

THE COMMUNITY MAGAZINE FOR KINDER HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS, PUBLISHED BY HSPVA FRIENDS

# epiphany

2024-2025



Curriculum Updates:  
Film and TV, Vocal Jazz,  
and Chamber Music

Investing in Summer  
Program Scholarships

Tony Award nominee K. Todd  
Freeman '83 honored as 2025  
Distinguished Alumnus

# HSPVA FRIENDS

Supporting Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts

## EPIPHANY 2024-2025

HSPVA Friends is the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that cultivates support for HISD's Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in order to enhance educational, professional, and artistic opportunities for current and future students of Kinder HSPVA.

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### HSPVA FRIENDS

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### KINDER HSPVA

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### ON THE COVER

Vocal Music Chair Marcus Jauregui watches from the wings as student conductor Stephen Hill '25 leads the Chorale in Moses Hogan's "Hear My Prayer." Photo by Lyle Ross.

## YOU PROVIDE THE ESSENTIALS AT KINDER HSPVA.

As a public school and national leader in arts education, Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts relies on private funding to deliver the arts curriculum every single day. **Your gifts to HSPVA Friends fill the gap between the HISD budget and the needs of Kinder HSPVA's pre-professional programs.**

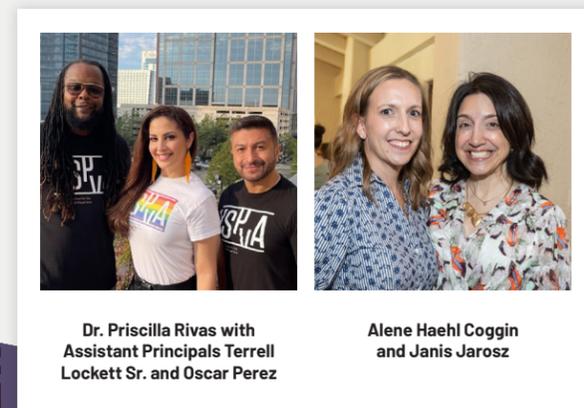
Each year, you provide more than 150 adjunct teachers, artists-in-residence, and master class instructors who teach core curriculum in Creative Writing, Dance, Instrumental Music, Theatre, Visual Arts, and Vocal Music. You fund the furniture, equipment, and technology that keep the theatres, galleries, and studios functional. You ensure that every art area is stocked with a full year's worth of daily supplies: sheet music, paint, lumber, welding materials, ceramics clay, safety gear, thread, fabric—everything HSPVA students need to bring their creative work to life.

In the pages that follow, you'll see just a few of the ways your gifts shaped the student experience in the 2024-2025 school year. **Every performance, master class, gallery show, and student success story in this magazine is made possible by donors like you.**

Thank you for your continued support of Kinder HSPVA.

With gratitude,

**Alene Haehl Coggin**, Executive Director, HSPVA Friends  
**Janis Jarosz**, Board Chair, HSPVA Friends  
**Dr. Priscilla Rivas**, Principal, Kinder HSPVA



Dr. Priscilla Rivas with Assistant Principals Terrell Lockett Sr. and Oscar Perez

Alene Haehl Coggin and Janis Jarosz

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Kinder HSPVA has one of the strongest academic track records in Houston.**

Students' academic performance and college readiness scores consistently place HSPVA as one of the highest-ranked schools in the city, state, and nation.

**Students are accepted to Kinder HSPVA based solely on their talent, not their grades.**

They earn their spots through a competitive audition process identifying artistic merit and potential. The school does not consider academic history or disciplinary records.

**No student is exited from Kinder HSPVA for poor academic performance.**

If they're committed to their art area, HSPVA is committed to them. The school provides the academic interventions students need to stay on track in their classes.

**Kinder HSPVA is a public school, but its arts curriculum is privately funded.**

It is easy to assume taxpayer dollars cover the arts programs at HSPVA. In reality, public funds only cover the full-time faculty in the art areas. HSPVA Friends covers the rest!

