



FRIENDS OF THE ALGER THEATER FIELD PROJECT

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

In early American history, though volunteer associations, organizations and corporations in the early New England colonies and Southern colonies had different governance guidelines as established by individual colonies/regions, uniformly the foundation for their existence was to address public concerns that the family and/or government weren't poised to address. Thus, the general nature of a nonprofit tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) corporations is to bring public benefit to specific concerns. The history of these corporations in early American history predates the break away from English Rule (American Revolution) (Dobkin Hall).

In an effort to further advance the public good in the field of arts & culture, Friends of the Alger Theater (FOTAT) elicited the support of outside contractors to assess their institutional readiness to embark upon renovating its current facilities so that FOTAT can offer an array of arts & cultural based programming to residents on Detroit's far eastside and its bordering

communities, i.e., the Grosse Pointes, St. Clair Shores, Warren, East Pointe, Roseville, Clinton Township, etc.

In furtherance of its renovation plans the Alger's goals are to serve as an entertainment venue, as well as a community gathering place for all age groups and to facilitate the following programming:

- Quality Films
- Live Stage Performances
- Live Musical Performances
- Dance Performances
- Educational Programs
- Dinner/Theater
- Music/Brunch Events
- Recording Studio for Local Musicians

Based on the aforementioned and a previous meeting with the representatives from the Friends of the Alger, the organization is in need of addressing the following concerns:

- A. Developing strategies to build (grow) capacity of the Friends of the Alger Theater organization. The outcome would provide a framework to recruit and retain a number

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of new active Board members and increase general membership by 20 - 30 %.

The addition of more talented and passionate people to the "Friends" organization would significantly contribute to the growth and success of its non-profit organization.

B. Developing effective marketing strategies to garner substantial community support and commitment for our Community Performing Arts Center project as well as attract a strong partner or two and commitment from a handful of performing arts organizations interested in leasing space from the "Friends" once the building is open and operational.

C. Developing a strategy to attract significant funding for capital improvements to the theater building and cover first year start up costs associated with a Community Performing Arts Center.

Thus, the Wayne State University Nonprofit Sector Studies Program NPS

3000/4500 and ISP 5000 engaged in services to address concerns A, B and C above in the following manner:

- Facilitation of an organizational assessment
- Facilitation of a baseline community assessment
- Completion of an assessment report which detailed organizational and communal assets and barriers
- Identification of best practice models to address programming and funding concerns
- Submission of a final report detailing funding, marketing and membership strategies and best practices

Documented herein is the report detailing the issues and recommended solutions based on the process above.

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Organization Overview

The Friends of the Alger Theater (FOTAT) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The organization is comprised of a four (4) member Board of Directors and boasts 175 dues-paying members ranging from neighborhood residents, community leaders and other committed friends all of whom are committed to preserving the Alger Theater and creating a viable community arts center in order to better the cultural enrichment of the diverse population of the nearby community.

The Alger Theater, situated on the corner of East Warren Avenue and East Outer Drive in Detroit, Michigan, first opened as a movie theater in 1935. Though the theater changed ownership several times, it remained a profitable venture until closing in 1981. At this time FOTAT formed with the intention of purchasing the theater and creating a community entertainment venue. FOTAT diligently raised funds and community awareness; however, before their goal could be realized the Alger was sold in 1984. The venue became a “blood and gore” movie house, until lagging profits and unruly crowds forced

the closing of the Alger, once again, in 1985. FOTAT was then able to purchase the building and after paying off past-due taxes and utility bills gained ownership of the Alger Theater (Friends of the Alger Theater). Today the Alger is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and FOTAT is currently seeking approval of the Friends of the Alger Theater Historic District designation from the City of Detroit. Most of the original effects and architecture remain. The marquee has been rehabilitated by FOTAT, and previous owners have removed the theater’s balcony, changed the pattern and number of floor seats, and the brick façade has been painted first gray, and now red (Friends of the Alger Theater). Though these effects remain, it cannot be ignored that in its current state the Alger is not suitable as a public venue. The building is in need of a new roof, has an underutilized electrical system and no operable heating, cooling nor plumbing system. While FOTAT has been able to make repairs and improvements to the building they see their efforts as “band-aids” which have succeeded only in preventing further damage to the structure (Costello and

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Gowman). Furthermore, the historical designation awarded to the Alger Theater may be ideal for marketing and community perception, but will impose strict rehabilitation guidelines on FOTAT. Board members Dennis Costello and Geoff Gowman state that the group is well aware that any planning or construction must now be approved by the designation authority and that the integrity of the original structure must be maintained.

Though they have owned the Alger Theater since 1985, FOTAT has had little progress in carrying out their mission. As stated, their mission is to operate as:

“...a volunteer driven, non-profit community-based organization comprised of neighborhood residents and businesses whose mission is to address the decay and deterioration encroaching the neighborhood and preserve the historic significance of the Alger Theater. The organization’s goals are to refurbish and reopen the Alger Theater as a viable community arts and

neighborhood movie theater. The Alger Theater will serve as a catalyst for the continuous revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood and adjacent businesses by promoting local creative arts and stimulation local economic activity.” (Friends of the Alger Theater).

However, though their mission states that both rehabilitation of the structure as well as community programs are goals of the organization, most emphasis and efforts to date have been focused strictly on rehabilitation of the structure (Costello and Gowman). The programming directives FOTAT wishes to incorporate include films, live stage and musical acts, educational activities, and dinner/theater sessions (Friends of the Alger Theater). It is FOTAT’s goal to both promote and host any movie or film activity and rent the theater to arts and culture groups or organization for the remainder of the activities (Costello and Gowman).

