAC for pictures and an exhibition Reframed for \$1,500. I was unable to make it to this show, but I did hear that it was great. And then I also wanted to highlight the Urban Exploration trip to San Diego that the Downtown Alliance does every single year. We were able to help put on two tours. One to the Rady Shell with Paige Satter from the Rady Shell, and Amy Ashton from the La Jolla Playhouse. What I found really interesting and fascinating about this is David Hodges who works for the Utah Symphony, actually used to work for the San Diego Symphony and he has some great relationships on how we create more public-private partnerships and how we could potentially build things like this in the future. Partnerships between parks, public lands and the symphony and how we actually activate our public lands with our arts and culture organizations. We also did a partnership with Phoebe Cornog with Pandr Design Co. And we kinda walked through with all of her murals and took a look at that with all of our city stakeholders. Just kinda wanna give you an update on media and marketing reporting as well.

Josh Jones Do you want to introduce Mohan before? **Britney Helmers** Yes! **Mohan**

Sudabattula Hi everyone, my name is Mohan. Pleasure to be here. I'm the founder of a local nonprofit called Project Embrace. Our vision is to increase access to healthcare for all. We do so by working with different hospitals, vendors. We're having to repurpose, use medical equipment that's no longer being used in different facilities and in patients and give it out to isolated and remote communities all around the Southwest and abroad at no expense to the patient. I think storytelling as a social impact organization is super important. So we do a ton of direct programming investment as an organization to help elevate the voices of patients unheard and disabled via the arts, music and different programs like that. So yeah, just that's a little bit about me. But thank you all again so much for having me. **Josh Jones** How did you hear about The Blocks? **Mohan Sudabattula** Yeah so last year, I bet Britney when she was part of the Granary District Alliance. So we had just moved into a warehouse down in that area and for a five year anniversary, instead of putting on a gala, I decided to put on a rave. We were looking at different spaces to use and just through the pipeline, everyone's like, "have you met Britney? You should talk to Britney. You should really be involved with Britney". And so, I was really intimidated to talk to Britney. Then I got on the phone and it was just a phone call but by the end of it I was just beaming and I was like, I think I just found my best friend. And so yeah, just stayed in touch and love all of the things that she's been involved with and all the programs

with The Blocks and the Downtown Alliance has been on. And when the opportunity presented itself I just had to hop on. Like, I've been a massive fan of all of the programs and all the work, just as a private citizen of Salt Lake County. So yeah, I think that's probably the fastest way to say it. **Josh Jones** Well I'm really glad to have you on the team Mohan and Seth. This is kind of like a beautiful send off for Lia. I just want to acknowledge I was a part of a very early iteration of The Blocks. And I just feel like this meeting has been kind of a love you. **Lia Summers** I've been getting very missed. **Josh Jones** Yeah, because I think for a long time, you had an idea of what the Blocks Arts District should be and were maybe a little frustrated at where we were going and the progress. And I think Brittany, in the year and a half you've been here has solidified what the mission is and has a really great viewpoint of where we want to go. And it just feels like we're not an adolescent nonprofit anymore. We have a place to go. And that's been thanks to you too. And Grace. You guys have been around for a bit. I just want to say also that those stories are like their seeds of vibrancy in the community and hopefully each one of their creators, they continue to grow those projects because I want to see those kids next year. I want Bachauer to do something even bigger with pianos. And Brad, of course, we're gonna be doing something forever and ever.

Marketing

Josh Jones You know, This stuff is so important to me because it's really about the stories that we've heard today. And through the projects and programming that we've done, it's really easy to achieve these kind of numbers and growth. And so it's not really even worth talking about. See, because the stories are so much more powerful. We did achieve the most press in the last quarter than we have for the blocks in probably, cumulatively in years past. From Brittany being on KRCL. That Deseret News piece. She sent it out to you. I hope you opened it. It was really great. They were there the first day at Abravanel. And they were taking pictures. And then I never saw the story. And months later, the photographer had gone back and taken pictures of kids on those pianos. And it's a beautiful photo essay of these very diverse group of children who had just wandered through the park and the photographer showed up there and taking these pictures. It was really such a cool story. People from out of state that just happened on it and they were just playing the piano. And then of course, through the Mariachi Festival, the fashion show we had a great story for. And then Open Streets. Does Open Streets feel like it was a million years ago? It was two months ago. **Britney Helmers** Oh, absolutely. I think we were so focused on our programming that it was like, you know what? Is Open Streets really happening? It just kind of happened around us. **Josh Jones** And then our website, the new website, we're getting tons of traffic on it. Melissa Fields is doing some of the great story writing for us. I've got a couple of blogs to go up today. The Utah Symphony has shared this and gotten great traffic on their website. So if you're not following, please do, along with our Instagram and Facebook. **Britney Helmers** Thanks Josh.

