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JFW Performing Arts Center
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Bastrop Cultural Arts Commission Mini Grant Answer Submissions

Provide a detailed description of the project or event.

BIPED, or the Bastrop Institute for Production and Entertainment Design, is a newly formed and experimental after school internship program offered to the students of BISD. We have set forward with our vision statement, "To provide our members the learning and experience of Technical Theatre Craft that will promote success in their future endeavors." that encompasses our main desire; that being to educate interested students in not only entertainment but behind the scenes career opportunities. As an organization we kickstarted our program this past August with an interest meeting, which had 30 students in attendance, and from that interest meeting we held interviews to gauge the level of skills in our students; having interviewed our students we as a means of collective growth accepted all interviewees despite their experience level. 2 months later, and with several meetings and events under their belts, we are 30 students strong in our program.

We host bi-weekly meetings where we cover "modules" in a specified area of interest: those being Lights, Sound, Stage Management, House Management, Projections, Scenic Design, Rigging, A/V, and a plethora of other items. Outside of those instructional meeting times students, having been accepted as vendors through the district, are assigned shifts to work most events that come through our facility, which in turn has not only benefited the 2 staff members with load sharing, but through the events where students have worked, their work and dedication has not only been recognized but complemented by renters and community members alike. Our hope is to have this grant fund our students application fees and dues to join USITT, the United States Institute for Theatre Technology, via a student chapter where they can attend national conferences as members and participate in life changing career opportunities; not to mention access to equipment and knowledge that is beyond the scope of our facility. If we receive this grant, the funds will allow us to create Texas' 2nd USITT high school student charter; as it stands currently there are only 7 active high school level student chapters in the nation, and our

students have thus far shown their interest, but the level of engagement has proven to both sponsors of BIPED, Jacob Layton and myself, that these student's deserve to be recognized and not go unnoticed for their passion.

Explain how your program supports and/or promotes arts in the local community.

Our program is the first of its kind for BISD, however there have been attempts at creating tech staff at this facility. Where ours differs is the dedicated time for instruction beyond facility specific needs. Students from all secondary BISD campuses, including both middle schools and CRCA, are eligible for enrollment. Once a student has been cleared for certain areas of instruction they are in turn permitted to sign up for shifts where their newly learned skill is tested under our supervision. Now, where this comes into play with promoting the arts is in the just that, these students are now not only adeptly learned in the running of productions, but design and implementation as well. In this facility we host a plethora of events ranging from Dance competitions, One Act Play contest, Choir and Band Concerts, Theatre Arts events, and the list goes on to complete our nearly 450 events a year hosted at this facility. Our students are trained to run the ins and outs of those events, all the while they develop working relationships with professional staff and outside vendors. Just yesterday, October 12, we hosted an Hispanic Heritage Month event where we had our interns running the events backstage and in the booth. Events in the live entertainment industry cannot run without the support and technical skills of those who work behind the scenes, but as it stands currently the only support going towards our students is the funds being dished out of the facilities expenses. Our hope is to continue to develop our student's skill sets and base knowledge to further increase the quality of productions hosted here at our facility.

What impact does your organization have on individuals in our community as a whole?

Outside the scope of technical learning our students have the opportunity for outside of school social interaction with trained professionals, hands-on exposure to equipment, but most importantly our organization provides creative outlets for students who either don't have access to extracurriculars or would otherwise miss the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging with like minded peers. As it stands currently, of our 30 students a third of them are from CRCA;

students who attend the Colorado River Collegiate Academy don't have access to these kinds of social clubs or extracurricular activities, but here we cater to their specific interest and we provide them with the chance to be a part of an organization that has potential career opportunities in an area of passion in their lives. Our members range not only in demographic, but age; our youngest student just turned 13 this past month and already their understanding and engagement with college level learning has surpassed our expectations. These students have become such self-advocates for their program and motivated owners of their learning, to a point where we have moved way beyond the base introductory level we begin our teaching at and these funds will allow us to take their education and potential to the next level in the near future.