

I D A H O F A L L S  
SYMPHONY

2026 Annual Report  
of the Idaho Fall Symphony Society



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SYMPHONY

**President's Message - Alice Pike**

This has been an exciting, emotion-filled year for the Idaho Falls Symphony. We laughed, cried and celebrated the last season with Thomas Heuser, our Music Director for the past fifteen years. We enjoyed the completion of the new Frontier Center lobby. We continued to look to the future in our strategic planning, and we worked to collaborate with other arts

organizations in our area. We hired new directors for our three youth symphonies, and continued our outreach and engagement with area schools.

We honored Thomas as our first ever Conductor Laurate and established the Thomas Heuser Endowment Fund in his name. We celebrated Thomas at a variety of functions and at each performance during the season. We were enriched and awed by the wonderful music Thomas and the musicians shared with us at each concert. We are so grateful for everything he has done for the Symphony and our community during his tenure. We mourn his departure and wish him the very best in the future!

At the same time, we look forward to the Symphony's future. The Search Committee, chaired by Jake Durchi, has reviewed applications, interviewed applicants and selected six finalists who will compete for the position of our next Music Director over the next season. It has been an enormous commitment of time and energy by the committee, and they have done a fantastic job. Next season will be so exciting for all of us as we have an opportunity to meet the finalists and see them direct our symphony orchestra. You will not want to miss a single concert, so get your season tickets now!

I am so grateful for the wonderful people I have the opportunity to work with at the Idaho Falls Symphony. I could not do my job without the support of all of you!

Our Executive Director, Carrie Athay, has worked tirelessly to fill the void left by reduced federal and state funding and economic hardship in the arts communities statewide. She has recruited new sponsors, encouraged private donations, and challenged everyone who loves the Symphony to support it. She has also coordinated, supported and participated in all of the various Symphony activities, which are legion!

Our musicians, staff, volunteers, committees and Board have worked very hard, and given countless hours in support of our mission: To provide quality, live orchestral experiences of the world's great music for the enjoyment, enrichment and education of our audiences and

musicians. Our sponsors and the community have supported us every step of the way. I appreciate each and every one of you. Thank you all for your commitment to the Idaho Falls

Symphony!

## Maestro's Message

**Dear Idaho Falls Symphony Society:** Our Musicians, Staff, Board of Directors, Volunteers, Sponsors, Audiences, Teachers, Students, Families and Friends:

On the occasion of my 15<sup>th</sup> and final Annual Meeting, please allow me to express my enormous gratitude to our entire organization. You all have given so much to the Idaho Falls Symphony: the countless hours spent practicing music, raising money, marketing concerts, teaching students, visiting schools, and attending these once-in-a-lifetime events. Our concerts are family gatherings, with generations of audiences cheering together; and onstage, we represent a regional force, with wonderful musicians combining in a professional setting of the highest caliber. We can all be proud of the Idaho Falls Symphony and the mission we represent—thank you for everything you do!

*How can it be that we've had 15 years together with more than 100 concerts?! Such an honor for me, and such a remarkable run. There are musicians in the orchestra who played every single event with me, and there are those who joined only recently or who have moved on to next chapters. Collectively, the professional quality of our musical output has risen from concert to concert. The overall musical expectations for preparation and delivery in this orchestra are very high, and I am so proud of that. Never have I felt abandoned in pursuit of ever-greater concerts! Our musicians have met the moment every single time, and our audiences continue to recognize and appreciate what we do.*

The community of Idaho Falls embraced me and my family in profoundly meaningful ways. Lauren and I of course have made more friends than we can count, but there were also visits from my parents, relatives, and siblings that were always joyful celebrations. We so happily embraced the region's outdoor adventures, from Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons to the Snake River and Craters of the Moon National Park. When Theo was born in 2014, spending time away from home became a bigger challenge, but we managed to make it work! Those of you who opened your homes and provided us with such warm hospitality, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

We have so many generous individuals whom we could thank at any given moment! For example, please allow me to shine a light on Arthur Kull, Director Emeritus of the Symphony Society. Arthur has served on the Board throughout my 15-year tenure—twice as President. When we first met, there was such an easy camaraderie, I have fond memories of wonderful evenings eating *fondue* with Annelies, Lauren, and their friends, Art and Antoinette Denison. Arthur had always been a sponsor of our concerts, and then he sponsored again, then raised his sponsorship level, then contributed to our capital and endowment campaigns, and he continues to give and give. Our Symphony Society cares so deeply about this orchestra, there is a tireless commitment to Idaho Falls and nourishing the community with a rich quality of life. Thank you for supporting our artistic and educational efforts!

When I first started in 2011, Tally Adler and Penni Englert were both new, too. We all started together, crammed into the tiny office that is now just a closet in the Colonial Theater. Jay

Reynolds managed our musicians and music library, and played a mean trombone. Yours truly still had to finish my doctorate in Cincinnati, so my time was split between San Francisco, Idaho, and Ohio. My first season was ambitious, with Tchaikovsky's Fourth, the Mozart Requiem and Scheherazade, with the orchestra still rehearsing over the span of three weeks. Our friend Dave Burger passed away after conducting the Youth Symphony one night, and I was made aware of our fragile balance.

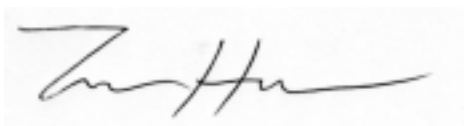
I could sit here all day and recount experiences: Pictures at an Exhibition, Rhapsody in Blue, the Organ Symphony, *And God Created Great Whales*. Meeting Broadway soloists at the Regional Airport, flying in late at night, providing directions for a van full of Mariachi or Cirque acrobats, and shopping for groceries in advance of long stays at the Candlewood Suites. New conductors and new musicians entering our Symphony, pushing the envelope further forward, all while working with our staff to cultivate new supporters and grow the organization. We were dreaming of the 65<sup>th</sup> season, then the 70<sup>th</sup>, then the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Spending long, hot afternoons on the back deck of one Anne Voillequé, smoking cigars with Dick Raaz and Mario at fundraisers. Those precious afternoons fishing the Snake River with Tim Hopkins and Buck Leonard will loop forever in my memory.

