

# The Ark Strategic Plan: 2020-2024

## The Ark's Mission

*“The Ark is a non-profit organization dedicated to the enrichment of the human spirit through the presentation, preservation, and encouragement of folk, roots, ethnic music and related arts. The Ark provides a safe and welcoming atmosphere for all people to listen to, learn about, perform and share music.”*

## VISION STATEMENT for THE ARK 2020-2024

### VISION 2020-2024: A NEW ERA

#### Introduction

The work and accomplishments of the past five years have set the stage for a new era at The Ark. Generous support from our communities has allowed us to purchase The Ark's space, pay off the mortgage and complete major renovations and updates, providing The Ark with unprecedented security and capacity. With ownership and increased capabilities comes the opportunity and responsibility to **expand The Ark's involvement and impact across its communities**. We are ready to further develop The Ark's leadership role as we continue to advance its mission of enriching human spirits through the power of music.

#### Vision

As we continue to **elevate The Ark's profile and expand its service to our communities**, we will pursue **appropriate growth and evolution** that respond to the next generation of music and community and align with The Ark's mission and legacy. Our next strategic phase will focus on three key areas: **Stewardship, Evolution, and Infrastructure**. Over the next five years:

- We will assure The Ark's **sustainability** by supporting and caring for its most important assets: **People, Programming, and Property**.
- We will assure The Ark's **continued relevance** by **exploring and responding to needs and trends** in our communities, music, and society.
- We will seek out opportunities to **expand diversity and inclusion** within our programming and across our constituents. With music as the primary channel for connecting people to The Ark, **programming will remain central** to our efforts to develop new relationships, create new partnerships, and broaden our audiences and other constituencies.

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- We will update The Ark's **administrative infrastructure** and **strengthen its internal operations** to keep pace with current needs, developing appropriate structures and systems that support The Ark's growth and evolution and enhance its cultures. As we further develop The Ark's **professionalism** and excellence we will **maintain the authentic and welcoming hospitality that has always been its core**.
- We will continue our commitment to fiscal responsibility and ensure The Ark's long-term sustainability and viability by **increasing revenue** (earned and contributed) to solidly fund any growth.

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## KEY VISION ELEMENTS- HIGH LEVEL GOALS 2020-2024

**STEWARDSHIP** *Assure The Ark's sustainability by supporting and caring for its most important assets:*

- **People (artists, audience members, donors, members, partners, staff, volunteers)**
  - Continue to recruit, retain and develop the full community of constituents that love and care for The Ark.
  - Understand who our audiences, members, and other constituents are and how we can best serve them.
  
- **Programming (core programming, education, Folk Festival, new opportunities)**
  - Maintain the strength and excellence of our core programming (club programming, Folk Festival, outside shows).
  - Expand and develop new programming as appropriate (e.g., more education, daytime use, partnerships with diverse communities, etc.).
  - Ensure that our legacy of supporting emerging, developing, and veteran artists continues to evolve to meet new needs and opportunities.
  
- **Property (equipment, facility, new capital projects, ongoing maintenance)**
  - Update our staffing infrastructure and systems to effectively support and maintain our property.
  - Build our reserves and work toward funding depreciation to support our facilities and equipment.
  - Undertake new capital projects as needed (e.g., bathrooms, freight elevator and lobby, artist area, HVAC, volunteer room)
  
- **Financial Stability**
  - Fund our growth and evolution by generating additional revenue to maintain financial stability and sustain the vitality of The Ark.
  - Explore how philanthropy is changing; develop and implement plans for responding.

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**EVOLUTION** *Assure The Ark's continued relevance by exploring and responding to needs and trends in our communities, in music and the music industry, and in society.*

- **Encourage broader diversity and inclusion in our programming and across our constituencies**
  - Attract and involve younger constituents across the organization, including cultivating the next generation of artists, audience members, and stewards (volunteers, Members, Board members, donors, staff...)
  - Identify and explore partnership opportunities with new and diverse communities. Develop relationships and programs where opportunities fit with Mission.
  - Determine and address where and how The Ark needs to evolve to provide welcoming inclusion of new partners, constituents and programs.
  
- **Read and respond to external/societal/industry/technology trends**
  - Monitor and explore the evolving music industry to understand what is happening with genres, artists, and trends (e.g. technology, touring, fees, etc.) related to our Mission. Respond as appropriate with plans for potential programming and operating adjustments.
  - Track societal trends (e.g., technology, downtown environment, cultural interests, entertainment trends and competition, philanthropy, etc.) and understand how they impact The Ark. Develop and implement high priority modifications/ changes/additions as appropriate.
  - Optimize Marketing and Communications to raise The Ark's profile, reach new markets, and build new audiences.

**INFRASTRUCTURE** *Strengthen internal operations by developing structures and systems that support The Ark's continued growth and evolution and enhance its culture(s).*

- Examine organizational structures (e.g., staff, Board, Committees, volunteers) and make adjustments as appropriate to enhance our capability and operation.
  - Address succession planning for Board and Staff leadership
  
- Examine and improve critical internal systems and processes to create a better operating environment and culture for our staff, including:
  - Internal communication (within the office, between the office and club)
  - Clarify roles and ownership
  - Review and update internal processes, contacts, and information flow for departments and initiatives (e.g., ticketing, rentals, show details, etc.)

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- Taxonomy
  - IT strategies
  - Documentation for positions, processes, contacts, etc.
- Review and evaluate potential Human Resource updates and enhancements
  - Benefits (e.g., retirement, health care, compensation, time off)
  - Opportunities for professional growth
  - Opportunities for advancement
- **Assess and improve the Patron and Donor experiences**
  - Points of contact (e.g., phone, box office, concessions, etc.)
  - Ticketing processes
  - Customer Experience at the club (entering, orienting/wayfinding, concessions, listening room, merchandise, etc.)
  - Donor Experience and Donor stewardship
    - Membership program
  - Develop and implement service recovery strategies and protocols