

# ANNUAL REPORT

THE **N** NICK



2025

# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## SUMNER BENDER

When I joined The Nick in June of 2022, the building was open, but just barely.

The theater had come through a prolonged period of instability, operating with a handful of temporary staff, limited programming capacity, and no clear sense of organizational direction. Like many independent cinemas, The Nick had weathered enormous external challenges, but it had also experienced a difficult stretch of leadership and staffing disruption that left the organization fragile at a moment when steadiness mattered most.

There was no quick fix. What followed instead was slow, intentional work. Rebuilding staff. Reestablishing trust. Listening closely to our audiences and partners. Making careful decisions that prioritized sustainability without losing sight of purpose.

Today, that work is visible in a full calendar, a growing team, and a theater that once again feels alive with conversation and connection. It is also reflected in the breadth of what we program. Alongside independent, documentary, and community-driven films, we intentionally screen movies that the majority of people in this city want to see. To us, that approach is not a departure from our values. It is an expression of them. Creating a space that feels welcoming, relevant, and truly inclusive means meeting audiences where they are and inviting them into shared experiences on their own terms.

In 2025 alone, we presented hundreds of programs, welcomed tens of thousands of people through our doors, and strengthened the organization's foundation so that this work can continue.

This progress belongs to many people. To our staff, who rebuilt systems and relationships from the ground up. To our board, partners, members, and donors, who chose to show up even when the future felt uncertain.

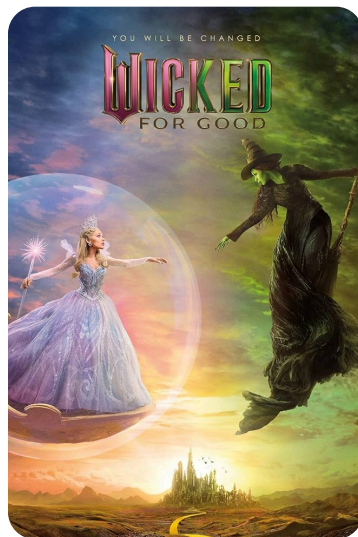
The work is ongoing. Independent cinemas continue to face real challenges, and we do not take any of this for granted. But as we look ahead, we do so with clarity, momentum, and gratitude.

Thank you for believing in The Nickelodeon Theatre. Thank you for being part of its renewal. I look forward to what we will continue to build together.

# PROGRAMMING

TOTAL FILMS SCREENED 164

## TOP 5 FILMS



Tickets sold  
3,796



Tickets sold  
2,625



Tickets sold  
2,436



Tickets sold  
1,989  
*(Started screening in 2024, number  
only represents 2025 sales)*