FOTAT’s initial objective was to become a grass roots organization that would seek and accept small personal donations from the community in order

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to raise awareness of their intent (Costello and Gowman). FOTAT Treasurer's Reports show that to date, FOTAT receives roughly \$3,000 yearly in donations and held \$13,966 in monetary assets in September 2007, the close of their last fiscal year. The majority of FOTAT's donations come from individuals in their own community, and their membership listing shows that 66% of their donations are from those residing in the ZIP code of 48224, which also houses the Alger Theater. The majority of FOTAT's 46 personal donations last fiscal year were received in the month of December, presumably due to the closing of the tax year. FOTAT would be wise to capitalize on their community's interest in end-of-year donations. The highest personal donation received was \$500.00. Treasurer's Reports also show that the remaining bulk of FOTAT's income comes in the form of revenue from advertisements shown on the marquee of the Alger Theater. Advertisements may be placed by any person, organization or business for a nominal fee. While the advertisement enterprise is the largest source of revenue for FOTAT, advertisements placed on the marquee

by for-profit businesses or individual citizens are often not directly related to the mission of the organization, and FOTAT is in danger of incurring unrelated income taxes (Massarsky 449).

As previously mentioned, and as shown in FOTAT's Treasurer's Reports, the organization spends the majority of its income on building repairs (\$4,613 in FY07) and utilities. While they do list nominal expenses for advertisements and marketing, these reports do not list any expenditures related to programming the past fiscal year. Though repairs and improvements are necessary to keep the building from falling further into disrepair, analysis of the treasury could easily lead one to believe that community outreach and public relations are not a high priority of FOTAT.

Leadership and Governance

The governing body of FOTAT is its Board of Directors, currently with four active members. The Board is set up in what organizational theorists conceive as "hierarchically arranged" (Herman and Heimovics 154), with the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer currently filled. The FOTAT Board

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once had active committee involvement and chairpersons; however those positions are currently vacant. The officers of the Board of Directors are chosen by the members of the organization, who earn voting rights by paying yearly membership dues (Friends of the Alger Theater). As Herman and Heimovics point out, the law of the United States "...holds that a nonprofit board is ultimately responsible for the affairs and conduct of the organization" (155). FOTAT lays out their compliance with this directive in the Organizational Assessment and Strategic Plan of 2003 by declaring that their Board "...serves to identify the organizations priorities and then develop an action plan to accomplish [them]...".

The current FOTAT Board is comprised of current and past residents of the area surrounding the Alger. The related life skills of the Board include business administration, social work, building rehabilitation, business ownership and community involvement (Friends of the Alger Theater). Review of Board competencies show there are contextual, interpersonal and analytical requirements. The contextual consists of

an orientation that includes an introduction to the organizations values, norms and traditions and leaders reviewing the organization's hallmark characteristics and the basic values that seek to set FOTAT apart from its competitors (Axelrod, 139). There is evidence of educational competency that can be construed from FOTAT's Board meeting minutes, as members set aside time at each meeting to learn about topics important to the future successes of the organization (i.e.: community meetings or development opportunities) or to discuss mission-related interests of all members. The only evidence of interpersonal competency within FOTAT is that many of its Board members have been with the organization since its inception, and can therefore ensure that there is strong history, knowledge and leadership available to groom future Board members. These members have also been successful, if not in advancing the organization, in at the very least keeping members active and the organization running. Of course, interpersonal competency at the core is still lacking, however, in that FOTAT has been struggling to succeed in their mission

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since the inception of the organization.

Board analysis does show evidence of weakness. As pointed out by Axelrod, the best possible governing practices regarding meeting attendance, Board size, committee structure and financial literacy of individual members should be decided upon by members and strictly adhered to (141). These measures are maintained by FOTAT, however, the lack accountability mechanisms. Whereas FOTAT is simply maintaining a board, it is missing out on the crucial role of a chief executive officer that is expected to accept and carry out the role of central leadership in a nonprofit organization (Herman and Heimovics, 154). FOTAT could benefit from a single individual chiefly responsible for the mission of the organization, as the lack of an executive channels the organizational energy to the internal affairs rather than the external affairs, leaving issues such as community outreach and marketing without the attention they so deserve (Herman and Heimovics, 159).

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SURROUNDING FRAMEWORK

Social and economic forces dictate, impart, the potential direction of FOTAT's services to the community and its ability to garner the necessary resources to address not only its programming concerns, but its building renovation efforts.

This section will explore the social and economic activities which FOTAT should take into consideration during its process of planning, programming and securing resources (fund development).

Social Impacts

The social impact of the Alger on the community, as well as various community stakeholders on the Alger, is complex. FOTAT has the ability to enhance its community involvement by partnering with local area groups such as the East Warren Avenue Business Association (EWABA) or Detroit Public Library, Thomas Jefferson Branch. FOTAT, as a nonprofit group with a mission relating to community enhancement would be wise to research and take advantage of the many tax incentives, grants, loans and other

opportunities available from business groups, corporations or government.

A strategic alignment with other local groups, either due to their proximity to the Alger, a relatable mission, or both, has not been proposed or executed by FOTAT. Alliances of this nature allow for smaller groups such as FOTAT to not only grow their community presence, but also share resources with like-minded organizations in their community. In addition, aligning allows groups such as FOTAT to gain a competitive edge by quickly growing the organization and allowing it to partner with a group that it may once have been struggling against (Willen and Yankey 255).