*Just look at how far we've come!* Being your Music Director has been the honor of my life and the cornerstone of my career. But it has also been my normal, my lifestyle, and believe me when I say, I will miss you all! I will miss the Idaho Falls Symphony! To "keep moving" in this conducting career is vital, but it comes with such heavy costs. Stepping away was a personal decision, but it was made possible by the maturity of the organization, knowing that we have added strength to the foundation of what can only be described as an incredibly bright future. For the next generation of students, audiences, and musicians in Idaho Falls, we remain a beacon of hope, the arbiter of artistic quality and professionalism that will continue to make a difference.

So here again are my two wishes as your proud Conductor Laureate! The first is for our musicians: *keep doing what you do!* Without our musicians, there is no Idaho Falls Symphony, so keep up the late nights, all that driving, practicing, and advocating for the IFS, and the great music will continue! My second wish is for our community, which includes our Staff, Board, audiences, supporters, et. al.: *keep doing what you do, too!* There is a scaffolding that we musicians enjoy: the organization itself, which makes the music possible. Please know that, on behalf of every musician who has ever been involved in the Idaho Falls Symphony, we feel the impact of your love and support. Keep attending our shows, advocating for the IFS, raising invaluable funds, and supporting this treasured institution.

We can and will remain friends, even with the distance of passing time. Meanwhile, I carry in my heart a fondness for the Idaho Falls Symphony and will remain your biggest champion! Best wishes for the next chapter—I hope your next Music Director knows how lucky they are!

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Heuser', written in a cursive style.

Thomas Heuser

## State of the Symphony: Annual Report 2026

By Carrie Athay

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude, pride, and excitement for the future of the Idaho Falls Symphony. Our 2025–2026 season, *A Season of Wonder*, invited audiences to experience the power of music to inspire curiosity, spark imagination, and create meaningful connections. Throughout the year, we witnessed extraordinary artistic achievement, expanded educational impact, strengthened community partnerships, and meaningful organizational growth.

This year's accomplishments reflect significant progress toward the goals outlined in our strategic plan: attracting and retaining diverse audiences, expanding educational opportunities, cultivating community partnerships, strengthening financial sustainability, and investing in organizational capacity. Thanks to the dedication of our musicians, staff, board members, volunteers, donors, sponsors, and community partners, the Idaho Falls Symphony continues to thrive.

Our season featured remarkable artistic experiences, from *Carnival! A Symphony in the Park* and *Sounds of the American West* to Beethoven's Violin Concerto with acclaimed soloist Simone Porter, *Home Alone in Concert*, our Red Dress Valentine's Concert, *Unmasking Mozart*, and our inspiring Side-by-Side performance with the Idaho Falls Symphony Youth Orchestras. Each performance reflected our commitment to artistic excellence while offering audiences opportunities to experience music in new and engaging ways.

One of our strategic priorities is creating concert experiences that attract and retain diverse audiences, and this year's results were encouraging. Ticket sales were strong across every concert of the season, meeting or exceeding projections—even during months that have traditionally experienced slower attendance. Season subscriptions increased by 3 percent, and the introduction of our new Choose Your Season package generated excitement among both longtime patrons and new audience members seeking greater flexibility.

Our innovative Soundscapes Series provided one of the clearest indicators of audience growth and engagement. Both *Phantoms & Fugues* and *The Four Seasons* sold out, setting attendance records for chamber-style programming and demonstrating growing demand for creative and immersive concert experiences.

Community partnerships remain another cornerstone of our strategic vision. This year, Soundscapes' *Phantoms & Fugues* brought together the Idaho Falls Symphony and the Museum of Idaho in a unique collaboration that combined storytelling, local history, and music in a way that captivated audiences and expanded the reach of both organizations. We also partnered with the Eastern Idaho Jazz Society for our Juneteenth celebration, creating opportunities to engage new audiences while honoring important cultural traditions. Planning is already underway for several exciting collaborations in the coming season.

Our educational programs continued to make a profound impact throughout Eastern Idaho. More than 1,600 students participated in our Link Up program's *The Orchestra Sings*, one of the most successful educational initiatives in our history. We are especially grateful that both Idaho Falls

School District 91 and Bonneville School District 93 have fully committed to continuing this valuable partnership.

Our Youth Symphony programs also experienced tremendous success. Combined attendance at our winter and spring Youth Orchestra concerts exceeded 2,200 audience members, reflecting both the talent of our young musicians and the extraordinary support of families throughout the region.

Through our Ambassador Program, we expanded our reach into rural communities more than ever before. One particularly meaningful example came following a visit by our Ambassador Jazz Ensemble to students in Soda Springs. School leaders expressed how rare it is for many of their students to experience live professional music and shared their gratitude for the lasting impact the performance had on their students. Moments like these remind us that access to the arts can be transformative, regardless of geography.

Music's ability to heal and connect was also evident through meaningful community outreach. In October, members of the Roderer family—each accomplished Symphony musicians—performed at the Teton Cancer Institute in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Their performance served as a powerful reminder of music's capacity to bring comfort, reflection, and hope. We remain deeply grateful for our partnerships with Mountain View Hospital and Teton Cancer Institute.

This year's accomplishments would not have been possible without our exceptional artistic and administrative team. I am deeply grateful to Music Director Dr. Thomas Heuser, whose vision and leadership have elevated the Idaho Falls Symphony artistically and organizationally. As we prepare for a Music Director transition, I want to recognize the tremendous legacy he leaves behind. The newly established Thomas Heuser Endowment for Musical Excellence has already approached \$100,000 in its first year, a testament to the profound impact he has had on our musicians, audiences, and community. His influence will continue to shape the Symphony for generations to come.

I am equally thankful for our conductors, educators, managers, and administrative staff whose dedication, creativity, and professionalism make every concert, rehearsal, educational initiative, and community partnership possible.

I also want to recognize our outstanding Board of Directors. Their service extends far beyond governance. They actively cultivate donor relationships, strengthen community connections, advocate for the Symphony's mission, and support fundraising efforts throughout the year. I am especially proud that our Board once again achieved 100 percent giving participation, demonstrating their unwavering commitment to the organization's future.

Financial sustainability remains a critical component of our strategic plan, and this year brought significant progress. We continued strengthening relationships of trust with donors, sponsors, foundations, and community partners while expanding support for the Symphony's long-term vision.

Our annual Gala was an extraordinary success, raising nearly \$180,000 to support the Symphony's artistic and educational programs. We were honored to welcome Crystal Builders as our Gala Presenting Sponsor and are deeply grateful for their partnership. We also extend our sincere

appreciation to Bateman-Hall for their generous \$6,000 Raise the Paddle for Education matching gift. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of attendees, we not only met but exceeded the challenge match, ensuring even greater support for educational programming throughout our region.

