



Mid-Year Report 2024

Celebrating 64 Years of Music, Connection and Learning.



Director's Message

Isn't it mindblowing that musicians working with the same 12 notes keep making new songs year after year, century after century? Doesn't it amaze you that your mood can switch from stormy to sunny when you hear a certain song? Or that a dementia patient who hasn't spoken in months can sing along to a familiar song from years ago? Or that an 18-month-old toddler can balance on her feet and sway perfectly to the rhythm of a song?



Music is a powerful tool for building health and harmony. As you'll read in one of our stories below, "we work with what we have." We have music. Sharing it joyfully in community is what folk music is all about, and that's the heart of Lena's mission.

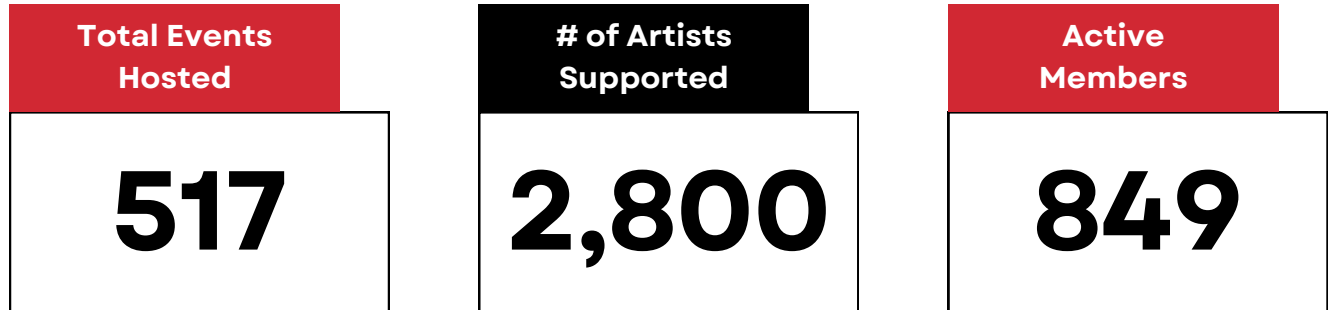
On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Caffè Lena, I'm sending you some numbers and stories that I think you'll find interesting as we mark the ½ way point in Caffè Lena's 64th year. This venue's history and intimacy are legendary, but it's friends and allies like you that have made Caffè Lena a national leader among small music venues. The information I'm sharing with you reflects the engagement of our audience and artists, and the generosity of our members and business sponsors.

I would love to hear back from you after you read this report. Are there other data points or stories you'd like included in future editions? It's our intention to make this Mid-Year Report an annual tradition, so let us know what will make it useful and interesting for you. I want you to have the information you need to understand the powerful impact you can make on this venue, and in turn on the wider community, and on the future of the music we all love.

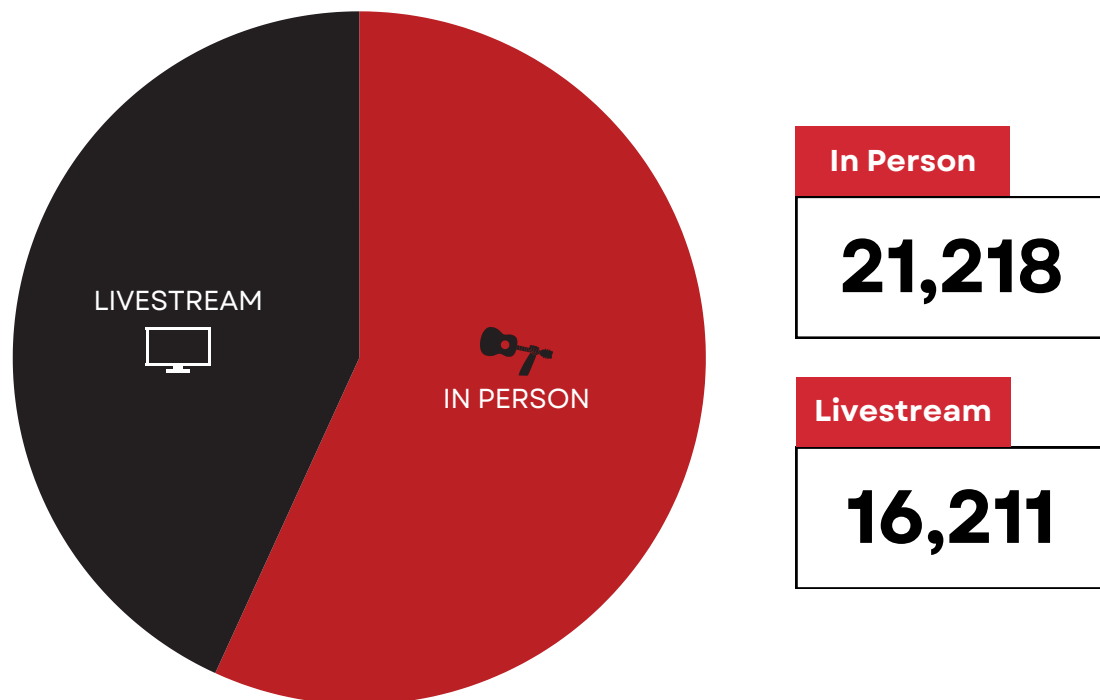
With gratitude,
Sarah Craig, Executive Director