FOTAT's most prominent strategic priority is that, ideally, the building comes first, however the group does realize that a fully operational building is both very expensive and time consuming in nature. A viable Alger Theater would take about three years and \$1.5 million to become reality (Costello and Gowman). The group is not opposed to hosting off-site programming in order to raise not only money, but community support. While FOTAT has

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realized some success in funds donated from the community that same community has received little to no return on their investments since the inception of the organization. Though FOTAT has achieved a modicum of success in paying off past debt and making repairs to the structure, the mission statement's goal of community arts programming and neighborhood revitalization have yet to come to fruition. Ignoring the availability of space, talent and resources in the area that would be available to help foster off-site programming is a critical mistake.

In addition, FOTAT operates under the assumption that the surrounding community needs and wants an arts and culture establishment. FOTAT has, to date, not carried out an assessment of their surrounding community (Costello and Gowman). Though it is arguable that any community would benefit from such an organization or venue, FOTAT has yet to produce data that would provide accuracy to their statement of community need.

Community and government

agencies also seem regrettably ignored by FOTAT. Opportunities may exist in the form of government programs related to the Brownfield redevelopment or tax credits for historical buildings, City of Detroit initiatives such as Next Detroit, or public/private initiatives such as Local Initiative Support Corporation or Main Street.

It is reasonable to assume that due to its age, current state of disrepair and date that the theater was last viable, the Alger houses potentially hazardous or pollutant materials. If such were the case, the structure may be considered a Brownfield, deeming it eligible for grants or, more likely, loans from government entities (State of Michigan).

FOTAT, though aware of, has yet to follow through on their goal of obtaining tax credits relating to the Historical Designation awarded to the building (Costello and Gowman). Due to limited board reach and capacity to realize development, FOTAT is in need of assistance to realize the benefits of the designation.

Next Detroit, an initiative sponsored by the City of Detroit has deemed East English Village, the

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neighborhood bordering the Alger Theater, as a focus area of the initiative. Even a cursory analysis of involvement requirements shows strong relationships between the Next Detroit's goals and FOTAT's mission. Goals such as stronger ties to Grosse Pointe Park, an affluent community bordering Detroit near the Alger Theater, reinforcing neighborhood and recreational activities in East English Village and revitalizing businesses in the East Warren corridor (Next Detroit) make a partnership with Next Detroit and FOTAT very logical, yet, the organization is not currently a focus of Next Detroit or its programs.

Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC), assembled in Detroit as Neighborhoods NOW, seeks to "...include new [community] partnerships, cross-sector collaborations and new investments..." in their designated focus areas. Much like Next Detroit, LISC has identified Detroit's Far East/Lower East Side as a Comprehensive Strategic Investment Area (SIA). Its priority areas are pre-designed, and FOTAT's mission and goals fall within the Youth, Families and Schools SIA (Beyond a Logo 19). As

FOTAT has expressed interest in creating programming for youth in the hours most often thought of as "after-school", an alignment with LISC and Neighborhoods NOW is advisable.

Main Street, designed to encourage economic development by historic preservation and maintaining relevance seeks to rebuild once thriving commercial districts. It is known that at the time the Alger Theater was thriving, the East Warren Corridor was certainly considered a viable commercial district (Friends of the Alger Theater). Main Street's ideal of promoting community self-reliance through revitalization of commercial structures mirrors that of FOTAT. In Detroit, Main Street funds are delegated through the Office of Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (ONCR), and further through the East Warren Business Association, which FOTAT does have community ties. Monies through this program are available for façade improvement, landscaping and structure betterment (Model D Media).

Economic Impacts

The Alger Theater sits between the two communities of Morningside

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and East English Village. Though the Morningside community is self-sustaining, it is East English Village that is seen as an “icon of stability” (Beyond a Logo 5). Though a neighborhood assessment shows that the East Warren corridor immediately surrounding the Alger is ripe with vacant, boarded up structures, the disposable income and levels of home-ownership in the surrounding area will paint a different picture. At the time of this report the area within a one-mile radius of the Alger is populated by 32,232 residents, and 11,833 households. The residents of the area boast an average household income of \$42,375, which is nearly \$14,000 per year higher than that of the entire city (U.S. Census Bureau). Though FOTAT has not completed extensive community surveys, they could deduce that the disposable income of the area would allow them to easily purchase tickets for film, live or community theater activities. A neighborhood assessment of the area show 13 schools, seven foster home facilities and 10 churches, yet no recreational venue, leaving the area prime for programming related to children and the arts.

However, though the economic viability of the area surrounding the Alger is relatively stable, the finances of FOTAT itself are its biggest economic downfall. While the focus was, and still is, to remain a grass roots organization that will operate on small personal donations, programming nor rehabilitation are possible if the general fund of FOTAT remains where it is today.

Hence, once FOTAT engages other collaborative partners and residents in the area in its programming model, it has greater propensity to realize its social and economic goals.

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LEADESHIP INTERVIEW

On July 1, 2008 an interview with two members of FOTAT's Board, Geoff Gowman and Dennis Costello provided further insight to the organization and its goals. The goal of the interview was to delve into the operations of FOTAT, their successes and struggles to date, how they viewed their organization in terms of nonprofit mandates and how they viewed their community impact.

When asked why FOTAT was incorporated as a nonprofit, Mr. Costello and Mr. Gowman state they were advised by an individual in another theater organization, The Detroit Opera House that the easiest was to purchase the building would be as a nonprofit. They also mention that the ability as a 501(c)(3) to obtain donations while giving their stakeholders a tax incentive was a driving force. It is arguable that at the time, FOTAT did not fully understand the mandates and struggles that would face them as a nonprofit. Though they maintain they are in complete compliance with any governing agency, such as the Internal Revenue Service, the danger of violating

their tax-exempt classification by allowing commercial advertisements on their marquee has already been introduced.

