

## 100 Women Who Care Salt Spring Island

*100+ Women Who Care Salt Spring Island is a group of women who care about our community and want to make an immediate and direct impact. Three times a year, we meet for one hour to learn about the great work being done by three local registered charities based on the island. By secret ballot, we vote for one of the three member-nominated charities, and the one with the most votes gets a \$100 donation from each member. It's that Simple!*

<https://www.100womensaltspring.org/>

*\*This pitch was not voted to win; however, a member approached me at the end of our meeting and asked me for information to donate. She followed up with a \$5,000 cash donation to Stagecoach operational funds.*

## Pitch for the May 7, 2026 Meeting

### Stagecoach Theatre School: Growing the Next Generation of Creators

Good evening, everyone. Thank you to the organizers of 100 Women Who Care for creating and sustaining this space where collective generosity sparks real change. And thank you to all the members—and to every organization represented tonight—for the incredible, heart-driven work you do to strengthen and uplift our community.

I'm Christie Roome, one of the OnStage Teachers and a Producer at Stagecoach Theatre School, and I would like to talk to you about growing the next generation of creators. Thank you for letting me share why now—more than ever—is the time to invest in youth and the arts.

Last year, two sisters joined our program. Both are neurodiverse, and their mother told us she never imagined her daughters would have the confidence or focus to perform in a musical. But they did. They learned their lines, mastered choreography, and stood in the lights together—beaming with pride. She said, "I didn't think this would ever be possible for them." That's what Stagecoach does. We create spaces where every child—no matter their learning style, experience level, or circumstance—can belong, take creative risks, and discover their voice.

This spring, we celebrated that mission in full. Our year-end performance weekend at the end of April brought together every corner of our school: our Theatre Seekers—preschoolers taking their very first brave steps onto a stage—alongside our Intermediate students aged 7 to 10, our OnStage performers aged 10 to 14, our Improv kids who had the audience in stitches, and a joyful dance recital.

And, our three year-end performances? They sold out before we even stepped foot in this theatre. It was a night that reminded every parent, grandparent, sibling, friend and community member who attended why this work matters.

Our mainstage production this year was *Shrek Jr, The Musical* —a story tailor-made for this community. It's about belonging, about showing up exactly as you are, and about finding your people in the most unexpected places. Our kids didn't just perform that message. They lived it. And the community has noticed. Coming out of COVID, our OnStage registration barely filled a single class. Today, Stagecoach serves 120 kids on Salt Spring—and this summer we have more than ten camps and workshops on the calendar. That growth is something to celebrate. It means our teachers are retained, our rent is paid, our insurance is covered, and our Artistic Director—who gives far more

hours than she is paid for—can keep doing the visionary work that makes all of this possible. Our part-time administrator keeps everything running behind the scenes.

But here is the honest truth about rapid growth: the revenue that sustains our day-to-day operations does not reach the infrastructure that makes our productions possible. Every set, every costume, every prop for *Shrek* had to be resourced creatively and scrappily. And our film camps—where kids learn storytelling through a camera lens—run on teachers' personal laptops and personal recording equipment, because we simply don't have the technology to support them properly.

That is what your investment tonight addresses. Not salaries. Not rent. The tangible, physical tools that turn a program into an experience: production materials for our shows, and proper technical equipment—computers and video gear—so our teachers are not subsidizing our camps out of their own pockets.

Theatre is more than performance. It's how young people learn empathy, presence, and resilience. In an age of constant screens, our classes are a natural digital detox—a place where kids put down their devices, look each other in the eye, and work together to tell stories that help them make sense of the world. Theatre transforms isolation into belonging, and anxiety into expression.

For 25 years, Stagecoach Theatre School has helped more than 500 young people find their voice. We have gone from a handful of students to a thriving school of 120—and we are just getting started. With your support tonight, we can make sure the growth we are so proud of is matched by the infrastructure it deserves.

Thank you.