2023 - 2024

By The Numbers



Attendance Figures



Caffe Lena On The Road

43 sites visited across Saratoga, Warren & Washington counties, serving **2,300** community members.

Member Spotlight

Lesley & Bob Vogel

In 2008, Bob and Lesley Vogel began searching for a weekend retreat that could eventually become a place to retire. New Jersey was their homebase, where Bob co-owned a marketing firm and Lesley decided to leave her law practice and focus on creating art. Their top priority was a town with a vibrant music and arts scene, leading them to Saratoga Springs.



“Caffe Lena is an anchor for us,” Lesley shares. “You don’t need to be in Manhattan to experience great music and meet interesting people.” For the Vogels, walking into a show at Caffe Lena is a chance to see friends and be part of a community that shares their love for live music.

What truly sets Caffe Lena apart for Lesley and Bob is its commitment to giving back to the community. “I’ve been involved with TrueSongs, as a sponsor and volunteer,” says Bob. “Caffe Lena not only cultivates a music scene but also walks the talk when it comes to community service.” This blend of exceptional music and community engagement is what makes Caffe Lena special to them.

The Vogels are generous members of Caffe Lena, motivated by a desire to ensure the venue continues to thrive. “We’re members because we want to make sure that Caffe Lena gets the support it needs to do what it does—not just when we’re at the show, but all the time,” Lesley explains. Being members makes the Vogels feel like they have “skin in the game.” This sense of ownership and involvement enriches their experience, making every visit to Caffe Lena more meaningful.

Lesley and Bob’s journey from New Jersey to Saratoga Springs, and their active connection to Caffe Lena, highlights the special role this venue plays in the lives of its members. Inspired by their story? Consider becoming a member of Caffe Lena yourself, and join an extraordinary group of good folks who celebrate music, service and community spirit.

Caffe Lena On The Road

Delivering live music to underserved community members in three upstate counties.



43 sites visited across Saratoga, Warren & Washington counties, serving **2,300** community members.

2024 Community Partners

Ascend Wellness
Hive of Hope
Lifeworks Community Action Soup Kitchen
Saratoga Senior Center
Wesley Community
WAIT House
Salem Community Courthouse
Saratoga Waldorf Lower School
Project Lift
Sacadaga Elementary School
Saratoga Independent School
Saratoga Springs High School
Saratoga Community Health Center
Cambridge Assisted Living
Saratoga Bridges
Charlton School
Caroline St Elementary
Saratoga Bridges
Lake Ave Elementary School
Geyser Rd Elementary School
Greenfield Elementary School
Division St Elementary School
Dorothy Nolan Elementary School

Testimonials

The visit to WAIT House was truly a gift. My staff and I cannot tell you enough how much we appreciate the time and effort on the part of Caffe Lena and its artists to bring light into the darkness faced by many of our residents.

Jason McLaughlin
Executive Director, WAIT House

I cannot say enough about the importance of this work - being able to go into these spaces, make connections with kids & make sure they are seen and that they know how incredibly important music is. It is such a gift.

Crys Matthews
Singer-Songwriter, Nashville, TN

Sponsor Spotlight

Granite & Marble Works

Mike and Margaret Roohan are business owners with a mission that starts with their company, Granite & Marble Works, and ends with a big positive impact on the quality of life in Saratoga Springs. “We look for ways to make a difference with what we have,” Margaret explains. “That happens to be countertops.”



The Roohans moved back to Mike’s hometown of Saratoga Springs in 1999 to raise their three children. Mike, a general contractor, had a keen interest in natural stone which led him to establish Granite & Marble Works. Alongside the hard work the Roohans put into building their business, they focused their family’s resources on supporting education. They donated a large piece of land to Skidmore College, and they were instrumental in creating a new home for the Saratoga Independent School. Their daughter, MaryLeigh Roohan, got a practical education at Caffe Lena’s open mic. She developed her songs and performance skills, and gave the first of many headline shows on our stage at the age of 17.

These days the Roohans' special project at Caffe Lena is underwriting our summer programming at Faith’s House, the daycare center for backstretch kids at Saratoga Race Course. (No surprise, Faith’s House is outfitted with Granite & Marble Works countertops.) The Roohans backed this Caffe Lena initiative based on their connection to the backstretch community and their love for children. After seeing our program in action last summer, Margaret was moved by its transformative effect on the young children, noting, “It has made the summer for the kids. It got them moving, but also calmed them. It's really sweet and fun.” Mike adds, “You never know when some small thing you do can change someone’s life.”