FOTAT also remains a very well-intentioned agency that is passionate about rehabbing their building and revitalizing their neighborhood. It is obvious, however, that they are much more focused on the structure itself than any programming they may offer. They do realize that off-site programming may be necessary in order to gain the support of their community, they have yet to establish a concrete plan of program offering. They speak almost exclusively of the rehab of the structure. FOTAT's Board members do briefly speak about programming raising awareness and participation in the community, and in return allow for a larger base of support once the building was to re-open. Aside from structure repair, FOTAT's Board would also like to focus on growing their membership and committee support. They are operating with a bare-bones level of organizational and community support, and at this time do not have the manpower to grow them further. An e-

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newsletter is currently in the works, and FOTAT hopes to have a mailing list of over 250 persons. They believe that if they reach out to every person they can, their dedication to the mission will catch on to others in the community. They realize that their mission is reachable, citing other area theaters such as the Redford and Senate theaters that have partnered with other nonprofits to rehab and operate their venues. They do, however, maintain that FOTAT is more invested in community revitalization than other rehabbed theaters.

When asked about area security and potential issues such as parking, the FOTAT Board members seemingly gloss over what are serious issues. They only briefly address the parking issue, maintaining that the theater was built at a time when automobiles were not prominent, and believe that foot traffic from the neighborhood will decrease the need for many more parking spaces. It is also their hope that if the theater were to be in use, it may revitalize others in the community to open businesses in the storefronts nearest to the theater, which will spur both an increased sense of safety as well as additional parking. It

should be noted that the nearby community of East English Village does have security patrol available, which may be an asset to FOTAT.

FOTAT lastly acknowledges that while they have not had a great deal of success, nor has their mission been realized, they remain dedicated to their cause. The organization is dedicated to providing what they call “something nice for the neighborhood”. They want to restore and maintain something that was magnificent for them, and they believe a new generation deserves it as well.

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FINAL ASSESSMENT

Through its 20 year history in the community, it is quite commendable that FOTAT's board has remained committed to realizing the agency's mission. In working to achieve its goal of creating a viable community arts center the board should consider stepping back and working on improving their structure, leadership, organizational operations and programming via technical assistance from Detroit LISC as well as New Detroit's Compassion Capital Initiative.

First and foremost, FOTAT needs to heighten their community interaction. Conducting community assessments is crucial to determining their level of potential community support; however what pops out the most is the lack of programming made available to the community. FOTAT's success can be enhanced with the support of the area residents (past, present and within a 30 mile radius). By fostering relations with the residents, FOTAT can position the organization and cultivate long term relationships with the target market. Programming which cultivate the talents of those in the

immediate vicinity helps to create a personal attachment to the mission. FOTAT's desires to launch a capital campaign for the building renovations will be better realized after structure, leadership, organizational operations and programming. If arts and culture programming is still not viable with their current funding, FOTAT may consider alternative fundraising or social activities that would both promote their mission and increase revenue.

Finally, FOTAT is not taking full advantage of opportunities that may be available to them. By researching government, private and other nonprofits that share the basic goals and ideas of FOTAT they may be able to grow the community support and financial resources that are so important.

FOTAT would be wise to undergo further organizational assessment, ideally executed by an outside organization. A follow up to this paper will begin that process by further addressing the issues presented in this paper, and the suggestions briefly mentioned in this section. More particularly, the next section will focus on two potential partnership that could

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assist the agency in facilitating programming that will firstly allow them to gain visibility in the field of the arts and secondly begin raising funds for both its programs and building renovations.

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PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

The Friends of the Alger Theater (FOTAT) has been in existence for over 20 years, yet has not been able to achieve the goals of its mission, which is to "...refurbish and reopen the Alger Theater as a viable community arts and neighborhood movie theater. The Alger will serve as a catalyst for the continuing revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood and adjacent business by promoting local creative arts..." (Friends of the Alger Theater). Since purchasing the Alger Theater in 1985 FOTAT has planned and carried out sporadic fundraisers, mainly by hosting jazz concerts at local restaurant venues. They have not, however, carried out any successful programming, nor are there any concrete program models or plans in place. In addition, the Alger Theater remains in disrepair, and an estimated \$1.5 million dollars is needed to bring the Alger structure up to the standards of FOTAT's desires. This project, if funding were to be received, would likely take three years to complete (Costello and Gowman).

In September 2007, the close of FOTAT's last fiscal year, treasurer's

report had \$13,966 in monetary assets. Thus, FOTAT's financial status does not allow them to begin work on the costly and time-consuming repairs of the structure. With such great emphasis on this area which has generated limited resources, FOTAT's lack of programming does not allow the organization to build the community's awareness and support of its efforts.

Though FOTAT lacks the necessary monetary assets to realize its mission, they have strong physical and intellectual assets that are of great benefit to them and the community. More particularly, the Alger Theater is in a high-traffic, stable income neighborhood in Detroit. As mentioned in the *Surrounding Framework* section of this report, the residents of the area boast an average household income of \$42,375 (U.S Census Bureau). With over 32,232 residents, another asset is human capital.

Having one high school which services many of the 11,833 households, the area has been labeled as needing stable after school programming by the Local Initiative Support Corporation (Beyond a Logo 19).

Giving strong consideration to the need in the area and the assets that are in

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place, this section of the paper will build on FOTAT's assets and propose strategic alliances with local entities, such as the Detroit Public Library: Thomas Jefferson Branch, Finney High School and the Blue Pointe Restaurant.