**Kinder HSPVA is more diverse than ever—racially and economically.**

About one in three students comes from a low socioeconomic background, and the school now serves its most racially diverse student body in its 54-year history.



**The 184 members of the Class of 2025 received more than \$32 million in college scholarship offers.**

## HSPVA FRIENDS PROGRAM PRIORITIES



### TEACHERS

Adjunct Faculty  
Artists-in-Residence  
Master Classes



### SERVICES

Accompanists  
Box Office Management  
Instrument Tuning & Repairs



### MATERIALS

Daily Classroom Supplies  
Instruments, Technology, Equipment  
Scripts and Sheet Music  
Sets and Costumes



### CAPITAL NEEDS

Studios  
Theatres  
Galleries  
Common Spaces



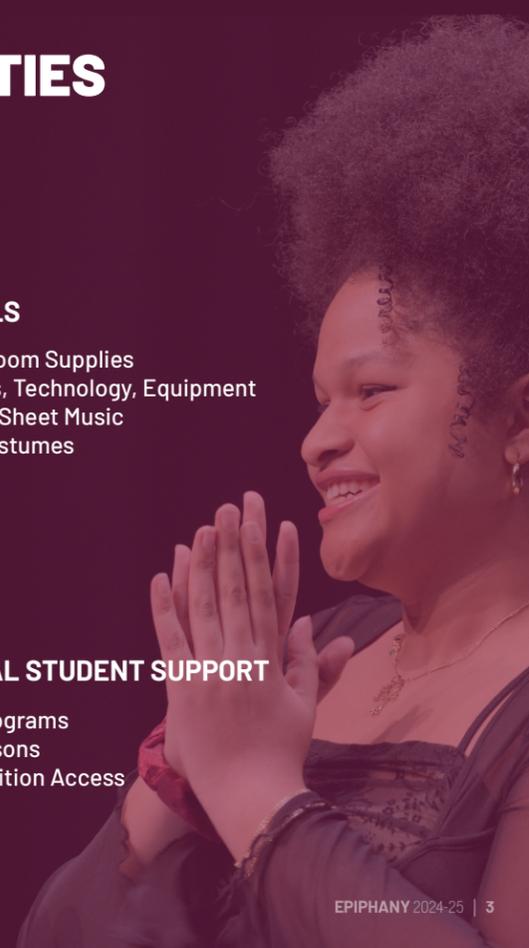
### CONNECTIONS

Field Trips  
Professional Development  
Partnerships with Arts Organizations  
Middle School Outreach



### INDIVIDUAL STUDENT SUPPORT

Summer Programs  
Private Lessons  
College Audition Access



# LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!



## STORYTELLING ON SCREEN

Kinder HSPVA students are writing screenplays, producing short films, and learning to act on camera. Thanks to new curriculum in Creative Writing and Theatre, students are developing professional-level skills for future careers in the entertainment industry.

All Creative Writing students take Introduction to Screenwriting as a foundational course. “We live in a visual world,” says **Creative Writing Chair Judith Switek**. “Students need a solid understanding of techniques to tell stories visually.” This year, the department introduced two electives: Filmmaking and TV Writers’ Room. In Filmmaking, students wrote, directed, and edited original short films with adjunct teacher **Richard Ford**. In TV Writers’ Room, taught by alumna **Adrienne Carter (Theatre ‘92)**, students collaborated like a professional network writing team to develop characters and

arcs for a full season of episodes under structured deadlines. Ms. Carter drew on her experience writing for shows like *Eve*, *Las Vegas*, and *Everybody Hates Chris*.

“Students need a solid understanding of techniques to tell stories visually.”

The Theatre Department also expanded its film offerings. With courses like Acting for Film, Voiceover Acting, and Film Studies, students prepare for real-world auditions. “The first round of nearly every audition—college, Broadway, film—is on camera,” says **Theatre Chair Rozie Curtis**. “We want students to feel confident in that medium.” Students also worked with local filmmaker **Molly Vernon** to create original short films.