We also made meaningful progress in securing grant funding and building organizational capacity. Successful implementation of a CHC grant contributed to improvements including the renovation of our board room, enhancing our ability to serve the organization and community more effectively.

Our marketing and audience engagement efforts reached new heights through innovative storytelling, strategic partnerships, and community-driven initiatives. ElevateHer Music continues to be one of the Symphony's most impactful philanthropic programs. In just three years, membership has grown to 37 women whose leadership, generosity, and advocacy have elevated the program to one of the Symphony's premier philanthropic groups. Their commitment and vision are helping shape the future of our organization.

This year also brought exciting improvements to our performance home. We were delighted to witness the beautiful renovations at the Frontier Center for the Performing Arts and honored to present our final season concert in the updated hall. We extend our sincere gratitude to the Frontier Center team and to GIFT for providing complimentary shuttle transportation during construction, helping ensure our patrons could continue enjoying performances with ease.

On a personal note, I am proud of what we have accomplished together. This year brought growth in attendance, educational outreach, donor engagement, community partnerships, fundraising success, and organizational capacity. While I am honored to help lead these efforts, every achievement reflected here belongs to a much larger team. The Idaho Falls Symphony's success is the result of talented musicians, dedicated staff, visionary board members, generous supporters, passionate volunteers, and an engaged community working together toward a shared purpose.

As we close *A Season of Wonder* and look ahead to our 2026–2027 season, *New Frontiers*, we do so from a position of strength. Our audiences are growing. Our educational programs are reaching more students than ever before. Our partnerships continue to deepen. Our donors and sponsors are investing in the future of the Symphony with remarkable generosity.

The coming season also marks one of the most significant milestones in our organization's history: the search for our next Music Director. The Music Director Search Committee has devoted countless hours to identifying exceptional artistic leaders capable of guiding the Symphony into its next chapter. From a pool of more than 120 applicants, the committee selected six remarkable finalists. Throughout the upcoming season, each finalist will lead a concert, allowing our musicians, audiences, and community to experience their artistry, leadership, and vision firsthand.

I am deeply grateful to the Search Committee for their diligence, wisdom, and commitment throughout this process. The quality of the finalists is extraordinary, and we are excited to discover who will help lead the Idaho Falls Symphony into its next era of artistic excellence.

Most importantly, we enter this new chapter united by a shared belief that great music enriches lives, strengthens communities, and creates lasting connections. The future of the Idaho Falls

Symphony has never been brighter, and I am deeply grateful to everyone helping make that future possible.

With gratitude,

**Carrie Athay**

Executive Director

Idaho Falls Symphony

**Our Symphony staff during the 2025-26 season included:**

1. Executive Director: Carrie Athay
2. Music Director: Dr. Thomas Heuser
3. IFSYO Youth Symphony Interim Conductor: Eric Smith
4. Philharmonia Conductor, PSO Co-Conductor: Annalee Kelly
5. IFSYO Assistant Conductor: Melissa Dayley
6. PSO Assistant Conductor: Lauren Anderson
7. Education Manager: Melanie Mallard
8. Audience Engagement Manager: Anne Henninger
9. Orchestra Manager: Marta Smith
10. Marketing Manager - Paige Rowberry/Leah Anderson
11. Bookkeeping: Heather Clarke/ Rylee Sessions

**2024-2025 Board of Directors:**

President	Alice Pike	Board Member	Ann Traynor
Past President	Kim Carpenter	Board Member	Lynn Winter
Vice President	John Radford	Board Member	Kevin Young
Treasurer	Judy Brower		
Secretary	Dean Scofield	Director Emeritus	Ann Howell
Board Member	Rick Aman	Director Emeritus	Jackie Larsen
Board Member	Ace Ballard	Director Emeritus	Arthur Kull
Board Member	Kim Carpenter	Director Emeritus	Sharon Price
Board Member	Todd Combs	Director Emeritus	Anne Staton Voillequé
Board Member	Elan Eddington		
Board Member	Abigail Martin	Orchestra Rep.	Jason Bull
Board Member	Warren Maxfield	Orchestra Rep.	Jake Knievel
Board Member	Georgia Meacham	Orchestra Rep.	Gabriella Roderer
Board Member	Michaela Morgan	Orchestra Rep.	Emma Rubinstein
Board Member	Linda Neeley		
Board Member	Kate Wheeler Peterson	Executive Director (ex officio)	Carrie Athay
Board Member	Amy Taylor	Music Director (ex officio)	Dr. Thomas Heuser

# Appendix I: Financial Stewardship & Impact

The Idaho Falls Symphony remains committed to responsible financial stewardship, ensuring that resources entrusted to us by donors, sponsors, grantors, ticket buyers, and community partners are invested thoughtfully in artistic excellence, educational impact, and organizational sustainability.

During Fiscal Year 2025–2026, the Symphony generated \$742,734 in operating revenue while carefully managing expenses and achieving positive operating results. Combined with significant growth in endowment and investment assets, these results reflect the organization's continued commitment to long-term financial strength and sustainability.

The charts below illustrate how resources were generated and invested to advance the Symphony's mission throughout the year.

## Revenue Sources

*How the Symphony's work is funded*

This chart illustrates the diverse revenue streams that support the Idaho Falls Symphony, including contributions, sponsorships, grants, fundraising events, ticket sales, educational programs, and other earned income.

### Income Sources FY 2025-2026

Operating revenue by major source.



- Annual Fund, Sponsorships & Grants
- Fundraising Events
- Other Income
- Ticket Sales
- Youth Programs

## Mission Delivery & Artistic Programs

*Direct investments in performances, musicians, education, and artistic excellence*

The majority of Symphony expenditures are dedicated directly to artistic and educational programming, including musician compensation, guest artists, music direction, youth orchestra programs, educational initiatives, and production costs associated with delivering high-quality performances throughout Eastern Idaho.

### Artistic & Program Expenses FY 2025-2026

Direct investment in artistic and educational programming.



- Artistic Staff & Musicians
- Guest Artists
- Music Director
- Production Costs
- Youth Programs

## Investing in Organizational Excellence

*Resources dedicated to administration, fundraising, marketing, governance, and organizational sustainability*

Strong organizations require strong infrastructure. These investments support donor stewardship, audience engagement, marketing, financial management, governance, technology, and operational systems that ensure the Symphony remains vibrant, effective, and sustainable for future generations.

