



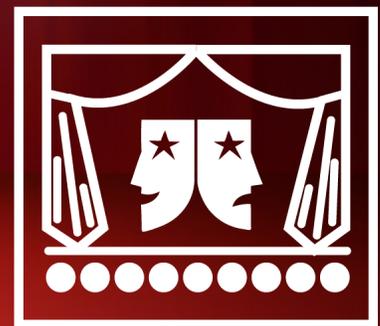
# ENGAGE

# ENRICH



# ENTERTAIN

Report on the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan



## CADILLAC FOOTLITERS



**To be a partner in a vibrant, growing community like Cadillac, the Footliters must enrich our community in return.**

Since 2019, Cadillac Footliters has provided over \$4000 in scholarships to help students attend camps and programs like Blue Lake, Interlochen, Stagedoor Manor, and youth programming at Old Town Playhouse. These scholarships are just one way Cadillac Footliters has given back throughout its long history. This commitment is even more significant when considered against the backdrop of a global pandemic that shut down many opportunities for students for an extended period.

Several recent productions provided opportunities for Footliters to partner with local charities to benefit the community. *Love, Loss, and What I Wore* raised nearly \$2000 for the Oasis Family Resource Center and provided donations of clothing and other items directly to the facility. *The Guys* benefitted the charity Veterans Serving Veterans, bringing in over \$2500 in contributions from performance attendees to support VSV's dream of building community common space to commemorate local veterans and bring the community closer together.

The Cadillac Footliters has reached out to other youth organizations, inviting teens from Eagle Village to attend performances for free, providing valuable exposure to the performing arts to youth who may not have had the opportunity otherwise. Recognizing the community's faith in the organization, Footliters partnered with local school districts, including Cadillac Area Public Schools, to share resources — most notably, regularly lending the drama club and musical department over \$5000 in microphones and technology to enhance and support their productions.

*Footliters recognizes the benefits of enriching the community and will strive to continue developing, refining, and enhancing partnerships whenever and wherever possible.*



**The Cadillac Footliters must realize our dream of a permanent home for performing arts in the Cadillac Area.**

Since its original theater burned down, the Cadillac Footliters has been searching for a home to better fulfill their mission of engaging, enriching, entertaining, and educating the greater Cadillac community. The organization purchased a parcel of land downtown many years ago with the dream of rebuilding a theater to serve the community. After further review and continued growth, the Board recognized that as a growing organization, that parcel of land would not serve Footliters' long-term needs. In 2021, Footliters partnered with Brian and Julie Williams from Blue Heron Cafe to sell their adjoining property so the Williams family could grow their downtown business.



The past three years have not been without near success and strategic pivots. When Goodrich Quality Theaters went bankrupt, Footliters leveraged community support to bid on the downtown Cadillac 4 property. While that bid was not successful, Footliters has continued to recognize that “home is what you make of it,” and has continued to explore a variety of locations and venues in which to put on productions. Whether it’s an intimate showing at the Raven Social, an evening at the Elks, donation-based performances at the Rotary Performing Arts Pavilion, or even massive Broadway stage hits at Elenbaas Auditorium in McBain, Footliters has expanded its reach into the community even without a permanent, physical space to call home.

*Footliters will continue to apply for grants, engage investors, and investigate properties that become available in order to finally realize this dream.*



**The Cadillac Footliters will harness today’s energy to develop the next generation of the organization and provide a welcoming environment for bringing new talent and experience to all facets of the organization.**

There is more to a show than just auditioning, learning the lines, and performing for an audience. Productions require directors, assistant directors, producers, set builders, stage managers, sound technicians, and a marketing team. Behind every show, a small army of unpaid volunteers works diligently to ensure it all comes together. Volunteers make up the Footliters’ backbone, and its mission is unattainable without the many people who have given their valuable time so freely.

Over the last three years, Footliters formalized several new positions and developed new internal competencies. Through formalized job descriptions for show producers, stage managers, and other volunteers, there are now procedures in place to make a new volunteer more immediately comfortable in their role. While many of the Footliters’ recent performance facilities included their own sound and light experts, *Footliters trained new people on running some of these aspects of a show as a way to continue to engage new and existing volunteers with a variety of ways to be a part of a production.*



**The Cadillac Footliters must continue to develop and communicate the value and meaning of membership to businesses, local organizations, and community members to build a foundation for a permanent facility, sustain Footliters’ growth, and create tomorrow’s energy.**

When Footliters first adopted its 2019-22 strategic plan, one membership and one sponsorship level existed. As financial needs for bigger productions and an interest in a strong financial position grew, Footliters encouraged additional sponsorship opportunities from members, businesses, and the community. Since adopting this plan at its annual meeting in 2019, Footliters revamped its membership levels to keep an accessible entry point for everyone who wanted to be a member, while also encouraging donations in the form of higher membership and sponsorship levels, with an eye to continued financial strength.

Footliters has made less progress in developing and communicating the importance and value of membership. While advertisements in show-related marketing, free tickets, and strong partnerships exist, more should be done to increase membership engagement. *Although there is room for improvement, Footliters’ revamped memberships provide a way for everyone, regardless of income or background, to engage and connect with the performing arts in the greater Cadillac area.*



**The Footliters will continue to provide a balance of shows to provide the community with opportunities to see and participate in known quantities and up-and-coming productions to build audiences and enrich the community.**

For every runaway hit like *Mamma Mia* and *Disney's Frozen Junior*, Cadillac Footliters has also produced lesser-known shows like *Leaving Iowa*, *Boeing Boeing*, and *The Guys*. Footliters recognizes that in seeking to engage, enrich, and entertain the community, bigger shows pay the bills. In contrast, smaller productions enrich and educate the community in new ways by encouraging expanded horizons and trying new things. Over the last three years, the data indicate that the community welcomes and supports such expanded offerings that include the big shows everyone expects to see and smaller gems that may have gone unknown and unnoticed by the community.

*This part of Footliters' mission is Footliters' future, inexorably linked with the community's enrichment.*



**The Cadillac Footliters must collaborate more with local individuals, businesses, and organizations, strengthening bonds and creating mutual value.**

As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that subsists primarily on ticket sales, donations, and membership dues, Footliters recognizes that a strong partnership with the greater Cadillac community is an inseparable part of the organization's reputation and credibility. Over the last three years, Footliters expanded community partnerships through outreach with local businesses to promote shows and tell our stories through various media outlets that continue to value and support our work and mission. Maybe you saw the *Boeing Boeing* window displays downtown before the pandemic. Perhaps you picked up some show-themed candy at the Sweet Shop. Maybe you enjoyed a special drink menu at one of our local restaurants. You've seen the Footliters on *The Four*, caught snippets of performances on *Michigan This Morning*, and heard interviews with cast members on local radio stations like 107.9 CDY. The Cadillac Footliters' successes are our local community's successes. *Footliters anticipates a future with strengthened and expanded partnership with other local individuals, groups, businesses, or organizations to help the entire community grow and prosper.*



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