

Senior Capstone Final Reflection

For my Senior Capstone project, I focused on the global issue of the lack of youth access to the arts, specifically theater programs. Personally, the theater has become my safe space, a place to express and feel at home with myself, and I believe all students deserve to have this connection to the arts if they so choose. The fundraiser I settled on to help this cause was a Royal Tea Party that went in tandem with the KM production of *Beauty and the Beast*. The funds from the event went directly to the Pink Umbrella Theater Co., an organization in Milwaukee that promotes and provides accessible theater for all, along with the KM Drama Club.

I was the head coordinator and leader of all aspects of this fundraiser. This being said, I did receive some much-appreciated guidance from my KM Global teachers to be able to set up this event in the best way possible. I worked hard on every piece of the event, from marketing to coordinating my 25 volunteers to creating costumes for the royals to wear. Coordinating this fundraiser was a large leadership role for me to take on and I gained much first-hand experience in how to work with all types of people and stay calm in times of stress. Within my projects I faced many roadblocks, one of which was, a few of my volunteers falling through at the last minute. This led to the hardest part of my project where I had to adjust my plans for each volunteer the day before the event. Although this was a brief setback, I learned the importance of persevering in times of hardship.

Although this project meant a lot to me, I truly wanted it to have a positive and long-lasting impact on my community. This meant I had to make both the people attending the event and the organizations receiving my donations feel represented and important. Since my main audience was children I wanted to make both the space and activities feel as magical as possible. I spent time looking back at my childhood and thought about the times I felt most special. The event I kept coming back to was my trip to Disney in the 4th grade. I remember meeting every princess and prince I could and feeling just awe of the fact that I was talking to the “real live” Jasmine or Kristoff. My little mind was blown. These memories are the reason it was so important to me to have “real” princesses and princes at my event, and I was not disappointed with the result. As seen on my Portfolio, the children loved interacting with the royals and some even became emotional. I had multiple parents come up to me and thank me for putting on “such a magical and joyous event” for their children and ask if this would become a yearly occurrence. In addition to this, the Pink Umbrella Theater Co. students were specially invited to the event and proper accommodations were made for these students. One example of this was putting on the event in a wheelchair-accessible area, other accommodations were made based on the students who registered for the event.

Along with the children of the KM area, many students from KM Highschool were involved with the project as volunteers or attendees. Due to COVID-19, volunteer opportunities for students have been hard to find, so I was extremely excited to be able to provide my fellow students with the opportunity to serve their community. Having peers I could rely on was also a big help for me. My peers impacted my thought process and constantly provided me with ideas and feedback. I was surprised by how what they had to say influenced me, they made me feel heard and like a leader in a way I never had before. They changed my view of what a positive and quality leader should act like.

The monetary result of this event was approximately \$600 split between the two organizations. This donation, of course, does not solve the issue of lack of youth access to the arts but it does provide some small assistance to my local community to get deserving students access to the theater community. There is still much work to be done on raising awareness of this issue along with getting the funds to support the overall theater world. I will continue to be an advocate for youth access to theater and do what I can to help as I continue in life. I hope that someone after me will take on this event for both the sake of theater advocacy and to bring joy to the royal-loving children in the KM community.

I am grateful for the opportunity to put on this fundraiser and the personal insights it provided me. I gained an understanding of the value of my surrounding community and how even a 17-year-old can make an impact on something important to them if they are willing to put in the time. I am continuing to learn how the arts can change lives, spark passions, and give inspiration to those who seek it. The 600 dollars raised, through ticket sales and donations, along with the 65 attendees of the Royal Tea Party, are proof of this impact.



Picture of me with final check for Pink Umbrella Theater Co.