Future Programming

Britney Helmers And then I'm gonna wrap up with our future programming in five minutes because Matt Castillo was unable to give us our other art and culture updates, but it is in the folder if you'd like to look at the ArtTix venue reporting. Just some things in our future, our Co-Create future. We will relaunch on October 15th. We have \$90,000 to give out to three

individuals and/or artists or arts organizations starting for February 28th, 2025. I also just want to note that our SevenCanyons Trust project, our project with FICE and Mill Art Consulting will also be coming out shortly. So our project with FICE, with FICE is Fusion Live. I mentioned that parking garage at Vectra across the street from Sky and Soundwell, October 19th. We are really pumped with this. I just heard so FICE was some of the dollars that we gave them. FICE decided to thrift a whole bunch of couches, rugs and vintage lamps. And then they purchased quite a bit of scaffolding to do an art exhibit, photography exhibit on the scaffolding, on that top level of the parking garage. So it will be a jazzy, groovy kind of night. 7 to 10 pm starts with Ryan Condrick spinning some Fusion tunes. And then we have Drewski, and Brother coming up from Provo. And then Ric Wilson flying in from Chicago to perform this free event. Super excited for this, super excited for the vibe that they're trying to create. Again, like something very different that we don't see in Salt Lake City. When they mentioned that they were thrifting some of those, I was like, you're getting that five levels up into on the top level of a parking garage. And they're like, for that view, absolutely. We want to be comfy, we want it to be chill. They're not even doing a large stage. They are doing all vintage rugs as the stage. It will be a really, really cool night. And the photography exhibit, I can't wait. Don't want to miss that one. Our pop-up art galleries with Mill Art Consulting. Again, this was from our Co-Create program. This will start to happen in the spring. We're looking at three months, two exhibits per month. And we just had some conversations with internet properties to discuss how we brighten up some of the blighted buildings, whether it be on Main Street, but somewhere in downtown, and build out these pop-up art galleries. We're really excited for this one as well. Camilla Fowler, who is our partner on this project, used to run Hope Gallery on Main Street. And we've got some exciting artists that are looking for spaces. Partnership with Utah Film Center for the Utah Queer Film Festival. We will actually be donating tote bags to this. And then, Squid actually created this artwork on the left-hand side, which will be live screen-printed by Copper Palette Press at the show. So, another really fun event that we're working with them on. And then, I cannot believe we are talking about this again. Glow installs in a month and a half on Gallivan Plaza. I feel like it just came down. I'm not sure where time went, but we will be installing in the next month and a half. And you will see that on our Q1 actuals of paying In Theory Art Studios and that partnership. We're looking forward to this again this year. And there is a link to some of that data from Matt Castillo's work from ArtTix and the venue reporting that we have in downtown, just to kind of give you that list right here. That was a lot and whew, man, I feel like I've been talking a lot, but I'm so glad we made it through. Is there anything else that we need to cover today? I don't think so. Lia, do you want to sign off one more time? **Lia Summers** Whoa. Yes, I want to thank our guests again. It really was so special to be able to hear firsthand your experience working with The Blocks, how The Blocks have helped you extend and expand your impact. So cool to hear what you're doing and how we've been able to be a small part of it. My biggest contribution to The Blocks was this. It was my job at one point to create that. And as Josh said, I felt like we had a lot of great ideas and it seemed impossible at times. What we were asking for was like, can this actually happen? And I think on my very last board meeting, getting to hear from you all that it is happening, I'm not gonna cry. It was really special. And thank you so much for being a part of this. Like, the whole reason The Blocks exist is to do exactly what it's doing and to be able to hear that it's had the impact that we always intended was pretty incredible. So thank you for sharing. Thank you for being here. Thank you for being a part of this whole meeting. You

didn't have to save it a whole thing, but I'm glad that you did. And with that, I think I can adjourn the meeting. Great, thank you all.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at **10:34am**.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 14th, 2025 at 9:00am