Programming Model

Potential programming for FOTAT should focus on its local partners and further developing its current marquee funding efforts.

Partners such as the Detroit Public Library, Thomas Jefferson Branch, Finney High School and the Blue Pointe Restaurant offer great opportunities to build on current assets in the area. Other partners or potential sponsors of marquee advertisement for arts based programming in the community include but are not limited to Advance Auto, Auto Murray, Auto Zone, CVS Pharmacy, Blue Pointe, Benito's Pizza, Pizza Hut, the 11,833 households, etc.

By working with the library and Finney High School, FOTAT could develop after school theater training which helps build on the arts funding the state government put into place via its Cook Cities Initiative. These two partnerships are of significance in that the library's success in children's programming makes

it an attractive partner for FOTAT, especially as the Alger itself is not habitable, and in house programming is not a possibility at this time.

Finney High School is another potential partner because it has access to federal and state funding to create an arts based after school program, but doesn't have the partners to assist in realizing its goal.

The Blue Pointe Restaurant has a long standing presence on Detroit's eastside. Over the years, they have partnered with FOTAT for fundraisers. Due to this already established relationship, FOTAT would have limited barriers to overcome relationship development to create and realize a more stable fundraising program with the restaurant.

In addition, by redirecting its efforts to build on its marquee advertisements, an existing enterprising strategy, FOTAT could generate unrestricted income to leverage for its rehabilitation concerns. The use of a strategic tool, the strategy change cycle, will be introduced as a possible problem solving tool for the FOTAT board, which may be used to strengthen and re-create the organization so that it remains relevant

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in the community.

PROPOSED ALLIANCES

FOTAT is not currently able to carry out any onsite, mission related programming. In order to remain relevant in their community, and bolster the awareness and support of the residents in the area, it is essential that FOTAT begins the modeling and formation of offsite programming. As the area has been singled out needing children's after school or educational programming, an alliance with the both Finney High School and Detroit Public Library: Thomas Jefferson Branch is proposed. High schools and libraries in various parts of the country are already operating programming relating to film, performing arts and children. FOTAT would be wise to glean information from these already existing programs.

Local Model - Grosse Pointe Public Library

According to Audio-Visual Librarian Diana Howbert, The Grosse Pointe Library has successful programming in place that is based on popular and family films. Partnering with a film teacher from the Grosse Pointe School District the library hosts Oscar Night, which is popular with teens as well

as adults. During Oscar Night groups will watch clips of Academy Award nominated films and critique performances. This program has become so successful that the library outgrew its own facility and now hosts events at either the Grosse Pointe War Memorial or the auditorium of Grosse Pointe South High School. In addition to this program, the library also has more traditional children's programming where parents and children together come to the library at designated times to read children's books or watch family or animated films in the library's meeting rooms. Ms. Howbert believes the library has had such great success with their programming for young people due to the creation of a Teen Advisory Board (TAB). One of the TAB's current projects is Cult Classics, showing classic films such as "Psycho" and "The Big Sleep". A discussion, led by a librarian, follows each movie. Following "Psycho" a discussion about the loss of character identity in horror movies took place. The students on the Board have partnered with their schools, mainly Grosse Pointe North and Grosse Pointe South High Schools, to allow for those attending film discussions as part of Cult Classics to earn Humanities credits (Grosse Pointe Public Library). Most all youth and teen programming at

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the Grosse Pointe Public Library is free. Ms. Howbert states that programs such as these are funded primarily by the library itself, and that an occasional program fee of \$10 applies. Most often, if a program patron is a member of the library's Friends of The Grosse Pointe Library organization the attendance cost is waived.

Regional Model - Madison-Jefferson Public Library, Indiana

The Madison-Jefferson Public Library in Madison, Indiana partners each year with the Ohio Theatre in Madison, Indiana to host the Family Film Series program. The Ohio Theatre is both a first-run movie theater as well as a community organization. In addition to programming in partnership with the library they also host free family films throughout the year, as well as a program titled Terrific Tuesdays, where families can purchase movie tickets for only \$2.00 per person. The Tuesday's program is subsidized by area businesses (Ohio Theatre).

Most, though not all, of the movies shown during the Family Film Series are based on popular children's books such as Horton Hears a Who, The Spiderwick Chronicles, and Nim's Island. Following each movie that is based on a book the library hosts a discussion group for

children, and parents are welcome to attend (Madison-Jefferson County Public Library). Movies are shown each summer on Monday (at 10:30AM and 1:00PM) and Tuesday (at 10:30AM), and the program is held at the same time as the library's traditional summer reading program. For each book a child reads, he or she receives one entry into a prize drawing at the Ohio Theatre (Ohio Theatre). The program is funded both by grants and public support. The Community Foundation of Madison provides a grant to the library, while businesses such as the *Madison Courier* newspaper, area doctor's offices and banks provide monetary and in-kind support. Prizes are awarded throughout the program, and grand prizes of two bicycles are given at a party celebrating the end of the Family Film Fest each August (Madison-Jefferson County Library).

National Model - New Jersey State Library

The New Jersey Theater Alliance is a nonprofit group made up of several nonprofit theaters in New Jersey. The group is responsible for model programming and partnerships between its member theaters. The partnership between the New Jersey State Library and

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the New Jersey Theater Alliance focuses on live action performances as opposed to film. Each year in August, the two agencies partner in the production of Family Week at the Theatre (New Jersey State Theater Alliance). Specifically, the New Jersey State Library hosts the sub-program Family Week at the Theatre in Your Library.