Next year, all upper-level Theatre students will form production companies, taking on every role required to create original films and produce a film festival. They will also continue training in voiceover, a growing field with practical applications in animation, industrial media, and audio publishing.

In both Creative Writing and Theatre, the demand for filmmaking opportunities continues to grow, especially as more students arrive at HSPVA already fluent in media technology. With the help of HSPVA Friends, the departments continue to bring in experienced adjunct faculty and build an inventory of cameras, lights, sound gear, and editing software for students to create longer and more technically advanced films.



Guest artists **Stephanie Blue ‘81** and **Chris Walker ‘86** lead class



Guest artists **Stephanie Blue ‘81** (left) and **Alexandria DeWalt ‘17** (right)

## VOCAL MUSIC JUST GOT JAZZIER

In the 2024–2025 school year, the Vocal Music Department launched its inaugural Vocal Jazz Studio—a step into the expressive, improvisational world of jazz singing. The initiative reflects HSPVA’s commitment to preparing students for the full range of musical opportunities they will encounter in college and beyond.

The studio opened with a three-day residency with **Alexandria DeWalt (Instrumental ‘17)**, who holds a Master of Music in Jazz Voice and now serves as an Assistant Professor at Berklee College of Music. Professor DeWalt introduced students to jazz history, improvisation, and scat singing, challenging them to embrace the unpredictable and let go of the idea that every note must be perfect.

“For classically trained students, improvisation is a big leap,” says **Vocal Music Chair Marcus Jauregui**. “Professor DeWalt helped them embrace that challenge—and not be afraid to take creative risks.”

The studio continued with more guest artists who brought real-world insight and performance experience. **Chris Walker (Instrumental ‘86)** led a master class focused on collaboration with a live jazz rhythm section. **Stephanie Blue (Instrumental ‘81)** assembled a combo of student instrumentalists. With Ms. Blue herself on piano, the singers and combo learned the subtle dynamics of ensemble performance. Students began to understand jazz not just as a genre, but as a conversation between voice, band,

and audience. That conversational quality was echoed in a workshop led by renowned jazz singer **Tommy Ward**, who emphasized the importance of storytelling in vocal performance.

“Singers today have to do it all. We’re helping them build real careers.”

One of the year’s highlights was a culminating performance by Vocal Jazz Studio members **Lil Williams ‘25** and **Victoria Martinez ‘25**, who sang alongside acclaimed jazz pianist and composer **Jason Moran (Instrumental ‘93)** in his concert *Duke Ellington: My Heart Sings* presented by DACAMERA.

The jazz studio is part of a larger effort to modernize and expand the Vocal Music curriculum to reflect the realities of today’s music industry. While classical technique remains foundational, the department now offers more specialized pathways in musical theatre and jazz, with future plans to add a singer-songwriter track. Faculty are actively developing new coursework, inviting guest artists, and partnering with professional arts organizations to ensure that training reflects the multidisciplinary demands of today’s music landscape.

“This is how we stay relevant,” says Mr. Jauregui. “Singers today have to do it all. We’re helping them build real careers.”



Guest artist **Tommy Ward** with the Vocal Jazz Studio





Kinder HSPVA and Pershing's Tenor-Bass Choirs perform together

## CREATING PATHWAYS TO PVA

Because the school is unique, Kinder HSPVA leaders work intentionally each year to familiarize young HISD students from every neighborhood with everything the school has to offer. Led by **Kinder HSPVA Director of Admissions and Community Relations Jonathan Klein**, the school is breaking down perceived barriers to access by creating earlier connections with elementary and middle school students. With financial support from HSPVA Friends, the school engages K-8 students through special performance opportunities, Middle School Workshops, and as active audience members.

"When we invest in recruitment and outreach, we find untapped potential. We find curious, passionate, and self-motivated students who have the talent and work ethic to be artists at HSPVA," says Mr. Klein. "The great news is that we are already seeing the results of these efforts in our demographics as students enroll from a wider range of schools." The student body represents more than 30 HISD middle schools.