## Supporting Expenses FY 2025-2026

Administrative, fundraising, and organizational support functions.



- Administration
- Fundraising Events
- General Administrative
- Insurance
- Marketing
- Professional Services

## Stewardship in Action 2025-2026

Operating Revenue outpaced Operating Expenses resulting in an Operating Surplus.

- As of May 31, the operating surplus is: \$95,000.
- The Thomas Heuser Endowment for Musical Excellence also reflected emphasis on our artistic mission resulting in: \$85,940
- Highest ticket revenue was *Home Alone in Concert*: \$74,372
  - Attendance 1643

Fiscal Year 2025–2026 demonstrated the Idaho Falls Symphony's continued commitment to both artistic excellence and financial responsibility. Through prudent management, strategic growth, strong community support, and ongoing investment in long-term sustainability, the Symphony is well-positioned to continue serving audiences, students, and communities throughout Eastern Idaho for years to come.

## Appendix II: Education Impact Report

The Idaho Falls Symphony's Education & Outreach programs continued to expand access to music education throughout Eastern Idaho during the 2025–2026 season. Through school visits, youth orchestra programs, community concerts, and Carnegie Hall's Link Up program, thousands of students experienced the transformative power of live music.

While total students served through the Ambassador Program decreased slightly from the previous year, the Symphony significantly expanded its reach into rural communities, ensuring

that students in geographically isolated areas had access to high-quality music education experiences.

## Key Highlights

### Ambassador Program

This year, Symphony musicians visited **30 schools** and reached **7,844 students** through interactive educational performances and demonstrations.

The 2025–2026 Ambassador Program theme, **Music is Physical**, explored how music exists through movement, coordination, communication, and emotional expression. Emma Rubinstein, String Musical Ambassador commented: “One of the most interesting things to me about the Ambassador programs is that one should never underestimate what the students will enjoy. They are wide open for new experiences and enjoy both classical and popular music, old and new. It’s the context and presentation that engages them.” Kevin Young, Jazz Musical Ambassador, described the experience as this:

Jazz is a style of music that thrives on audience interaction, especially swing jazz (dancing). Parts of our performance that appeared to have the most audience attention involved times when we encouraged the audience to physically engage with the music we played.

Elementary school students are so new to experiencing a live performance that they seem to have enjoyment simply in witnessing the process of making music. They take their emotional cues from the performers' emotions.

We've also noticed they really like responding to the question "How does that music make you feel?".

The program expanded its rural outreach efforts, with one of the most memorable visits taking place in **Soda Springs**, where educators expressed deep gratitude for providing students with a rare opportunity to experience live professional musicians in their school.

### Idaho Falls Symphony Youth Orchestras (IFSYO)

The Idaho Falls Symphony Youth Orchestras served **more than 165 students** across three ensembles:

- Youth Symphony
- Philharmonia
- Preparatory Strings Orchestra

Students participated from throughout Eastern Idaho, including **Bonneville, Bingham, Jefferson, and Madison Counties**, reflecting the growing regional impact of the program.

### Youth Orchestra Concerts

The Winter and Spring Youth Orchestra concerts welcomed more than 2,200 audience members, showcasing the accomplishments of our young musicians and celebrating music education in Eastern Idaho.

### **Link Up: The Orchestra Sings**

In partnership with Carnegie Hall, the Symphony's Link Up program engaged more than **1,600 students in *The Orchestra Sings***.

Participating teachers received curriculum materials and classroom instruction resources, including recorder instruction, allowing students to actively participate in the culminating concert experience.

**Favorite Song:** *Ode to Joy* by Ludwig van Beethoven

District 91 and District 93 have both committed to continuing participation in future years, demonstrating the program's educational value and community impact.

### **Free Community Concerts**

The Symphony's annual Carnival! A Symphony in the Park welcomed nearly **3,000 attendees**, providing free access to live symphonic music for families and community members throughout the region. Additionally, we partnered with the Eastern Idaho Jazz Society to create an exploration through the impact of African Americans on music.

### **Education & Outreach by the Numbers**

<b>Program</b>	<b>2025–2026 Impact</b>
Ambassador Program	7,844 Students Reached
Schools Visited	30 Schools
Youth Symphony Enrollment	165+ Students
Link Up Participants	1,600+ Students
Youth Orchestra Concert Attendance	2,200+ Audience Members
Concert in the Park Attendance	Nearly 3,000 Attendees
Counties Represented in IFSYO	Bonneville, Bingham, Jefferson, Madison
Rural Communities Reached	Expanded outreach including Soda Springs

### **Notable Achievements & Fun Facts**

- The Ambassador Program expanded its reach into rural communities more than ever before.
- Students traveled from across Eastern Idaho to participate in the Idaho Falls Symphony Youth Orchestras.
- More than 1,600 students participated in Carnegie Hall's Link Up program, *The Orchestra Sings*.
- *Ode to Joy* emerged as the favorite piece among Link Up participants.
- Nearly 3,000 community members attended the free Concert in the Park.
- The Youth Orchestra concerts drew record-level attendance, welcoming more than 2,200 audience members.

## Looking Ahead

The Idaho Falls Symphony remains committed to expanding access to music education throughout Eastern Idaho. Through continued investment in the Ambassador Program, Youth Symphony, Link Up, and community partnerships, we will continue creating opportunities for students of all backgrounds and geographic locations to experience the joy, discipline, and inspiration that music provides.

## Education Sponsors

Key to our success are sponsors and grantors who believe in our mission to bring music to our communities. We are grateful for their support and vision.