Tickets sold  
1,977

# PROGRAMMING

**FESTIVALS**

3

**FIELD TRIPS**

13

**PRIVATE EVENTS**

25

**REELTALKS**

20

**BOOK CLUBS**

8

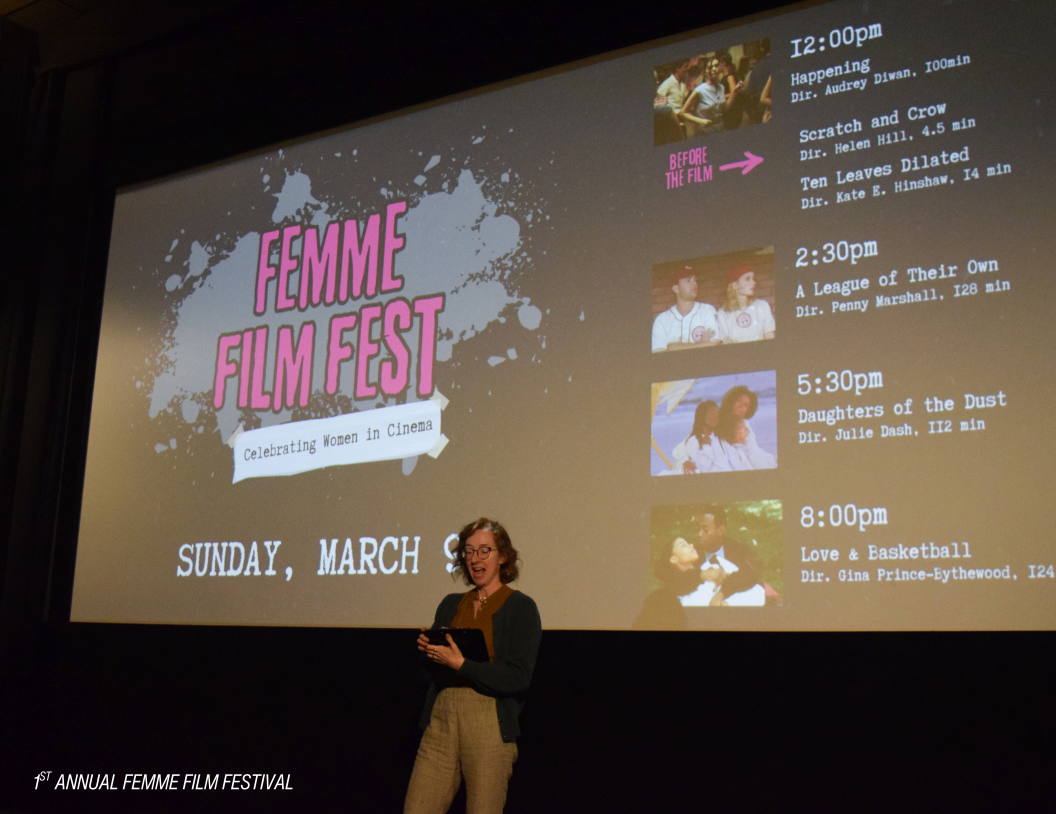
**TALKBACKS**

26

Throughout 2025, we presented 229 programs, including independent film releases, curated series, community conversations, educational screenings, and special events.

More than half of this programming was created in-house or in partnership with local and regional organizations. Artists, educators, filmmakers, advocates, and community leaders joined us to use film as a catalyst for dialogue, learning, and connection.

These programs reinforced The Nick's role as a shared civic space. A place not only to watch films, but to gather, reflect, and engage with one another.



1<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL FEMME FILM FESTIVAL



PALMETTO SOCIETY MEET & GREET WITH ED TILDEN



2025 RED CARPET PARTY



2025 CRIMSON SCREEN HORROR FILM FESTIVAL

# BEYOND THE SCREEN

**BAGS OF POPCORN SOLD**

**14,004**

**CUPS OF SODA SOLD**

**10,923**

**MOST POPULAR**

**CANDY**

**CLASSIC M&MS**

**WINE**

**PINOT NOIR**

**BEER**

**PABST BLUE RIBBON**

# AUDIENCE

**TOTAL TICKETS SOLD**  
**43,048**

**AVERAGE TICKET PRICE**  
**\$8.92**

We welcomed tens of thousands of people through our doors in 2025., reflecting strong theatrical engagement alongside a growing number of discussions, panels, and community-led events.

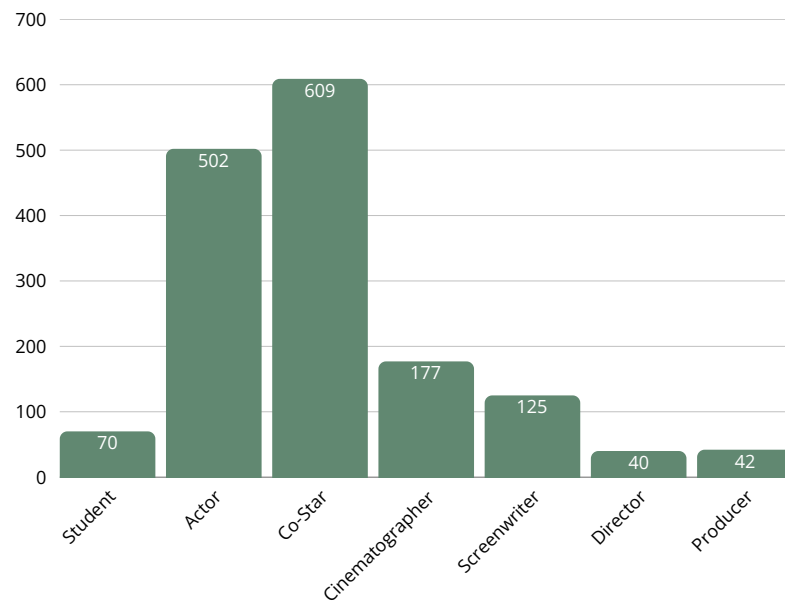
Every number represents a person choosing to spend their time here, often staying after the credits to participate in conversation.

Throughout the year, we prioritized accessibility by keeping ticket prices low, ensuring community members could continue to experience films together at a time when rising costs have made affordability increasingly rare in the theatrical landscape.