This year, many elementary and middle school students had the opportunity to perform on the Denney Stage. For example, **Pershing Middle School's Tenor-Bass Choir** joined the Vocal Music Department for its Winter Concert, **Meyerland and Ortiz Middle Schools' Mariachi Ensembles** opened the Mariachi Concerts, and **Clemente Martinez Elementary** 5<sup>th</sup> graders danced alongside Kinder HSPVA students in the Spring Dance Concert through a partnership with Hope Stone, Inc.

There are also opportunities for middle school students to experience a "day in the life" at Kinder HSPVA through HSPVA Friends' annual Middle School Workshops. Each fall, current HSPVA students teach the ten popular Saturday workshops and give middle schoolers hands-on experiences in every art area. HSPVA Friends waives the cost of the workshops for HISD students who need financial assistance. Mr. Klein works with middle school teachers to identify interested students who need workshop scholarships and, in some cases, will arrange school buses for whole groups to attend together.

Perhaps the most popular and simplest way for children to connect with Kinder HSPVA is as audience members. The All-School Musical student matinees are a popular field trip destination, and Mr. Klein and HSPVA Friends can coordinate buses for K-8 schools that lack transportation funds. This February, more than 1,400 HISD students attended matinees of *Sister Act*. HSPVA students also visit schools to perform and connect with younger students on their own campuses. This year, Chamber Music students performed at **Bruce Elementary**, Mariachi, Latin Jazz, Strings, and Vocal Music students presented Hispanic Heritage shows at **Marshall, Meyerland, and Ortiz Middle Schools**, and French students brought an original French holiday musical and art project to **Kolter Elementary**.



Clemente Martinez 5<sup>th</sup> graders rehearse with Kinder HSPVA dancers

Photo by Tati Vicedomine



Kinder HSPVA's Mariachi Los Pasajeros performs at Ortiz Middle School



Meyerland's Mariachi prepares to perform at Kinder HSPVA

### Have a middle schooler in your life?

Learn more about the Fall 2025 Middle School Workshops at [hspvafriends.org/workshops](https://hspvafriends.org/workshops)



## SUMMERS THAT PAY OFF

Each year, donations to HSPVA Friends fund scholarships for pre-college summer programs and private lessons. These opportunities have a major impact on Kinder HSPVA students' artistic development and often lead directly to college admission and scholarship offers. Summer programs allow students to learn from top professionals in their fields. They expand their skill set and return to HSPVA with a broader artistic perspective. Students also have the chance to connect with working artists and college faculty—relationships that often open doors to admission and financial aid.

**Luke Wallace (Instrumental '25, pictured above)** received one of the 2024 Nicole Hurst Summer Scholarships, created in memory of alumna **Nicole Hurst (Vocal '00)**, a celebrated singer who collaborated with artists including Justin Timberlake, Kelly Clarkson, Bruno Mars, and **Robert Glasper (Instrumental '97)**. Luke used his scholarship to attend the

Roc Nation Summer Academy at Long Island University, where he studied music for his senior year, he applied to LIU and earned the Roc Nation Hope Scholarship, which will cover the majority of his tuition. He will attend LIU this fall to major in Music Technology, Entrepreneurship, and Production.

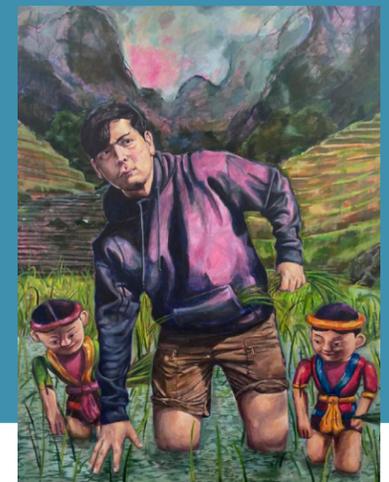
In 2025, HSPVA Friends awarded summer program scholarships to 26 students. Recipients studied at schools and professional arts organizations across the country, including Alley Theatre, American Ballet Theatre, Berklee College of Music, Interlochen, Juilliard, New York University, Rhode Island School of Design, and the University of Southern California.