“You get so much more than you give,” is how Margaret explains Granite & Marble Works’ commitment to supporting local causes. “Through collaboration, you’re pooling resources,” Mike adds, “and it actually affects our whole staff. Everyone here feels good about the ways the company makes things happen for local people.” The Roohans invite other business owners to adopt a Caffe Lena program that’s meaningful to them. Margaret says, “You can make a connection as a company to a world bigger than yours.”

Passing It Forward

Engaging our youth in carrying on the folk tradition.



Little Folks Series

These free concerts show young children how real music is made. Monthly Little Folks matinees give families a chance to enjoy a kid-friendly concert that appeals to all ages. We market these activities through local social service agencies to make sure all families, regardless of income, get a chance to enjoy live music from folk legends, world music groups and beyond.

Folk Club Kids

Ages 18 mos - 5 years old come to Caffe Lena weekly for Folk Club Kids, a unique free drop-in program of live music, games, lessons and stories. Children are invited to sit and listen, twirl and bounce, answer questions, sing along, and follow gestures. It's an opportunity for children and their caregivers to fall in love with live music in an inclusive, warm, relaxed environment.

Caffe Lena School of Music

Caffe Lena School of Music uses traditional folk music pedagogy rooted in demonstration, conversation, and mentoring, where friendship and mutual respect are integral to learning. From the first lesson, students experience the power of making music as an ensemble, and hear how each note and strum contributes to the whole as their repertoire of skills grows.

The Rolling Pebbles

In the last 18 months, School of Music students have started the very first Caffe Lena youth band. Meeting weekly to learn songs & performance technique have led this group of budding stars to perform on storied stages throughout the Capital Region including the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, SPAC, Caffe Lena's Sing in the Streets Festival and the School's annual fundraiser festival Fiddles & Foliage.

Lena Legacy Spotlight

Cassandra Kubinski & Bogdan Gologan



Songwriter and performer Cassandra Kubinski first joined the Caffe Lena community over a decade ago as an audience member when she would visit Saratoga Springs to spend time with her then-boyfriend, Bogdan Gologan. Cassandra later brought her phenomenal piano-driven pop to our stage as a performer, and then accepted an invitation to join our Board of Directors in 2022.

Earlier this year, Bogdan and Cassandra, now married and thinking about the kind of community they want to help create, decided to join the Lena Legacy Society. This special group of donors is building an endowment to ensure that the Caffe is here to serve future generations.

“We’ve been inspired by the Caffe’s mission and how it translates into practice,” said Cassandra. “The positive impact Caffe Lena has on the community is something we wanted to support.” As an artist herself, she values Caffe Lena as an essential venue for self-expression, creativity, and connection. “Supporting an organization that offers such a wide cross-section of artists and audiences a platform to thrive is crucial,” said Cassandra. “We understand that what the Caffe offers is always going to be needed, which is why we wanted to invest here for the long-term.”

Bogdan added, “We’ve made close friends by coming to the shows. The people we’ve met through Caffe Lena have become an important part of our life in Saratoga. And having our name on the wall? That’s the best part,” he smiles.

By including Caffe Lena in their estate planning, Bogdan and Cassandra are planning ahead to keep the Caffe going strong. “We like to vote with our resources for the institutions and people with whom we share values and visions for the future,” says Cassandra.

We invite others to learn more about the Lena Legacy Society and how you, too, can make a big impact on the future of music through your estate plan, life insurance, IRA, or by making a gift now.

Join the Good Folk!

Take the next step in supporting & sustaining the future of Caffè Lena.



Membership

Membership dues provide a crucial portion of Caffè Lena's annual operating budget. In return, we enjoy giving you the best possible experience at a vibrant and healthy folk club. Member perks include discounts on tickets, preferred seating, early access to high-demand shows, the highly-sought-after members only mug, and access to annual member-only parties.

Lena Legacy Society

The Lena Legacy Society is made up of music lovers like you who want future generations to have a place to applaud, sing, tell stories, and learn to play. By naming Caffè Lena in your estate planning, you will further your charitable and financial goals while creating a secure future for Caffè Lena, a welcoming space where creative fellowship flourishes.

Donations

With the support of our donors, we create an extraordinary performance schedule that fills the stage seven nights a week. But it doesn't stop there! We stream our programming to a world-wide audience, bring our headline artists into the community to play for elders, school children and the poor, and welcome all to free educational events at the Caffè.

Volunteer

From working in the kitchen to keeping the building ship-shape, to envisioning future directions for our non-profit organization, volunteers partner with professional staff to get things done.

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