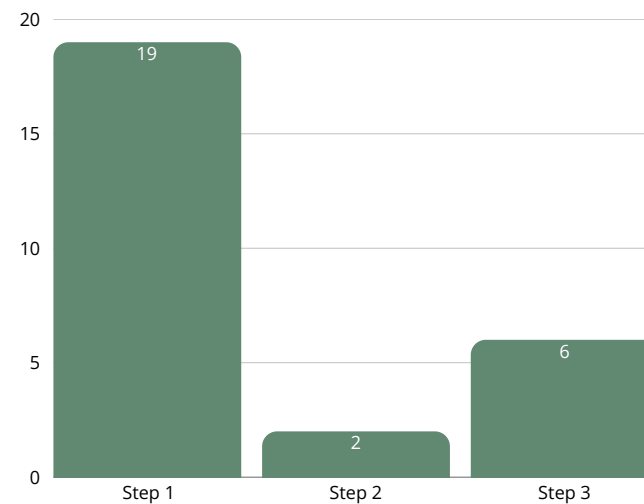
# MEMBERSHIP

TOTAL ACTIVE MEMBERSHIPS 1,595

## CORE LEVELS



## PALMETTO SOCIETY



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025

## OFFICERS

**Chase Heatherly** *Board President*

Chief Revenue Officer, Evening Post Publishing

**Jennifer D. Capell, CPA** *Vice President*

Vice President of Finance and Corporate Controller,  
BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina

**David Palkovitz, CFP** *Treasurer*

Wealth Management Advisor, Apollon Wealth Management, LLC

**Tabitha Safdi** *Secretary*

Senior Director of Audio and Digital Operations, SCETV

**Tiffany Adams** *Past President*

Owner, Adams Family Wellness, LLC

**George Wolfe** *At-Large*

Retired Partner, Nelson Mullins

## BOARD MEMBERS

**Ryan Coleman**

Director, City of Columbia Office of Economic Development

**Kim Crafton**

Vice President and Director of Marketing and Air Service Development, Columbia  
Metropolitan Airport

**Ebony D. Green, M.Ed., JD**

Education Consultant

**Sean Hastings**

Partner, Nelson Mullins

**Francie Kleckley**

Privacy and Data Consultant, Burnette, Shutt & McDaniel

**Lowndes Macdonald**

Founder, President at Macdonald Growth Strategies, LLC

**Joseph M. McCulloch, Jr.**

Attorney, McCulloch & Schillaci

**Justin Washburn**

Architect, Architrave

**David Whiteman**

Retired Professor of Political Science and Film Studies, University of South Carolina

# DEVELOPMENT

**TOTAL INDIVIDUAL  
GIFTS**

**7,836**

**UNIQUE DONORS**

**4,600**

**AVERAGE GIFT SIZE**

**\$43.47**

The median gift size was \$0.75, reflecting a high volume of small “round-up” donations

Round-Up giving was a major driver of participation, nearly 79% of all donations were round-up contributions. This indicates strong donor willingness to support the mission through micro-giving at the point of sale.

In 2025, The Nick continued its mission to be more than a movie theater.

Much of that work happens quietly. It shows up in packed calendars, careful planning, and steady relationship-building rather than headlines. But when we step back and look at the full year, the progress is clear and deeply encouraging.

# REVENUE/EXPENSES

## EARNED REVENUE

BOX OFFICE	\$449,371
CONCESSIONS	\$283,348
RENTALS	\$18,515
MERCHANDISE	\$1,422
	\$752,656

## CONTRIBUTED REVENUE

MEMBERSHIPS & CONTRIBUTIONS	\$284,279
CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS	\$75,407
GRANTS	\$191,887
EVENTS	\$8,825
	\$560,298

**TOTAL**      **\$1,313,054**

## PROGRAMMING EXPENSES

PROGRAMMING	\$254,978
THEATER	\$312,079
CONCESSIONS	\$90,275
	\$657,332

## OTHER EXPENSES

MANAGEMENT & GENERAL	\$620,645
FUNDRAISING	\$9,731
	\$630,376

**TOTAL**      **\$1,287,708**

# QUOTES

“

**I love this place; my secret getaway. Great snacks, retro vibe, and good movies, of course. — Tonya**

Great movie theater with amazing surround sound and picture. Customer service is also very pleasant and accommodating. Family friendly too. — Doug

I would say this theater is a hidden gem. Great vibe, very clean, friendly staff. — Edwin

**This is THE BEST theater in Columbia, bar-none. They have membership packages, or just get the tickets you need/want. Staff is AWESOME! Beautiful setting, easily accessible with parking garage right down the street. Love it! Go! — T Reed**

Always a great experience for an amazing price point compared to commercial cinemas. Support this institution for saving your pocket to be a movie buff 💪 - Staff is so considerate and fun! — Curtis

# THANK YOU SO MUCH!

As we move forward, we do so with momentum and clarity. The focus ahead is on deepening relationships, expanding access, and continuing to show up for this community with care and intention.

Thank you for being part of The Nickelodeon Theatre. We look forward to welcoming you back into the dark, where stories bring us together.