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| ❖ Alice Pike & Ken Krell | ❖ Heather Clarke                            |
| ❖ Arts Idaho             | ❖ Idaho Environmental Coalition             |
| ❖ Bank of Commerce       | ❖ Idaho National Laboratory                 |
| ❖ Bateman Hall           | ❖ National Endowment for the Arts           |
| ❖ Carol Ormond           | ❖ Rocky Mountain Power Foundation           |
| ❖ CHC Foundation         | ❖ Virginia Willard/Willard Charitable Trust |
| ❖ Chesbro Music Co       |   |

### IFSYO Alumni Fund

- ❖ Alan & Callie Avondet
- ❖ Aaron & Elan Eddington
- ❖ Claire Yoo
- ❖ Heywook & Taesic Yoo

### Raise the Paddle Education sponsors

- |                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ❖ Rick & Linda Aman               | ❖ Abigail Martin              |
| ❖ David & Lori Barber             | ❖ Warren Maxfield             |
| ❖ Kim & Mike Carpenter            | ❖ Dave Hill & Georgia Meacham |
| ❖ Mike & Shae Clements            | ❖ Carol Ormond                |
| ❖ Stephanie Dunn & Travis Spencer | ❖ Carrie & Don Potter         |
| ❖ Jeff & Betsy Hunsicker          | ❖ Cody & Kylie Wheeler        |
| ❖ Aaron Johnson                   | ❖ Virginia Willard            |

# End of Year Committee Reports

## Executive Committee Annual Report - 2026

Committee members: Alice Pike (President), Kim Carpenter (Past President), John Radford (Vice-President), Judy Brower (Treasurer), Dean Scofield (Secretary)

Throughout the 2025-2026 season the Executive Committee worked on reviewing documents in preparation for the Music Director Search, and discussed work to be done by other committees. It also reviewed policies, handled personnel matters, and revised the Symphony Org Chart. It recommended an Ad Hoc programming committee be established for the next two seasons to assist in the transition between Music Directors.

The committee would like to thank Emma Rubenstein and Jake Knievel for their service on the Board as Musician Representatives, and to express our sincere gratitude to Dr. Thomas Heuser for his extraordinary service as our Music Director. We will miss you, Thomas!

Respectfully submitted by,

Alice Pike

President, Idaho Falls Symphony Board of Directors

## Education Committee Annual Report - 2026

### Education Committee Summary of Accomplishments:

The Education Committee was made up of 11 active members for the 2025-2026 season. The Committee met seven times between the months of June 2025 and May 2026 with an average attendance of eight members per meeting.

### Ambassador Program

- **30 school visits, 36 performances, with an estimated 7,844 students reached.**

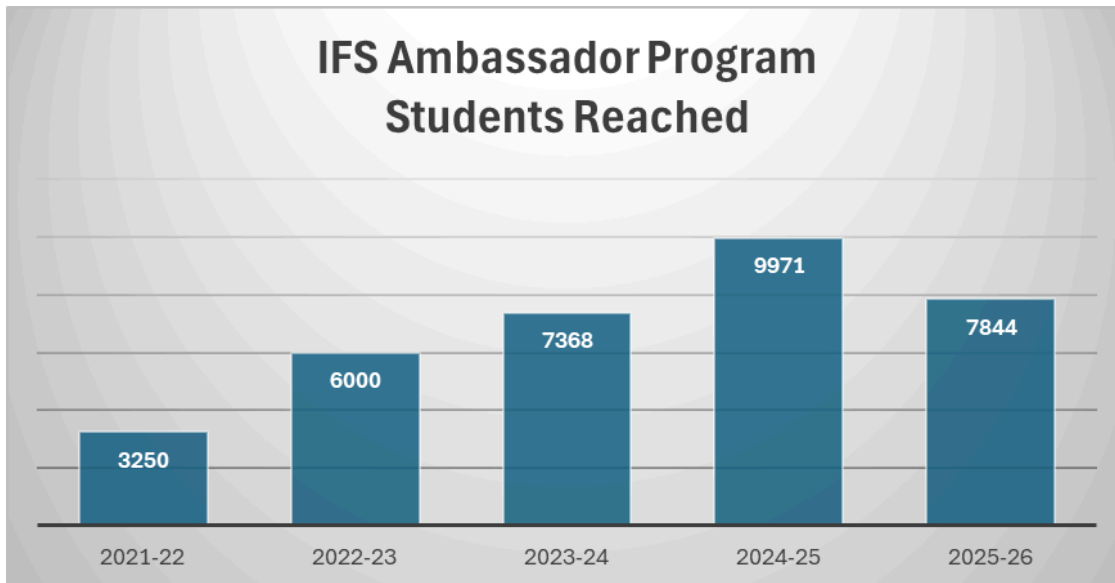
The IFS Ambassador Program continues to reach thousands of students. The number of ensembles in the program have remained the same, String Quarter, Wind Ensemble, Brass Quintet, and Jazz Quartet. This season, due to scheduling constraints with both schools and Ambassador program musicians, the number of students reached (7,844) was down an estimated 2,127 students from last season's record high of 9,971.

This season, all ensembles focused their presentations on the common theme of "Music is Physical." The four Ambassador ensembles completed a total of 30 school visits, down from last season's 40 visits. The program continues to emphasize visits to rural school districts outside of Idaho Falls. This year, Ambassador musicians visited six rural schools. The additional driving time

and cost associated with visiting rural schools continues to be a challenge the Education Committee and IFS staff are working on for future season.

Going into the 2026-27 season, the Ambassador Program will continue to visit rural school districts and seek out more possibilities for engaging junior high and high school students.

*Table 1 - IFS Ambassador Program Students Reached.*



### **Other Outreach Activities**

Additional outreach activities were performed by the IFS and IFSYO music directors and other IFS representatives. Highlights of these activities include the following.

- The IFS Music Director visited eight junior and high school music programs, reaching an estimated 365 music students. Some of these visits included guest soloist Jordan Bowman.
- IFSYO musicians participated in the Idaho Falls Arts Council's Roaring Youth Jam.
- The Music Director and several IFS musicians collaborated with the Eastern Idaho Jazz Society to perform for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Juneteenth celebration at the Colonial Theater.
- The Music Director, the IFS Principal saxophonist, and several members from the IFSYOs supported charitable fundraising efforts as part of the Idaho Falls Giving Machine campaign in Idaho Falls.
- The IFS worked with Hillcrest and Idaho Falls high school choir students as part of the highly successful Home Alone concert.
- The IFS ED and several musicians participated with the Museum of Idaho in a joint music and storytelling performance.

### **Idaho Falls Symphony Youth Orchestra Programs: IFS Youth Orchestra, Virtuosi Strings Philharmonia, and Preparatory Strings Orchestra**

The IFSYOs continue with strong student enrollment.

A new lead Music Director for the IFSYO was hired after resignation of the existing IFSYO Music Director. Music Director positions were also evaluated and reestablished for the Virtuosi Strings Philharmonia and the Preparatory Strings Orchestra.

A large number of IFSYO musicians successfully made it into All State orchestras.

