

Testimony Re: S.F. 0915, White Bear Center for the Arts
MN Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee
Lexi Munson, Membership and Development Coordinator

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of you today.

I started at White Bear Center for the Arts when I was 11. I took art classes in their youth summer program and was regularly volunteering by the time I was 14. When I was 16, I started working in that same youth program and became a Communications Intern during my junior year of college. I graduated last May from St. Catherine University with a Bachelor's degree in Marketing and Accounting while minoring in Nonprofit Strategies and Operations, appropriately inspired by my love for the organization that helped me find my path, and leading me to accept a position as WBCA's Membership and Development Coordinator.

Being at WBCA during my high school years set me ahead in terms of self-confidence in the workplace because of the sense of responsibility and trust that WBCA instilled in me. It has always been a safe place to explore and take risks because of the support that I felt and continue to feel. My experience also guided my college search because I saw every aspect of an arts organization, from programs and reception to maintenance and admin. Because of that, I knew what elements I wanted to focus on in my collegiate career.

In addition to professional development in the workplace, WBCA also empowered me as an artist from a young age, inspiring me to begin my ceramics business at 16. To this day, I continue to sell my work while improving upon skills such as customer relations, budgeting, and time management. While those skills have been invaluable, there is also something special about the pride of being an entrepreneur.

I have no doubt that this program has the utmost potential to make an impact, and the thought that students would have the opportunity to experience something similar to what I did in a structured and funded format is exciting. And it's important to remember that my journey would never have happened without art. I wouldn't be at WBCA without falling in love with art classes at 11, and I wouldn't be who I am today without WBCA.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.