Family Week at the Theater in Your Library is held in one library in each county in New Jersey. The library which hosts the programming is decided by a voting group which receives applications from teen groups at each library. In addition to live shows at the libraries, workshops are held for both adult and youth patrons (New Jersey State Library). Many shows, such as “Arabian Nights” and “Seussical Junior” are based on popular books or stories. Children that attend the “Seussical Junior” performance receive a free Dr. Seuss book. Workshops include TeenProv, an improvisation lesson for teens, and Theatrical Movement, which allows children to take the stage and learn basic movement techniques from the Alliance’s actors (New Jersey Theater Alliance).

The program is funded jointly by grants as well as local businesses, private

donations and ticket sales. The National Endowment for The Arts, New Jersey State Council on the Arts and other smaller foundations provide grant support. Sprint, Verizon and Barnes and Noble were the title sponsors for the event. Barnes and Noble was the primary sponsor for the In Your Library events (New Jersey State Library). Tickets to Family Week at the Theater events held in traditional theaters are \$10.00 per person; however, events held in the partner libraries are free of charge (New Jersey State Theater Alliance).

Proposed FOTAT Programming

The neighboring Jefferson library and Finney High School are the ideal places to fulfill the goal of a safe structured environment where children can nurture their abilities, and with this partnership, FOTAT may be able to increase its community impact. Not only will FOTAT be showing current donors a return on their investments by creating programming that carries out their mission, but may attract new donors who are happy with the programming offered.

Mrs. Maria Bryson, Branch Librarian at the Jefferson Library, was very receptive to partnering with FOTAT for offsite programming. Mrs. Bryson

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stated that the library does host regular children's programming of game days, movie days and summer reading clubs. The programs are successful with up to 30 children attending game and movie days and up to 60 children attending summer reading club events. The library facility has space that may accommodate 40 children in chairs or 60 children with floor seating. They are remodeling their outdoor courtyard which will allow them even more space for events. The library also has audio visual equipment such as a DVD player and television. They hope to replace this equipment with newer models by fall 2008.

Given the success of the programming models, the proposed programming partnership between FOTAT and Jefferson Library is for a book-to-movie reading group. This would likely be a smooth operation as the library is already experienced in both movie days as well as book groups. Mrs. Bryson states that the youth patrons of the library are very interested in hands-on activities, and are interested in movie making, comic books and art projects. If the book-to-movie program progressed successfully, FOTAT may wish to host movie making workshops or live-action workshops for the children. As the library is a nonprofit

entity in itself all events held in the facility must be free of charge and open to everyone in the community (Bryson). Jefferson Library is willing to partner with FOTAT in advertising any programs either on their website or on library posters.

In order to successfully carry out a program with a potential for 60 children in attendance, volunteers from the FOTAT organization would be necessary. With 175 dues paying members (Meeting Minutes) FOTAT has a strong community that it may draw from. Moving these members from dues paying to actively involved will require contact and interaction from the FOTAT Board of Directors. FOTAT may also seek to recruit new volunteers from the program itself, as parents or caretakers of children are often willing to take part in activities that benefit them.

Program funding needs may be addressed by competing for grants from various community foundations. Materials, equipment and advertisement are all likely costs for this program. If the programming were to grow into a workshop or instruction phase, costs would be significantly higher as more advanced equipment as well as payment to professional organizations would likely be

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necessary.

Possible Funding Sources

The Edward E MacCrone Trust is an independent foundation, held in trust by Comerica Bank, which gives primarily in the state of Michigan and has a specific interest in cultural and performing arts. In 2006 the foundation awarded \$80,000 in grants, and has assets of \$1.8 million. There is a rolling deadline for awards, meaning FOTAT would be able to apply for grant funding at any time of year, based on their own programming schedule. A detailed letter must be submitted to the foundation, via Comerica Bank, outlining the need and reason for requesting (The Foundation Center).

The Kresge Foundation, a large entity with over \$3.4 billion in assets, gives \$1.2 million in grants per year. Many of Kresge's grants are awarded over a rolling period of time, meaning that funds may be disbursed equally over a two- or three-year period. Kresge's mission is to catalyze the growth of organizations and to help them connect with their stakeholders, both of which are important to FOTAT's mission and organizational concerns. They have a key interest in arts and humanities and education. Kresge operates an Arts

Support Program which will award \$2 million in grant funds to arts and cultural organizations in Detroit over the next two years. Organizations with operating budgets of less than \$500,000 per year, a category FOTAT certainly falls under, are eligible for grants of \$5,000 to \$20,000 per year. Kresge also operates a Detroit Program, which seeks to support a higher quality of life in the metro-Detroit region by creating a thriving arts and cultural community. There is no limit to the amount of funding an organization may apply for. The application for a Kresge grant is quite involved, with IRS determination, organization history and programming plans being some of the required documents. Though this funding source is being introduced for children's library programming it is also worth noting that Kresge is willing to provide funding for building renovation (The Foundation Center).

The Ford Motor Company Foundation, another large foundation, has over \$94 million in assets, and gave \$17.6 million in grants in 2006. They have strong emphasis on giving in Southeastern Michigan, and an interest in children, arts, historical organizations and performing arts. They will assist with funding program development, as well as ongoing

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program support. The foundation gave over \$1 million to three Detroit based agencies in 2006, and gave \$42,500 to a literacy arts program also in Detroit (The Foundation Center).

It should be briefly noted that it is critical for FOTAT to have concrete, stable program models as well as a detailed budget for the program before applying for grant assistance.

