

OTP NEWS

OLD TOWN PLAYERS COMMUNITY THEATRE & ARTS CENTER

A Year of Progress On and Off the Stage

2025 was a banner year for the Old Town Players, marking a turning point for our community theater; one defined by growth, renewal and a shared commitment to excellence. What began as a season of ambitious goals quickly became a year of meaningful progress as performers, volunteers and audiences alike came together to build something stronger than ever before. From record-smashing productions to expanded participation and new, creative energy both onstage and behind the scenes, the theater has taken confident steps forward while staying true to the spirit that has always made it a home for creativity and connection. In this edition of OTP News, we take a look back at key milestones and accomplishments.

JANUARY

Facing an aging infrastructure and a limited financial situation, the OTP Board of Directors took a bold and decisive step forward by formally committing to an ambitious capital campaign designed to secure the theater's future and expand its impact for generations to come. Blessed with the talent of a gifted grant writer and the opportunity to partner with Patronicity and the Indiana Housing & Community Development's CreatINg Places matching grant program and armed with a deep belief in the power of community theater as a cultural, educational and economic cornerstone, our goal was set at a daunting \$50,000. A deep breath was taken and we took the leap, embarking on a monumental yet energizing journey!

FEBRUARY

The planning was fast, furious and intentional. Blending creativity, urgency and teamwork, committees were formed, local sponsorships were secured, and a calendar packed with performances, pop-up fundraisers and donor challenges kept the drive alive. Clear communication, quick decision making and a shared sense of purpose fueled long hours of bold ideas while strong community partnerships amplified our outreach. The result was an undeniably high-energy campaign that transformed pressure into progress. Our first fundraising event? A delightful and delicious performance of "Death by Chocolate", directed by Vickie Puffer. Attendees enjoyed the show and a sprawling dessert bar. A few even took home a new piece of art from the silent art auction.

MARCH

March consisted of more event planning and nonstop fundraising. Campaign letters were mailed to patrons and community supporters and phone calls and personal visits were made. Plentiful dine-to-donate events allowed for ample opportunity to connect with our friends, supporters and members of our community to share our excitement for the possibilities this capital campaign would afford us while enjoying a delicious meal someone else cooked. Who had time to cook with all the fundraising and planning? By donating a percentage of sales on designated days, our generous friends at Procopios, Byron Bobe's Pizza House, Texas Roadhouse, Wings, Etc., Buffalo Wild Wings, and Fazoli's turned everyday meals into meaningful support for the arts in our community. Families dining out, friends catching up and neighbors grabbing takeout all became a part of something bigger.



APRIL

Elvis was in the building, along with local talent Big D! It was a night of great friends, great music and great fun! Big D provided his always enjoyable musical magic and Josh Pack captured the spirit of Elvis perfectly. The event raised significant funds while also bringing the community together in a fun and memorable way. The combination of great entertainment and strong community support proved that creativity and enthusiasm can turn a simple idea into something incredibly special. We bolstered our Patronicity campaign total with an exceptionally successful meat raffle and Easter cinnamon roll fundraiser. And did we mention we did all this while rehearsing and performing? "Our Town" couldn't have been a more timely tribute to the incredible folks in OUR town, who, having contributed more than \$83K to the cause, smashed our 60 day fundraising goal resulting in a match of \$50K from the IHCDA.

MAY

In May, we opened our doors to the Flaget Drama Department, serving as host for their spring performance of "The Lion King". OTP is proud to support these talented young thespians and play a role in their blossoming love for the performing arts. We then promptly jumped into casting the all teen summer musical which would prove to be a success of epic proportions. Keep reading - we'll get to that later!

JUNE

June offered an ever so brief period of reflection and much needed rest after such a flurry of activity. Once the rest was over, we began working with local contractors to obtain work estimates for the major facility improvements we'd been working so hard to fund. With roof replacement, eave and soffit repair, veranda repair and resurfacing, repair and painting of the auditorium ceiling and walls was on the list of things to be done, this was no quick and easy task. But, the excitement of crushing our goals kept the fire stoked and bids were accepted, reviewed and awarded. OTP is committed to investing funds back into the same community that was so generous in its support of us.