Several IFSYO musicians have been participating in and benefiting from formal small ensemble instruction by IFSYO Music Directors.

The season's final concert was held in April and was very well attended.

### **Idaho Falls Symphony Youth Orchestra Booster Club**

Students (and their parents) from IFSYO programs continue to benefit from the hard work of dedicated parents participating in the IFSYO Booster Club.

Now in its fourth season, this club has helped provide fundraising and other vital support for the IFSYO programs. They have also worked directly with the Education Committee to advocate for policy changes designed to help grow the IFSYO programs. These include raising tuition to offset the need for time-intensive fundraising efforts that were burning out dedicated parents, consider a recommended or established entry fee for IFSYO concerts, and implementing a low-overhead fundraising program called "Fill the Case". The Education Committee worked with booster club leadership to evaluate and implement these ideas.

It was recognized by the Education Committee that the hard work put in by the booster club parents has a significant impact on the high enrollment in IFSYO programs.

### **Carnegie Hall Link Up Program**

The third annual IFS Carnegie Hall Link Up Program occurred on 2 April at the Frontier Center in Idaho Falls with participation by several D91 and D93 schools. The IFS Education Director held three professional development and planning meetings with D91 and D93 teachers and administrators in preparation for the event. The event went well with very few minor issues.

The Education Committee worked with the IFS staff to evaluate lessons learned for inclusion into next year's program. Things that went well included 1) creation of a video by the Education Director that was provided to teachers in advance of the performance that helped to prepare students for what to expect and how to behave at the concert. This significantly improved the focus and behavior of the participating students. 2) using student modelers from Idaho Falls High School to provide visual cues from the stage to attending students. And 3) having the D91 and D93 communications leads attend the concert to help promote the event within the school districts to increase future attendance. Three things to consider for future improvements included 1) being more proactive with teachers in soliciting the names of student modelers with a goal of having names one month prior to the performance. 2) adding in the option of visual elements to coincide with some of the musical numbers. And 3) reaching out much earlier to schools to encourage them to send a representative to observe the performance so they can evaluate future attendance of their school.

## **Young Artist Competition 2026-27**

The formalized methodology developed last season for conducting first-round judging of junior and senior YAC applicants will be carried forward for the 2026-27 season. A total of 5 Senior division candidates and 11 Junior division candidates submitted video applications by the 4 May 2026 deadline. The Education Committee Chair is facilitating the first-round judging process with a panel of three judges. First round judging will conclude on 9 June. The finalists' recital is scheduled for 12 September 2026 with senior and junior division winners participating with the IFS in April of 2027.

## **IFS Education Programs Review**

Earlier this season, the Committee began a systematic review of all programs associated with the Education Committee. The purpose of the review is to ensure the primary purpose for each program is clear and in alignment with IFS goals. In addition, the Committee is reviewing metrics for each program to help measure the success of each program in fulfilling its main purpose. The programs under review are:

- Youth Symphony Orchestras
- Ambassador Program
- Young Artist Competition
- Carnegie Hall LinkUp Program
- Other ad hoc Education and Community Engagement Programs

Submitted by Kevin Young, Education Chair

## **Development Committee Annual Report - 2026**

Committee Members: Carrie Athay, Michaela Morgan, Amy Taylor, Alice Pike, John Radford, Jake Knievel, Josh Ashby, Josh Johnson, Abigail Martin, Kate Wheeler Peterson, Blake Rose

The 2025–2026 season was a year of reflection, discovery, and strategic growth for the Development Committee. As the Idaho Falls Symphony prepares for a new era of artistic leadership and the upcoming New Frontiers season, the committee focused on strengthening the relationships, resources, and community connections that will support the Symphony's future.

This year, the Development Committee developed and adopted a clear framework to guide its work:

- Committee Mission: To grow awareness, partnerships, and community connection in support of the Idaho Falls Symphony.
- Committee Vision: A symphony embraced by the entire community as a vibrant, inclusive cultural cornerstone.

- Committee Purpose: To build relationships, expand audiences, and create sustainable support that allows the Idaho Falls Symphony to flourish.

These statements emerged from thoughtful discussions about why each of us is involved with the Symphony, what role music plays in our community, and how we can invite more people to experience the joy and inspiration that live orchestral music provides. Through these conversations, we recognized that our work is not simply about fundraising—it is about creating meaningful connections between the Symphony and the people it serves.

To better understand those connections, the committee began conducting patron analysis to learn more about who attends Symphony performances, what motivates their engagement, and how we can strengthen those relationships. These efforts are helping us identify opportunities to welcome new audiences while deepening connections with existing patrons, donors, and community partners.

The committee also celebrated several significant accomplishments this year. The Board of Directors established the Thomas Heuser Endowment for Musical Excellence, and a successful endowment campaign launched the fund with strong community support. This initiative represents an important investment in the long-term artistic vitality and sustainability of the artistic mission of the Symphony. In addition, successful Idaho Gives, Giving Tuesday, and year-end campaigns demonstrated the generosity of our supporters and the growing commitment of our community to the Symphony's future.

As we look ahead, the theme of New Frontiers provides an inspiring vision for the work before us. The Development Committee sees this next chapter as an opportunity to expand awareness, build new partnerships, engage new audiences, and ensure that the Idaho Falls Symphony remains a vibrant cultural resource for generations to come.

The spirit of our work can be captured in a single statement that emerged from our discussions this year:

“Music is alive in Idaho Falls, and everyone is invited to be part of it.”

We look forward to continuing that invitation as we move into the exciting opportunities that lie ahead.

Submitted by Carrie Athay, Development Chair

## **ElevateHer Music Annual Report – 2026**

ElevateHer Music was founded in September 2023 with a mission to promote and enhance opportunities for female artists at the Idaho Falls Symphony. Members are dedicated to advancing women in music by fostering collaboration, creating performance opportunities, and encouraging artistic excellence through the work of the Idaho Falls Symphony.

Each member makes a personal annual commitment of \$1,000 in support of this mission. ElevateHer Music began with 19 members in its inaugural season, grew to 29 members during Season 75, and expanded to 39 members during Season 76.

Since its inception, ElevateHer Music has sponsored female conductors, composers, and numerous female musicians appearing with the Idaho Falls Symphony. Through the generosity and vision of its members, ElevateHer Music has become an important force in advancing artistic opportunities for women while strengthening the Symphony's commitment to artistic excellence. In recognition of this impact, ElevateHer Music achieved Philanthropic Leadership Circle status during Season 75 and continued its support of female artists throughout Season 76.

