

## **Request for Proposals: An Arts Partnership for a Destination Cultural Center**

### Who is StoneLion?

StoneLion Puppet Theater, a Kansas City, Missouri Not-For-Profit Corporation, designated a 501(c)3 Charity by the IRS, has a twenty-five year track record of national and international theatrical touring. It is known not only for its grant-supported Environmental Education touring roster into schools across the country, it is also known for its Giant Puppet Productions, featuring puppets up to 35' long and 25' high that have been seen at festivals and outdoor venues around the region. Last year, StoneLion gave over four hundred performances here and abroad. StoneLion's finely crafted productions have toured to Vietnam, Guatemala, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates and other international destinations. StoneLion's Artistic Director is a U.S. State Department Arts Envoy bringing artistry to the world. (StoneLion has been funded by entities as diverse as the EPA, the Francis Family Foundation, Johnson County (KS) Stormwater, The United States State Department, KC Water Services, The National Endowment for the Arts, The Missouri Arts Council, ArtsKC, The Kansas City Neighborhood Tourism Development Fund and more.)

### Project Summary:

StoneLion's business model, up to this point, has been to generate revenue in two equal buckets: grant-funded public and private school touring; and, fee-based performances at client locations, with annual revenues in excess of \$250,000.00. StoneLion has not in the recent past sold individual tickets in a theater environment, nor has it had any public space to display its hundreds of puppets and fascinating work space. The RFP is designed to explore the possibility of partnering with a developer, community improvement district, or governmental entity to create a destination cultural center, bringing thousands of families to the destination while providing public art as an amenity to the area.

### A History of Partnership:

For the last ten years, the Board of Commissioners of the Kansas City, MO Parks Department has graciously partnered with StoneLion, providing a former Community Center at 20<sup>th</sup> and Tracy for StoneLion's use for offices, building, and storage in exchange for annual in-kind programming at Kansas City Parks and associated facilities. This relationship is coming to an end this year as the building is about to be sold.

KC Parks has enjoyed hundreds of shows, workshops and activities in its Community Center over these last ten years, including multiple outdoor giant puppet productions, and annual participation in the Parks-Sponsored Waterfire spectacle on the Plaza each October.

### A Following:

Event producers know that when they hire StoneLion, there is a built-in boost in attendance numbers to their event. With over 5,000 email contacts, over 1,700 followers on Facebook and over 1,600 likes (See: <https://www/facebook.com/stonelionpuppets/>) there is a core group of families, some multi-generational, that are attracted to its productions.

## Our Proposal:

StoneLion proposes to create a destination cultural arts attraction that includes the following:

- Weekly ticketed performances open to the public, of its repertoire of over 100 productions in an intimate, simple multi-purpose theater space/commons area.
- The same venue for events for the young and young at heart, including corporate retreats, birthday parties, receptions and weddings.
- Gallery-quality displays of its puppets for the public to enjoy.
- Visibility into our studio build space, allowing patrons to see puppets of all sizes coming to life in real time.
- Regular puppet-making workshops for the public or for private parties.
- Regular roving puppets and outdoor art (think art installations, performance artists, stilt walkers, etc.) in the area during special events, or high traffic days, creating art on the streets or sidewalks.
- Outdoor staged productions as an adjunct to special events in the area.
- A small gift shop featuring unique puppet-related gifts, toys and souvenirs.

StoneLion is not looking for a free building. We have the financial wherewithal to buy or lease the space we need to continue our existing operations. What we do not have is the financial wherewithal to obtain that space AND a NEW public cultural arts destination. The purpose of this RFP is to see if there are partners willing to bridge that gap through a creative collaboration that brings the traffic, cachet, and civic pride associated with such a cultural attraction. There are specific needs:

1. The public cultural arts destination would require 4,000 - 6,000 square feet of space, including space for the following:
  - a. A 10x20 workshop for sewing and sculpting visible to patrons through a large window.
  - b. A 24x24 stage and associated seating for 50 along with floor seating, integrated with common area space sufficient for a small gift shop and gallery installations of the puppets.
  - c. 600 sq. ft. of administrative office space.
  - d. 1,000 sq. ft. scene shop for sets and giant puppet build with 12' ceilings and a large door tot eh outside, also with large windows for patrons to view.
2. StoneLion additionally requires 4,000 - 6,000 square feet of industrial storage with a large entry door, either in conjunction with the cultural space or at a second location to be used for storage of puppets and sets.
3. Parking for StoneLion vehicles and trailer.

Please submit a letter of interest by November 15, 2017 with some information about what you have to offer to Greg Patterson of Greg Patterson & Associates at [gpatterson@gpattersonassoc.com](mailto:gpatterson@gpattersonassoc.com), 816-753-3619, 3619 Broadway, #8, Kansas City, MO 64111.