JULY

In July we held our annual potluck and meeting. We welcomed new and old faces, celebrated an outstanding 2024-2025 season and announced an exciting 2025-2026 season. Great food, fun and fellowship was enjoyed by all. We welcomed our newest board member, Brian Moyer, and celebrated Bryan Bible and Brian Moyer (Winnie Wilson Award winners), Zoe Herron (Ham Award winner), and Shane Selby (Vermillion Award winner).

AUGUST

OTP was clearly the place to be on those 2025 summer nights. See what we did there? Kicking down the door of the 2025-2026 season, Coni Like and the cast of "Grease, High School Edition" brought the house down! Performing in front of a whopping 1137 attendees over the course of 6 performances (and a special, private performance we're not even counting), Danny, Sandy, Rizzo, Kenickie and the rest of the Rydell gang CRUSHED the standing attendance record by more than 250 people. What an amazing accomplishment and stand out memory for all involved. Following the wrap of "Grease", the entry ceiling was torn out and replaced just in time for the Teen Center (housed in our basement) to open its doors for the 2025-2026 school year.

SEPTEMBER

In September we welcomed new director, Tim Fox, for his interpretation of "Misery". Casting took place early in the month and the cast set to work honing and perfecting their roles. 19 new premium seats were installed thanks to some very hard working and loyal friends and our first alcohol permits were obtained, allowing for beer and wine service before and during intermission at select Friday and Saturday performances. Another successful dine-to-donate event at Fazoli's rounded out yet another month of accomplishment for OTP.

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

The chill of fall may have begun to show itself, but it did not slow our roll! In October we became the proud new owners of a new lighted marquee, performed 6 performances of "Misery", casted the Christmas show, and provided another performance of "Death by Chocolate" - this time at Highland Woods as part of a fundraiser benefitting the Knox County CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) program. Somewhere in there we managed to fit in a work day during which a generous donation of Bosson Chalkware figure heads were hung in the Bierhaus Room. The Bierhaus Room now also serves as our new lounge.

Roof replacement complete! The first sign of change was the bright white dome, standing proudly atop the building, gleaming in the sunlight of an early November morning after a good cleaning and sealing. Roofers removed and replaced 100% of the decking and shingles on the roof and identified areas of failing brickwork set to be repaired in the spring of 2026. Meanwhile, our focus indoors shifted to planning and executing our annual online silent auction. Made possible through generous donations by local businesses and individuals, this event not only raises essential funds, it is yet another opportunity to highlight the importance of the meaningful partnerships we share within our community.

Directed by Steve Gray, "The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus", a unique take on the story of St. Nicholas, brought the magic of the holiday season to life, creating a memorable experience for all ages. Our Christmas shows do more than entertain - they strengthen the bond within our community and light up the season with joy, laughter and holiday tradition. Speaking of holiday tradition, our cinnamon roll fundraiser made a triumphant return, solidifying its spot in the OTP annual event lineup for what we hope will be years to come. As we wind down the holiday season, ceiling work and paint begins in the auditorium. We can't think of a better way to start the new year and look forward to you taking it all in for yourself when you attend our next OTP performance! *Beetlejuice, Jr.* auditions are January 5 & 6 and show dates are set for March 20-22 and 27-29. Mark your calendars now to see "the ghost with the most" in what is now our fully renovated auditorium.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AUDITIONS - *Beetlejuice, Jr.*

JANUARY 5 & 6 @ 6PM

No prior experience required

JANUARY BOARD MEETING

JANUARY 21 @ 6PM

Board Meetings open to public

PROCOPIO'S DINE TO DONATE

FEBRUARY 12 - LUNCH AND DINNER SERVICE

20% will be donated to Old Town Players

FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 18 @ 6PM

Board Meetings open to public

STAY INFORMED

Be sure to join our Facebook group **Old Town Players** or follow **otp47591** on Instagram to stay in the know about all the OTP happenings and hoopla!



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www.oldtownplayers.org

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