

filament THEATRE



WHERE FAMILIES COME TO PLAY

December 2020

Dear Filament Theatre family and friends;

Like most of you, Filament Theatre started 2020 with a list of big plans and to-dos. We were slated to stage our first play for preschool audiences, *Zip, Zoom, Bloom*. And we extended the run of *Forts!* —our longest-running show— into March because so many of you wanted to pack into the theatre to have some imaginative fun with cardboard boxes, sheets and clothespins.

But then, of course, our plans and to-do lists, like yours, melted away because of the pandemic. We didn't stop creating, though, and these topsy-turvy months have shown us the importance of **resilience, creativity, play, collaboration and gratitude** in weathering these challenges.

As this unforgettable 2020 comes to a close, we're overwhelmed with **gratitude** for your support during a time that has been difficult for so many. We are proud of what we have achieved during this year of **growth, experimentation and listening**, and we could not have done any of it without help from you and all our friends.

We cannot wait to welcome you all back to Filament Theatre once again. In the meantime, we wish you peace, health and plenty of time for play. Even though our stage is currently dark, we still need your support to further our mission and build Filament's future. If you are able, please consider making an end-of-year contribution to Filament Theatre.

We cannot wait to welcome you all back to Filament Theatre once again. In the meantime, we wish you peace, health and plenty of time for play.

Sincerely,

Julie Ritchey
Artistic Director

Krissi Ann McEachern
Managing Director



THANKS to the support of families like yours, we were able to adapt and rewrite our 2020 plans. Take a look at what we've been up to:



MARCH

Your world, and ours, turned upside down. We closed *Forts* early and locked the theatre's doors, to keep everyone safe, and went back to building forts in our living rooms. But we were **resilient**. We made sure our teaching artists were financially supported. We held virtual community gatherings, to learn how Filament could best serve our family and friends during this time. And our Board of Directors began a series of intensive Zoom meetings, creating a fundraising strategy to help see us through this crisis.

APRIL

Thanks to your support and care, we raised more than \$100,000 during a massive spring fundraising campaign. We are overwhelmed with **gratitude** for the nearly 240 individuals who contributed, 75% of which were new Filament donors! That support allowed us to not only survive but to prepare for the theatre's next act.

MAY

Just as Filament Theatre has for 14 years, we focused on **play** as a way to reimagine our world. We created **Lightbulb Lab**, a free toolkit for children and families filled with activities and games designed to spark creativity that was downloaded by more than 600 families. We also launched **Suddenly—A Story!**, a free, digital class that culminated with performances about a sloth who loved interior design, evil birthday cards, and a dog who ate a tiny iPod—all created with simple objects found at home and presented via Zoom.

JUNE

We'll be honest: This was a sometimes-scary and tumultuous time for our neighborhoods and our country, as many of us fought for social justice. At Filament, it was also a time for internal reflection. Our team worked hard to reimagine our theatre's vision and values to **better reflect our community** and our goals. Have you seen our updated mission statement?

The mission of Filament Theatre is to create a more equitable society by celebrating and amplifying the perspectives and experiences of young people through the performing arts.

JULY

Like many of you during this unusual time, we tried new things! Filament hosted its first-ever virtual summer camps. We put on three different virtual camps with our **creative and resilient** teaching artists and nearly two dozen campers. In the end, we created three new works of art.

"Thank you for giving Henry such a fun, magical, and creative experience this summer. His Filament camps were a highlight of his summer, during what has been a pretty rough few months.

We appreciate all of you!"

— Parent of a Filament camper



AUGUST

With our camps still going strong, we were so proud to **collaborate** with 41 theatre's for young audiences from around the country to be a co-presenter of **A Kids Play About Racism**. More than **75,000 people** from around the country streamed this smart, groundbreaking play that engaged in difficult conversations and helped young people process the world around them.

SEPTEMBER

It was a bittersweet time. We said goodbye to our co-founder, managing director and resident renaissance man, Christian Libonati. But we were **grateful** to receive dozens of applications from qualified candidates from around the country who were excited to serve as Filament's new managing director. And we could not have been more delighted to welcome [Krissi Ann McEachern](#) into the role, following our hiring committee's extensive selection process.

OCTOBER

We were honored to be awarded the **2020 Award of Excellence for Theatre for Young Audiences** by the Illinois Theatre Association. We also worked on **Trike StoryBox**, a new collaboration with the Trike Theatre in Arkansas to create a solo story via Zoom for preschoolers. It's one of many ways Filament is working to broaden its **partnerships** with artists and audiences around the country.

NOVEMBER

In another **collaboration**, Filament worked with the **St. Louis Symphony Orchestra** to create a series of educational videos for 3rd—through 8th—graders to explore the power of music and sound to connect us in times of isolation.

DECEMBER

As this up-and-down year comes to a close, Filament is pleased to be involved in a new residency with two elementary schools in Winnetka to produce a show as part of the Kennedy Center's new play development program. This virtual residency will employ **six teaching artists** and involve **500 students** in this playful, creative program.

From our Filament Theatre family to yours, we wish you a new year filled with resilience, creativity, play, collaboration and gratitude. We are so thankful for your support.

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