



# project STAGE

Students, Teachers, Artists: Generating Excellence



A partnership of  
Des Moines Public Schools, Hoyt Sherman Place Foundation, and Turnaround Arts: Des Moines

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Students, Teachers, Artists: Generating Excellence

A partnership of:



**TURNAROUND ARTS:**  
**DES MOINES**  
creating success in schools

Project STAGE is made possible by the generous support of:

**IOWA ARTS COUNCIL**

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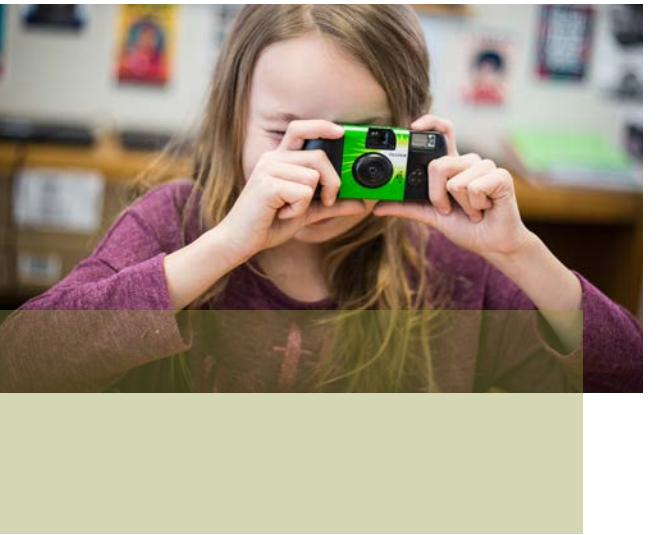
# PROJECT STAGE

## The arts are a critical part of a good education.

Study after study has shown that students are more engaged and successful in school not only when they have access to a quality arts education curriculum, but even more so when the arts are integrated into other areas of learning.

**Project STAGE is a new effort in Des Moines built around that principle.**

**Project STAGE** (Students, Teachers, Artists: Generating Excellence) is a partnership between Hoyt Sherman Place, Des Moines Public Schools, and Turnaround Arts: Des Moines.



## The goals of Project STAGE are threefold.

**First:** Provide a stage for students on the Northside of Des Moines to share their voices and creativity through visual and performing arts.

Over 200 students representing each of the five Turnaround Arts: Des Moines schools will be performing their annual musical productions on stage at Hoyt Sherman Place as part of a two-day performing arts festival. Additionally, budding photographers from these schools have been participating in an ongoing series of photography workshops, and will display their work at Hoyt Sherman Place in an exhibit entitled #OurDesMoines. The Project STAGE Festival will culminate in a series of performances from student groups, teachers, and national Turnaround Artist DJ IZ Avila.

**Second:** Increase awareness of Turnaround Arts: Des Moines and Project STAGE programming in our schools while shining a spotlight on the deepening partnership between Hoyt Sherman Place Foundation and Des Moines Public Schools.

Hoyt Sherman Place and Des Moines Public Schools will invite the families of students and members of the broader Des Moines community to attend the school musicals and student/teacher/artist performances.

**Third:** Provide teachers in our Turnaround Arts schools with ongoing support for the teaching practice of arts-integration.

This will be accomplished through a micro-granting process. Teachers in our TA schools have been invited to submit proposals for how they intend to implement arts-integrated lessons in their classrooms in the upcoming school year. Two \$500 micro-grants will be awarded to fund the best proposals.





# MEET THE TURNAROUND ARTS: DES MOINES SCHOOLS

When the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) established Turnaround Arts (TA) in 2012, Des Moines Public Schools was one of the first eight school districts in the nation to take part through Findley Elementary School. TA was designed to help turn around low-performing schools, narrow the achievement gap, and increase student engagement through the arts.

Based on progress with the original cohort, the program was expanded to 37 schools districts across the country in 2014, and Des Moines Public Schools was able to include all five schools that feed into North High School: Harding Middle School along with Cattell, Findley, Madison and Oak Park elementary schools.

Several nationally acclaimed artists have been mentors to the Turnaround Arts schools in Des Moines, including Oscar winner Forest Whitaker, Tony winner John Lloyd Young, actor Kal Penn, and members of Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble.

## CATTELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Cattell Elementary School: Our school was named for Jonathan Cattell, a state legislator and later state auditor for Iowa during the Civil War. He helped to establish the school near the state capitol that now bears his name. The original Cattell School was built in 1890 and had only four classrooms. As the surrounding community grew, two additions were constructed. A new building was dedicated in 1992 on the same site. Cattell serves approximately 410 students from kindergarten through fifth grade.



3101 East 12th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50316  
[cattell.dmschools.org](http://cattell.dmschools.org)



*Cattell students rehearse their  
Turnaround Arts musicals for Project Stage.*



*Tony and Grammy award-winning performer  
John Lloyd Young spent a day with Des Moines  
Public Schools working with students and  
teachers at Cattell Elementary School.*





# FINDLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Findley's mission is to accept nothing less than high achievement from every student. We are building big dreamers and high achievers at Findley Elementary.