### DONOR SPOTLIGHT KARINA FAREK (VISUAL ARTS '11)

Karina is a celebrated illustrator, animator, and co-host of the popular Drawfee YouTube channel. She created the Onion Summer Program Scholarship at HSPVA Friends to help talented Visual Arts students attend prestigious pre-college workshops they may not otherwise be able to afford. Her generosity gives students access to the kinds of transformative arts experiences that shaped her own career.

**Nate Barcot (Visual Arts '26)** is the recipient of the 2025 Onion Summer Program Scholarship. This summer, Nate attended pre-college workshops at Kansas City Art Institute and Minneapolis College of Art and Design. Check out Nate's self-portrait, *Water Puppets*, below.





## SMALL ENSEMBLES, BIG IMPACT

A few years ago, chamber music instruction at Kinder HSPVA was limited to a small number of students. With only five full-time Instrumental Music faculty—one for each ensemble: Band, Jazz, Mariachi, Orchestra, and Piano—this specialized training was a sought-after, audition-based elective. The faculty knew more students needed access. Thanks to their efforts and support from HSPVA Friends, **Kinder HSPVA now boasts the largest high school chamber music program in the country.**

Chamber music is essential for students pursuing music professionally. Most classical musicians earn their living playing in small ensembles—not in symphony orchestras—and the skills required are uniquely demanding. Each musician plays an individual part without a conductor, sharing leadership responsibilities. Success depends on active listening, intensive individual preparation, and a deep understanding of how every part fits together. Chamber music also sharpens how students rehearse and perform in larger groups. And in the competitive college audition landscape, this training gives students a significant advantage.

In 2023, Kinder HSPVA partnered with AFA, Houston's premier music education non-profit, to launch an expanded chamber music program. AFA's professional teaching artists now coach ensembles throughout the day, providing conservatory-level instruction built directly into students' core music curriculum.

The impact has been dramatic: more than 90 Instrumental Music students participated in chamber ensembles this year, compared to just 25 before the AFA collaboration began. Each semester culminates in a Chamber Music Festival, a week of evening concerts featuring different ensembles each night. You might hear a harp duo, a saxophone quartet, or a mixed group of piano, strings, and winds.

Thanks to donors to HSPVA Friends and AFA, the Instrumental Music Department's chamber music program has set the national standard and prepares students for intensive study after HSPVA.

## NEW DANCE DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP



After 27 years on the faculty and a decade as Dance Department Chair, **Janie Carothers '84** retired at the end of the 2024-2025 school year. Mrs. Carothers helped shape the department's pre-professional curriculum into one of the strongest high school dance programs in the country.

**Courtney D. Jones '99** is taking the reins as Department Chair. Ms. Jones is a Presidential Scholar in the Arts for Choreography, and she has choreographed for Houston Grand Opera, Theatre Under the Stars, Hope Stone Dance Company, and Stages. She has performed at the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and in the First Broadway National Tour of *Wicked*. **JoDee Engle '96** joins the full-time faculty after more than 20 years as an adjunct teacher and guest choreographer. Mrs. Engle brings extensive experience as a choreographer and dancer from modern dance and opera companies across the country.

A big thank you to Mrs. Carothers for all her years of service to Kinder HSPVA!



COURTNEY D. JONES '99



JODEE ENGLE '96



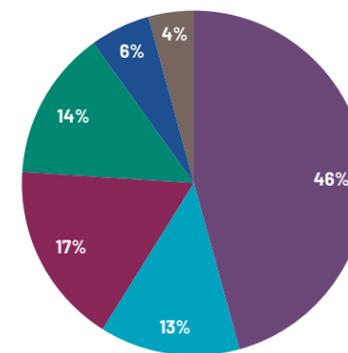
GAVIN WARFIELD '25, MS. JONES, JERMYA SANDERS '25, AND MRS. CAROTHERS '84

Gavin and Jermya were dance captains for the All-School Musical 9 to 5, directed by Mrs. Carothers and choreographed by Ms. Jones.