In addition to its philanthropic impact, ElevateHer Music fosters meaningful connections between members and artists through four annual social and educational gatherings. These events feature performances by female musicians and ensembles, along with personal conversations about their artistic journeys, career paths, challenges, and achievements. Members have the opportunity to engage directly with the artists, ask questions, and gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of women in music today.

Following a comprehensive ten-month Music Director Search process that attracted an exceptionally strong pool of candidates from across the United States and abroad, the Idaho Falls Symphony has selected six finalists to conduct concerts during the 2026–27 season. ElevateHer Music will host exclusive receptions with each finalist, providing members with a unique opportunity to learn about the candidates' artistic vision, leadership style, and aspirations for the Symphony's future while engaging in meaningful conversation during this pivotal period for the organization.

The continued growth of ElevateHer Music reflects the enthusiasm of its members and the impact of its mission. As the organization looks ahead to Season 77, members remain committed to creating meaningful opportunities for female artists, supporting artistic excellence, and helping shape the future of the Idaho Falls Symphony.

Respectfully submitted by

Kim Carpenter, ElevateHer Music Steering Committee Chair

## **Finance Committee Annual Report - 2026**

The 76<sup>th</sup> season of the Symphony is wrapping up, having had our final events with Thomas Heuser as our Maestro.

The Finance committee has continued on the items established as board priorities for the success of the Symphony.

The finance committee continues in its role of monitoring the financial success of the Symphony and seeing the Symphony continue to improve its processes and grow in its ability to manage the financial health of the organization.

The key successes of this season include:

Transferring the quasi endowment funds from the previous management company to Fidelity with management from Onyx financial. This has resulted in a very favorable fee structure and improved access to the funds in addition to implementing the process for taking the quarterly withdrawal established in our budget.

We have been tracking the donations to the Thomas Heuser Endowment fund which have resulted in \$85,940 dedicated to artistic endeavors in the Symphony.

During this season, the Symphony transferred \$329,161 into the Fidelity quasi endowment fund and added \$84,925 of TH Endowment donations (with some recent donations to be added). The balance in the Long term portfolio at May 31, 2026 has grown to \$440,075.

The change for our Short term investment (the amount we have available to fund our current operations) has resulted in an improved ability for us to move funds in and out of an interest bearing account and manage our overall cash needs.

The current season has resulted in a positive financial outcome, especially after a very successful fundraising GALA in May. We will finish the current season with a surplus over and above the donations for the endowment. As of May 31, the surplus is \$95,000 including the increase in the quasi endowment of \$37,000. This will reduce during the month of May as we pay operating expenses but we will finish the season in an excellent financial situation.

We continue to use our budget as an appropriate management tool over spending and have already updated the budget to address the changes in our next season as we conduct the search for the next music director. We have also made some administrative changes to address the changing needs of the organization as we now have an office manager that will move the bookkeeping in house.

## **Idaho Falls Symphony Strategic Plan (after year 1 of rolling plan)**

### **1. Preamble**

#### **IFS Mission Statement**

*The Mission of the Idaho Falls Symphony Society is to provide quality, live orchestral experiences of the world's great music for the enjoyment, enrichment, and education of our audiences and musicians.*

#### **Legacy of Artistic Excellence**

For decades, the Idaho Falls Symphony (IFS) has been a cornerstone of Eastern Idaho's cultural landscape, delivering extraordinary musical experiences that inspire, educate, and entertain. Founded with the vision of bringing the grandeur of symphonic music to the region, IFS has evolved into a dynamic and innovative institution—one that continually adapts to meet the changing needs of its audience while maintaining its commitment to artistic excellence.

#### **A Future Built on Purpose**

As the Symphony looks ahead, it does so through a lens of intentional growth and sustainability. At a strategic retreat on March 1, 2025, IFS Board engaged in a futuring process guided by the principles of **Ikigai**, a Japanese concept that identifies purpose at the intersection of four key elements:

1. **What We Love** – The passion that drives our musicians, staff, and supporters.
2. **What We Do Well** – Our commitment to artistic excellence, quality of musicians, and performance mastery.
3. **What Our Community Needs** – The role IFS plays in cultural enrichment experience, education, and accessibility.
4. **What Sustains Us** – The ability to generate revenue from diverse sources, ensuring long-term viability.

This **Strategic Vision Document** captures the preferred future of IFS by aligning its aspirations with these four guiding principles. It articulates a roadmap that not only strengthens IFS as a leading cultural institution but also positions it for greater impact in the community.

### **Charting the Next Three Years** (rolling model)

Building on its rich legacy, IFS is committed to **expanding its reach and relevance**—particularly by engaging younger audiences, strengthening community partnerships, and diversifying its programming. Through collaboration with patrons, stakeholders, musicians, and staff, the Symphony will embrace opportunities to enhance its artistic and operational sustainability.

This Strategic Vision Document outlines:

- **Our Preferred Future** – A bold statement of where IFS will be in three years.
- **Key Initiatives** – The strategic priorities that will guide our efforts.
- **Measurable Outcomes** – Clear benchmarks for assessing progress.

With this vision, IFS reaffirms its dedication to **inspiring, educating, and enriching** through live orchestral music, ensuring its role as a **vibrant and enduring** part of the community for generations to come.

## **2. Strategic Vision Statement**

(Preferred Future for March 2028)

*“Our ‘preferred’ future in three years is to **solidify** the Idaho Falls Symphony as a leader in the cultural arts community, **renowned** for its musical performances, innovative programming, expanded audience engagement, and financial resilience. By significantly **increasing** attendance among younger audiences, **strengthening** partnerships, and **growing** educational initiatives, we aim to **inspire** the next generation of musicians and music enthusiasts **ensuring** sustainability and relevance for generations to come.”*

*(Bolded words are action related steps)*

## **3. Key Initiatives**

- 1 **Creative Programming and Audience Development**
- 2 **Encourage (encourage) Community Cultural Arts, Partnerships and Sponsorships**
- 3 **Operational and Artistic Sustainability**
- 4 **Strategic Marketing, Development and Outreach**

## **4. Outcomes & Key Measurables - DRAFT**

1. **Creative Programming and Audience**

Outcomes: (these are descriptive in nature)

- Create concert programs to attract and retain diverse demographics, continuing to grow our younger audiences.
- Continue to expand youth programs and collaborate with local schools to cultivate youth appreciation for live orchestral cv experiences.
- Secure grants to fund innovative and sustainable projects. Increase and diversify revenue to ensure sustainable financial operations.