In 2012, Findley was one of the first eight schools in the nation selected to participate in Turnaround Arts. As a result, the school received intensive arts education resources, expertise and the involvement of high-profile artists over the course of two years to support their reforms. The strong arts focus in all classrooms continues to pay dividends at Findley.



As part of the Turnaround Arts program, Oscar-winning actor Forest Whitaker worked with Findley Elementary School.

3025 Oxford Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50313  
[findley.dmschools.org](http://findley.dmschools.org)



In 2012, Findley was one of the first eight schools in the nation selected to participate in Turnaround Arts.



# HARDING MIDDLE SCHOOL



Warren G. Harding Middle School was built in 1926, three years after the death of our 29th president.

In the 1960s, the civil rights and antiwar movements reverberated in public schools. Harding was at the center of the historic Tinker decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, upholding the free speech rights of students who wore black armbands to school in protest of the Vietnam War.

Today Harding Middle School educates a diverse student body in grade 6-8, and celebrates students involved in a range of urban arts including dance, spoken word poetry, and graffiti. The schools dance group – the Harding Breakerz – has performed at the White House.



Actor and former White House advisor Kal Penn spent time at Harding Middle School, working with students and teachers.

203 East Euclid Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50313  
[harding.dmschools.org](http://harding.dmschools.org)



Harding's dance group – the Harding Breakerz – has performed at the White House.





# MADISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Madison Elementary has grown since it opened in 1952. Today it serves 300 students from diverse backgrounds, and employs over 50 staff members. As the building and its population have grown in size, the commitment to provide the best education possible for our students has only deepened.

As a Turnaround Arts school, Madison classroom teachers work with our art and music teachers to integrate arts-based teaching strategies into all learning. We also offer arts-based extracurricular activities, including Turn-Around the Night, Boogie on the Blacktop, Cultural Night, and our Drama Club performances.

Madison also uses Responsive Classroom training to support our students. RC centers on meeting students' emotional and behavioral needs. We start each day with a Morning Meeting. During this time, students have a chance to talk about their lives with peers, participate in a game that focuses on connecting with teachers and other students, and preview what the daily learning objectives.



**806 Hoffman Ave**  
**Des Moines, IA 50316**  
**[madison.dmschools.org](http://madison.dmschools.org)**



*Madison was excited to welcome musicians Cristina Pato and Shane Shanahan who represent the Grammy-nominated Silk Road Ensemble.*



# OAK PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Oak Park Elementary has been serving students on the Northside of Des Moines for over 125 years. Oak Park is dedicated to creating lifelong learners who are caring, compassionate, and knowledgeable citizens. The school is a collaborative community that strives to reach the high expectations set for every student.

As a Turnaround Arts school, Oak Park teachers work with arts specialists to integrate the visual and performing arts with core classroom content to engage diverse learners and deepen understanding. Additionally, Oak Park engages students, staff, and community through high impact arts events and is especially proud of its tradition in musical theater. The annual school musical is a deeply ingrained component of the culture at Oak Park Elementary and its community.

**928 6th Avenue**  
**Des Moines, IA 50313**  
**[oakpark.dmschools.org](http://oakpark.dmschools.org)**



*Oak Park students rehearse their Turnaround Arts musicals for Project Stage.*



*Tony and Grammy award-winning performer John Lloyd Young spent the day working with students and teachers at Oak Park Elementary.*







**DES MOINES**  
**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



**Iowa’s largest provider of public education, Des Moines Public Schools educates more than 33,000 students with the vision of “Becoming the model for urban education in the United States.”**

The school district employs nearly 5,000 people at over 60 schools throughout the state’s capital city.

Diversity – in terms of the programs offered in schools and the students they serve – has long been a cornerstone of DMPS. Students come to Des Moines from more than a hundred different nations, bringing with them a richness of languages and cultures. Here they find educational opportunities including top-ranked Advanced Placement programs, International Baccalaureate schools, the state’s only public Montessori school, a nationally recognized career education program, and much more.

Des Moines Public Schools also provides students with access to a wide range of performing and visual arts. From orchestras to concert bands to jazz ensembles, student-musicians have many opportunities to perform. Plays and musicals are an important part of the culture at most schools. A range of visual arts is taught, and the annual DMPS Art Exhibit shares the works of hundreds of student-artists with the community. And in recent years, students are finding many ways to learn and participate in more contemporary urban arts, from spoken word poetry to graffiti to dance.

Des Moines Public Schools believes that all students are better prepared when they attend school in a setting that reflects society. Diversity enriches the climate and strengthens the effectiveness of our schools. Different viewpoints and perspectives that spring from economic, racial and ethnic diversity enhance all aspects of a DMPS education.