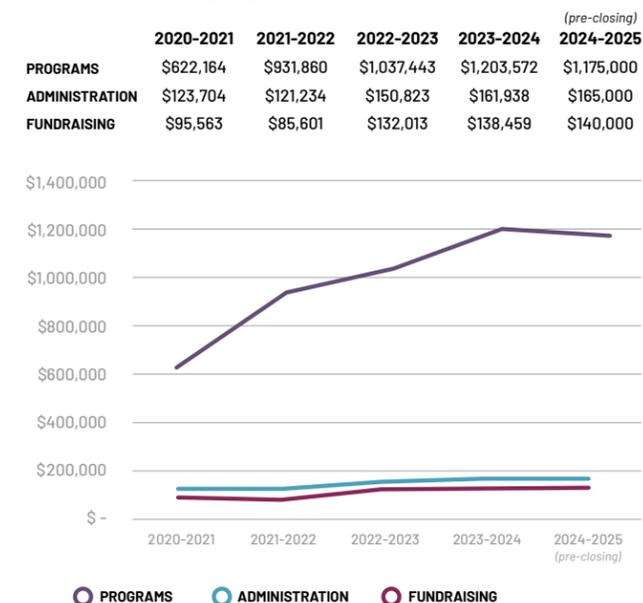
## 2024-2025 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

### 2024-2025 PROGRAM EXPENSES

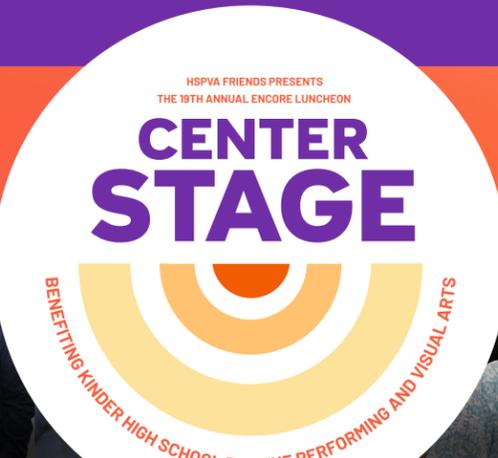
- **TEACHERS**
  - Adjunct Faculty
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  - Master Classes
- **SERVICES**
  - Accompanists
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- **MATERIALS**
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  - Professional Development
  - Partnerships with Arts Organizations
  - Middle School Outreach
- **INDIVIDUAL STUDENT SUPPORT**
  - Summer Programs
  - Private Lessons
  - College Audition Access



### FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES OVER FIVE YEARS



HSPVA Friends is audited annually by an independent accounting firm. Tax returns and audited financials are available at [hspvafriends.org](https://hspvafriends.org).



Josh Pazda '03, Jeffrey Brown



Jennifer Miller-Stone, Austin Hunt, Carole Nelson '74, Patricia Bonner, Dr. Priscilla Rivas, Sally & Philip Edmundson, Alene Haehl Coggin

## 19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ENCORE LUNCHEON

HSPVA Friends hosted the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Encore Luncheon, Center Stage, on April 3, 2025. Luncheon Chairs **Sally and Philip Edmundson** welcomed 250 guests on to the Denney Theatre stage to celebrate 2025 Distinguished Alumnus and two-time Tony Award-nominated theatre, film, and TV actor **K. Todd Freeman '83**. The 2025 Encore Luncheon raised a record-breaking \$333,000 for Kinder HSPVA programs.

Guests enjoyed student performances by Kinder HSPVA's Mariachi Nuevo Jalisco, the cast of the Theatre Department's production of *Urinetown*, and the Vocal Music Department's 2025 winners from the prestigious YoungArts program, which recognizes the best high school artists in the nation.