FUNDRAISING

In addition to not being able to carry out mission related programming onsite, FOTAT is unable to host fundraising events at the Alger Theater. Fundraising events are necessary to engage and educate the public on the mission and successes of an organization. FOTAT has hosted successful fundraising events in the past; however, the demise of an entertainment committee left the organization with no follow up events. FOTAT's Board of Directors has stated that they are badly in need of another successful entertainment, fundraising and awareness committee (Costello and Gowman). Due to its close proximity, knowledge and past relationship with FOTAT and experience with live entertainment, a partnership with the Blue Pointe Restaurant is proposed. Several

nonprofit organizations have successfully partnered with other entertainment or dining establishments in order to raise funds, either as a high-profile one-time event or an ongoing partnership, and their program details will be discussed.

Local Model - The Ark

While The Ark is currently operating as a successful nonprofit entertainment venue, much like FOTAT strives to become, the organization began as a small group supported by local churches, which sought to offer a creative outlet to young people through music and the arts. The Ark was able to sustain itself through donations and ticket sales, though a large fundraising event, The Ann Arbor Folk Festival, soon became a large source of revenue. The Ark has a separate entity that is responsible for the sale of food and beverages to concert attendees, and The Ark has made it a requirement that one be a member of the organization in order to purchase alcohol. While The Ark is able to host fundraisers and revenue generating programming in their own facility, FOTAT would still be wise to learn from the history of The Ark and how they became a successful entertainment venue.

In terms of community collaboration, The Ark hosts, in

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partnership via sponsors and grant support, The Ann Arbor Folk Festival, a two-day event held this year at Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor. Sponsors such as Ford Motor Company and DTE Energy, as well as for-profit businesses that believe in The Ark's values of the human spirit and artistic freedom, such as Whole Foods Market and Functional Organics are eager to partner with the organization (The Ark).

Regional Model - Boyne Highlands Young Americans Dinner Theater

Boyne Highlands Resort in Bay Harbor, Michigan has partnered with Young Americans for the past 31 years. Young Americans is a nonprofit organization focusing on promoting a positive image of youth through music and dance performances and education. In addition to the revenue generating dinner theater at the resort, the organization also offers children's workshops and artistic education as part of their mission.

The dinner theater is comprised of a group of young adults ages 16 to 24 who serve meals and perform for resort patrons. In exchange for their providing entertainment the young adults are able to board at the resort, and their stay and meals are gratis (Boyne Highlands). It is programs such as the dinner theater that

generate funding for Young Americans' many other programming directives. Monies are generated through ticket sales which are \$43 for adults and \$25 for children under 12 years of age. The food is prepared by the resort staff and is served by the performers as part of the dinner theater experience. Performances include both music and dance numbers, with this year's program focusing on Broadway show tunes (Young Americans).

National Model - Bay St. Louis Little Theatre

The Bay St. Louis Little Theatre has been in existence for 61 years as a successful performing arts theater in Mississippi. The Little Theatre generated revenue mainly through ticket sales; however, they also received grant funding through the Mississippi Arts Commission in order to rehabilitate their structure. The building was undergoing renovation when it was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. A new building was acquired, however extensive renovation was still necessary to make the structure viable, and onsite programming was not possible. The Little Theatre partnered with P'Zazz Restaurant to host a successful Valentine's Day Dinner Show, and has built the partnership up to include an event on the

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third Thursday of every month, and will continue to do so until the Little Theatre is able to host on site programming. In addition to raising funds for renovation, the dinner show generated revenue used to support a children's theatre workshop.

The dinner event is held at P'Zazz Restaurant in Diamondhead, Mississippi. Little Theatre actors perform live shows while the diners enjoy their meals. There is a \$5.00 charge to attend the event, and there are also raffle prizes that are donated by local area businesses, such as, salons and local sports teams. This program is funded by the Little Theatre itself, as well as from the ticket sales and the profits of the raffles. The theatre itself received a boost when a local business man purchased naming rights to the theatre's new building. The Little Theatre was able to reopen in May for onsite shows (Bay St. Louis Little Theatre).

Proposed FOTAT Programming

David Muir, the owner of the Blue Pointe Restaurant was very supportive of FOTAT and their past fundraisers and has stated that the establishment is willing to participate in any and all future endeavors of FOTAT. Past fundraisers held at Blue Pointe have had an attendance of up to 80 persons. Mr. Muir has stated that he is

willing to give a discount on a buffet meal to FOTAT. With an average meal price of \$30 per person, and an attendance capacity of 100 people, a potential night's profit is roughly \$3,000.

The program models support that a door charge or ticket fee is generally acceptable. Given that the meals average \$30, and entertainment is part of the event a ticket fee of \$40-\$45 dollars may be supported. Thought Mr. Muir did not state his willingness, FOTAT could bargain for entertainment to be donated to the event by either the restaurant or the entertainment group. In addition, funds may be raised by the sale of raffle tickets or silent auctions. Prizes may be solicited by local businesses or establishments. Staff of two Detroit based agencies, the American Red Cross and March of Dimes, state that silent auction or raffle prizes are often key money-makers as patrons of such events are willing to spend a small amount of money for more expensive goods or packages. Local salons, restaurants or small businesses are often willing to donate gift certificates or popular merchandise in exchange for the publicity offered by being part of a charity event (Hendricks). In addition, larger "grand prize" items such as sports or travel packages often draw hundreds or

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thousands of dollars (Koch).

In addition to a one-time fundraising event, FOTAT may also seek to partner with the Blue Pointe to host a concert series or ongoing fundraiser. Instead of purchasing food and hosting a dinner, FOTAT may negotiate with Mr. Muir and the Blue Pointe to have a presence in the restaurant once per month (or more, as success and time permit) and receive a percentage of the evening's profits. The local American Red Cross hosted a similar concert series with Memphis Smoke, a restaurant in Royal Oak, Michigan. Each week the agency was able to sell items, and promote itself during a live performance. Donation boxes and information packets remained in the restaurant throughout the length of the partnership. Donations and raffle sales raised over \$8,000 for the organization (American Red Cross Southeastern Michigan).