# HOYT SHERMAN PLACE

**Hoyt Sherman Place is a cultural, historic and educational hub of central Iowa.**



**Built in 1877, the facility is now one of the premier historic cultural centers in the state, working with national and local partners to present outstanding performances, celebrate Iowa’s history, and expand the availability of arts and culture in the region.**

In 1907, the Hoyt Sherman mansion was leased to the Des Moines Women’s Club, which added a wing to house the first art gallery in Des Moines. Dedicated to entertaining and lifelong learning, the DMWC membership rapidly expanded. To accommodate this large group during their meetings and guest lectures, the club built the 1,400 seat theater in 1923 and now fills a niche in the community by hosting some of the top singers, comedians, authors, and radio/TV personalities. While attracting nationally recognized artists has heightened the appreciation of Hoyt Sherman Place in central Iowa, the use of its space for local dance recitals, graduations, and community forums is what has solidified its legacy in the community’s heart, and remains an important part of its mission.

The Hoyt Sherman Place Foundation is expanding its support of the Des Moines community by inviting students and educators to take advantage of its unique space. The foundation strongly believes that arts education is a key component of personal and social betterment, and seeks to ignite critical thinking and inspire lifelong learning for a diverse audience. This historic mansion, art gallery, and theater can help teachers and students gain a greater understanding and interest in music, theater, dance and the visual arts by demonstrating their importance throughout the history of Des Moines and the state of Iowa.





# TURNAROUND ARTS

**Turnaround Arts** is a national program under the auspices of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Arts, several private foundations and corporations, and local program partners.



## TURNAROUND ARTS: DES MOINES

creating success in schools

Together with national and local partners, Turnaround Arts: Des Moines uses arts education as a tool to improve learning conditions in some of the historically most challenged schools in our city. Initiated and sustained with institutional support from Des Moines Public Schools, In addition to the Hoyt Sherman Place Foundation’s Project STAGE, Turnaround Arts: Des Moines also partners with Des Moines Performing Arts. This work requires collaboration and the support of many local organizations.



Turnaround Arts was established in 2011 by the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, a White House advisory body on cultural issues during the Obama administration. The program’s premise is that high-quality and integrated arts education strengthens school reform, boosts academic achievement, and increases student engagement in schools facing some of the toughest educational challenges in the country.

The program currently works in 73 schools across the country, in 37 districts and 17 states and the District of Columbia. TA schools receive an array of arts education services designed to increase their opportunities for success, engage their communities, and raise the visibility of their achievements. Key to these efforts is arts education programming that is rigorous, effective, and integrated holistically into the school, as well as strategically targeted to address broader school challenges. The program works closely with participating schools throughout the year to help plan and implement programming and ensure its quality and impact.

Schools are supported by local program partners, who apply with the Kennedy Center to implement Turnaround Arts in clusters of local schools. The national program office provides these partners with arts education resources and expertise, coaching, program methodologies, baseline evaluations, training, and peer-to-peer learning structures. The national program also provides resources directly to selected schools, including arts supplies, musical instruments, licensing rights and kits for school musicals, and high-profile Turnaround Artists who work with students and teachers. In turn, local program partners select clusters of eligible schools and support them with instructional resources and coaching, teacher professional development, leadership support, and more. The program structure that enables these changes relies on an intensive intervention model based on eight pillars that guide arts-based transformation in each school.





## THE INAUGURAL **PROJECT STAGE FESTIVAL**

**On April 27-28, 2018, students, teachers, and families gathered for the first Project STAGE Festival, a two-day event at Hoyt Sherman Place featuring music, visual arts, and more.**

### **Key parts of the festival included:**

#### **School Musicals**

Each year, schools in the Turnaround Arts network are provided with a musical theater show kit from Music Theatre International. Thanks to this national partnership with MTI, the Turnaround Arts: Des Moines schools presented the following musicals on stage at Hoyt Sherman:

- Harding Middle School: Disney's Beauty and the Beast Jr.
- Cattell Elementary School: Disney's Aladdin KIDS
- Findley Elementary School: Disney's 101 Dalmations KIDS
- Madison Elementary School: Magic Treehouse: Pirates Past Noon KIDS
- Oak Park Elementary School: Disney's The Jungle Book KIDS

#### **Photography Exhibit - #OurDesMoines**

A photography exhibit featuring the work of students from each of our Turnaround Arts schools and peer mentors from the Urban Leadership Academy at Central Campus. The exhibit was presented in the gallery at Hoyt Sherman Place. Works focused on the concept of community as seen through the lens of our youth. Students participated in a series of workshops facilitated by school district photographer Jon Lemons and Director of Communications Phil Roeder. With each workshop, students were given a disposable camera and an assignment to shoot pictures of different aspects of their community: Family & Friends, School, Neighborhood, and Self. Additionally, students have written individual artist statements to accompany their work.