Key Measurables: (these are qualitative in nature)

- Increased overall concert attendance. For each year over the next three years increase attendance by 5%.
  - Increased regional outreach to new schools each season for youth engagement through Ambassadors and Link Up. (set a numeric number this year 2026 as reference point)
  - Conduct annual audience surveys to measure diversity and satisfaction. Survey data: percentage of audiences reporting “increased appreciation” or “felt welcomed.” (set a numeric % this year as reference point)
- 

## **2. Community Partnerships and Sponsorships**

Outcomes:

- Grow the number of community and business partners.
- Increase the number of sponsorship and grant revenue.
- Develop new grant-funded projects each year.

Key Measurables:

- Increase number of active community/business partners.
  - Total revenue from sponsorships and grants increase.
  - Develop at least one major new grant-funded project per year.
- 

## **3. Operational and Artistic Sustainability**

Outcomes:

- Increase musician and staff retention.
- Implementation of operational efficiencies.
- Revisit audience experience and launch at least one new operational initiative to make the experience more inviting.

Key Measurables:

- Increase retention (musicians, staff) leading to sustainable staffing
  - Implementation of one new operational efficiency and less expensive guest artist venue.
  - Create one new audience experience and launch at least new operational initiative to make the experience more inviting
  - Implement a measure collecting critical and audience feedback on each performances.
-

#### 4. Strategic Marketing, Development, and Outreach

Outcomes:

- Increase email list and social media following.
- Continue Launch dynamic pricing and “choose your own season” by 2026.
- Increase individual giving and donor base by speaking with new potential donors.
- Boost donations via online tools (e.g., ticket add-ons, social giving).

Key Measurables:

- Increase email list and social media following each year.
- Implement a dynamic pricing and “choose your own season” by December 2026.
- Increase individual giving and donor base.
- *Speak with X potential donors/year regarding legacy giving.*

### Gala Committee Annual Report - 2026

The Idaho Falls Symphony Gala continued its tradition of excellence this year with one of the most successful fundraising events in the organization's history. Held at the Blue Cross of Idaho Convention Center, the gala welcomed more than 300 guests for an unforgettable evening of music, community, and philanthropy.

A dedicated and hardworking Gala Committee played a critical role in the event's success. This year, the leadership structure featured two Co-Chairs, a model that proved highly effective and is strongly recommended for future galas.

The Symphony was also honored to secure a Presenting Sponsor for the first time, Crystal Builders, marking an important milestone in the event's growth and community support.

Guests enjoyed exciting live and silent auctions, incredible food, and outstanding entertainment throughout the evening. The Idaho Falls Symphony String Quartet provided elegant music during the reception, while The Shift energized the celebration later in the evening.

A new addition this year, the complimentary wine bar, was an overwhelming success. Thanks to the generous donation of all wine served, the experience enhanced the evening at no cost to the Symphony.

The Symphony party signups were once again a highlight of the gala, with several events selling out during the evening. These exclusive gatherings continue to be a favorite among supporters, creating memorable experiences while helping to support the Symphony. Additional opportunities to participate will be announced in the coming weeks.

The generosity of our guests, sponsors, donors, and volunteers made this gala an extraordinary success and further strengthened our ability to fulfill the Idaho Falls Symphony's mission to provide quality, live orchestral experiences of the world's great music for the enjoyment, enrichment, and education of our audiences and musicians.

Submitted by Kim Carpenter and Ace Ballard, Gala Co-Chairs

## **Governance Committee Annual Report — 2026**

Committee Members: John Radford, chair

Carrie Athay

Jason Bull

Kim Carpenter

Jake Durtschi

Ann Howell

Arthur Kull

Jackie Larsen

Kate Wheeler Peterson

Alice Pike

Blake Rose

The Governance Committee continued to encourage and review additions to operating procedures, nominated new and returning Board Members, and nominated Idaho Falls Symphony Officers for the coming two years.

In 2026, the Committee worked to develop new bylaw language and addressed a range of governance issues. We maintained communication with all Board Members throughout the year and solidified language around endowments to strengthen the organization's long-term financial foundation.

We will be very busy in the coming year with the excitement of a new Music Director, as well as fine-tuning organizational policies, procedures, and supporting documents.

Respectfully submitted by John Radford, Governance Chair

## **Orchestra Committee Annual Report - 2026**

- The four orchestra representatives met in an unofficial capacity monthly over the course of the season, discussing needs, organizing the winter soup dinner, and planning the agendas for two Orchestra Committee Meetings held in November 2025 and May 2026, respectively.
- The four orchestra representatives planned and hosted two Orchestra Committee Meetings held virtually in November 2025 and May 2026, respectively. The November meeting included discussion about repertoire for Season 77 and the director search. The May meeting focused on the developments in the director search, including revealing the 6 final candidates to the orchestra. The meeting ended with honoring Thomas Heuser for his work as MD for the last 15 years.
- The annual orchestra meeting, with all musicians invited, convened for a soup dinner before a

symphony rehearsal in February 2026. Board members were invited, and committee chairs gave brief remarks about their committee activities. The consensus was that this was a successful event, and helped solidify the connection between musicians and board.

- Orchestra Representatives sought additional clarity in response to the decision the previous year to meet quarterly as the Orchestra Committee, consisting of 4 reps, the ED, the MD and the Orchestra Manager. The 4 reps discussed the possibility of less often than quarterly over the course of the season. In the final Orchestra Committee Meeting of the season, held in May 2026, consisting of the 4 reps, the ED, the MD and the Orchestra Manager, along with members of the orchestra attending virtually, it was mutually decided that the Orchestra Committee continue to meet quarterly. An unofficial proposal to make additional clarification to the wording in the Master Agreement was made, allowing the soup dinner to be included as one of the quarterly meetings.
- The orchestra reps, with the financial support of the ED, gifted a Blackwing pencil to all members of the orchestra who played with the Idaho Falls Symphony during the 76th season.

**Orchestra representatives at the end of their two-year term:**

Emma Rubinstein and Jake Knievel

Orchestra representatives mid-term:

Jason Bull and Gabbi Roderer

Newly elected orchestra representatives:

Bill Smith and Christine Hutchings