MARQUEE CHANGES

The Alger Theater itself sits on the corner of Warren Avenue and East Outer Drive, on the east side of Detroit. The corner is a high-traffic area with an estimated 80,000 individuals that drive or walk past the theater each day (Costello and Gowman). The theater is still

noticeable to the public, mainly due to an updated marquee. FOTAT is currently capitalizing on the marquee by offering low cost advertising to area residents, community agencies and businesses. Over half of the income generated by FOTAT in FY2007 was from advertisements on the marquee, however, their largest source of could potentially harm FOTAT's status as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, as the majority of advertisements placed on the marquee are not at all tied to FOTAT's mission (Massarsky 449). Advertisements are sold at varying rates for individuals, nonprofits and businesses. For the purpose of this comparison, we will use the business rate of \$2.00 per letter, with a \$50.00 minimum charge (Friends of the Alger Theater).

FOTAT must begin advertising mission related messages of their marquee. The marquee would be an excellent advertising source for local performing arts or film organizations. Having the marquee advertise and or all upcoming cultural events in the area, such as the Detroit Film Theater events, holiday ballets or music events such as the Jazz Festival or Concert of Colors would still bring in revenue for FOTAT.

Lamar Outdoor, a commercial

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advertising firm specializing in outdoor signage operated a billboard near the Alger, on Harper just west of Cadieux. For one panel of this sign, Lamar has a cost of \$4,900 per month (Lamar Outdoor), over \$4,000 more than FOTAT charges for use of their marquee as advertisement. Of course, FOTAT's marquee is much smaller in size and doesn't operate with color or graphics, but the traffic in the area supports a higher rate. In addition, other historic theaters also advertise on their marquee. The Athens Theatre in De Land, Florida also rents space on their historic marquee. In addition to a setup fee of \$25.00 the rates range from \$30 for one day to \$350 for one month of advertising. The Athens is similar in that it is an historic theater, undergoing extensive renovation, which is now operating as a nonprofit entity (Sands Theater Center). If enough monies are generated from the new usage of the marquee, FOTAT may be able to update to a color panel or digital marquee. Of course, due to its Historical Designation, FOTAT must ensure that an updated sign would be allowable.

STRATEGY CHANGE CYCLE

The strategy change cycle (SCC) is a ten-step process that allows an

organization to step back and review their mission, relevance to their stakeholders and the organizations strategic issues (Bryson 171). As FOTAT has been stagnant in the success of programming and other mission related activities for over 20 years, a process such as this will allow them to examine the strategic, or problematic, issues facing them. Not only has FOTAT itself evolved, but the political, social and economic climate of their neighborhood has changed as well, and FOTAT may realize that they need to adapt to the needs of their community. The SCC will force FOTAT to identify strategic issues, their mandates and mission. They must then research their internal and external environment and follow by forming, testing, reviewing and adapting strategies to address these issues. Once implementing their newly formed strategy they will constantly need to readdress and review their success and relevancy. The SCC is a circular process that forces an organization to consistently examine the issues that are facing them, and will allow them to realize, address and adapt to meet the needs of their stakeholders (Bryson 174).

FUTURE PLANS

Upon success of the proposed

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partnerships with the Jefferson Library and Blue Pointe Restaurant, FOTAT may wish to take on additional programming directives. It is the hope of the group to rehabilitate their building in order to be able host onsite programming, and these proposed programs may assist them in raising the community awareness and funding that is so necessary to the project. In addition to the community support initiatives discussed in the precursor to this paper, FOTAT may wish to align strategically with other local film or theater groups. These alliances may allow FOTAT to share materials, volunteers or funds in order to reach a larger group of stakeholders (Yankey and Willen 257).

On the local level, a partnership with the Detroit Film Center would greatly benefit the Alger's cause. In addition to providing cinema workshops and classes, the DFC also offers low cost equipment rentals to its members (Detroit Film Center). On the regional level, FOTAT should contact the Michigan Theater Foundation regarding its programming. Recognized as one of one most successful theater organizations in the entire country, its knowledge and experience would prove to be invaluable to the FOTAT. Lastly, on a national level, the FOTAT should join the League of Historic American Theaters

(LHAT). The resources at the LHAT's disposal along with the guidance and direction it can provide, more than make up for the nominal fee of \$290 that FOTAT would be required to pay to join. LHAT also hosts a yearly programming forum for historic theaters, that this year will be held at the Michigan Theater (League of Historic American Theaters).

PROGRAMMING CONCLUSION

FOTAT has been in existence for over 25 years. They have been able to purchase their facility, make repairs and pay back taxes (Friends of the Alger Theater), yet have not been able to generate any large amounts of income or successful programming. For these two reasons, FOTAT is not seen as exceptionally relevant in the eyes of its stakeholders. Though they are very well intentioned and driven, it is critical that they shift their focus temporarily from rehabilitating their structure to hosting offsite programming in order to interact with their community. Studying program models that are similar to those that FOTAT wishes to undertake will allow them to glean best practices and failures which they may adapt for their own use. They must also examine further enterprising strategies, as well as focus on

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their strategic issues in order to ensure they are offering a service that is required and will be utilized by their community. After approximately one year of successful programming or fundraising, FOTAT may wish to take on additional programs, and begin to align themselves with local, regional and national initiatives that may support their venture.

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