The luncheon featured a panel discussion about Kinder HSPVA's role as an arts

education leader in Houston and nationwide, moderated by **Matthew Loden (Instrumental '86)**, Lynette S. Autrey Dean of Music at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. Dean Loden was joined by **Dr. Priscilla Rivas** (Kinder HSPVA Principal), **Jonathan Klein** (Kinder HSPVA Director of Admissions and Community Relations), and **Devondria Douglas** (HISD Director of Fine Arts).

K. Todd Freeman has appeared on Broadway in *The Minutes*, *Airline Highway* (Tony Award nominee for Best Performance by an Actor in a Featured Role in a Play and Drama Desk Award winner for Outstanding Featured Actor in a Play), *Wicked*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and *The Song of Jacob Zulu* (Tony Award nominee for Best Actor in a Play). In addition to his stage work, Freeman has extensive experience on camera, including Netflix's *A Series of*

*Unfortunate Events*, Amazon's *The Horrors of Dolores Roach*, *The Rehearsal*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *The Dark Knight*, and *Cider House Rules*.



K. Todd Freeman



1. Kimberly Hickson Spaw, Susan Elmore '78, Clare Jackson, Patra Brannon-Isaac
2. Jennifer & David Jordan
3. Fan Morris, Vallette Windham, Peter Morris
4. Kathryn Ketelsen, Lucy Chambers
5. Susie & Josh Vanlandingham
6. Misty Matin, Meg Estopinal, Chris Goins, Hiram Butler
7. Judy Tate, Cece Fowler, Susie Criner
8. Irma Alarcon & J. Alejandro Rauh-Hain



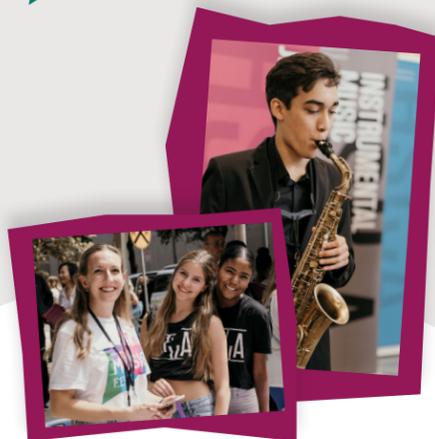
## MUSICFEST

On September 15, 2024, MusicFest brought more than 1,800 guests to Kinder HSPVA, where 350 Instrumental and Vocal Music students performed over 30 concerts, recitals, and jam sessions across six stages. HSPVA families, alumni, prospective students, and downtown neighbors enjoyed six hours of live music in a festive atmosphere complete with food trucks and snow cones.



### Save the Date!

MusicFest returns Sunday, September 14. Get your tickets at [hspvafriends.org/musicfest](https://hspvafriends.org/musicfest).



## THE PVA SHOW

The PVA Show is HSPVA Friends' annual gallery show and auction party. On January 24, 2025, a sold-out crowd of 300 HSPVA supporters gathered at the historic Julia Ideson Library and raised more than \$80,000 for the arts curriculum. HSPVA families, alumni, and art patrons enjoyed drinks and hors d'oeuvres, cabaret performances, and a curated auction of more than 100 pieces of student art alongside packages that included jewelry, theatre tickets, vacation homes, and exclusive experiences.



### Save the Date!

The PVA Show is Friday, January 30, at the Majestic Metro in Downtown Houston. Don't miss your one chance each year to bid on HSPVA student art, plus cocktails, a DJ, and a dance floor!

Learn more at [hspvafriends.org/pvashow](https://hspvafriends.org/pvashow).



1. Maria-Martha Powell, Simone Maher
2. Alex Villegas, Pilar Villegas (Vocal Music '27)
3. Mark & Hien Reynoso, Barbara Ramirez
4. Linda Barcot, Ellie Herrera, Katherine Vukadin
5. Martin Mathus, Sheryl Vandeven



**Thank you to our generous 2024-2025 donors!**  
**You make Kinder HSPVA the best public arts high school in the nation.**

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## \$10,000+

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