

A Community & Cultural Asset

Presentation to the Carmel Residents Association | May 2026

Who is Sunset Cultural Center?



-
- A **nonprofit organization** that operates and manages Sunset Community and Cultural Center on behalf of the City of Carmel
 - Formed in **2003** following a major renovation of the historic facility
 - Oversees **venue operations, programming, arts education, and community engagement**
 - Hosts over **150 events annually**, from performances and festivals to civic and private events
 - Partners with **local, national, and international** artists and organizations
 - Dedicated to making the arts **accessible, inclusive, and impactful** for the community

Sunset Center Timeline



1926: Built as a public school.



Sunset Center Timeline

1931: An auditorium was added to the campus.

1935: The Carmel Bach Festival held its first performance in the school auditorium.



Sunset Center Timeline



1964: The City of Camel purchased the property and renamed it *Sunset Community and Cultural Center* – overseen by the Cultural Commission.



Sunset Center Timeline



Late 1990s: Heavy use of the facility led to the need for major renovations.

2001: A \$22.4 million capital campaign was launched – including \$13 million from private donors and \$9 million from a City bond – and renovations began.

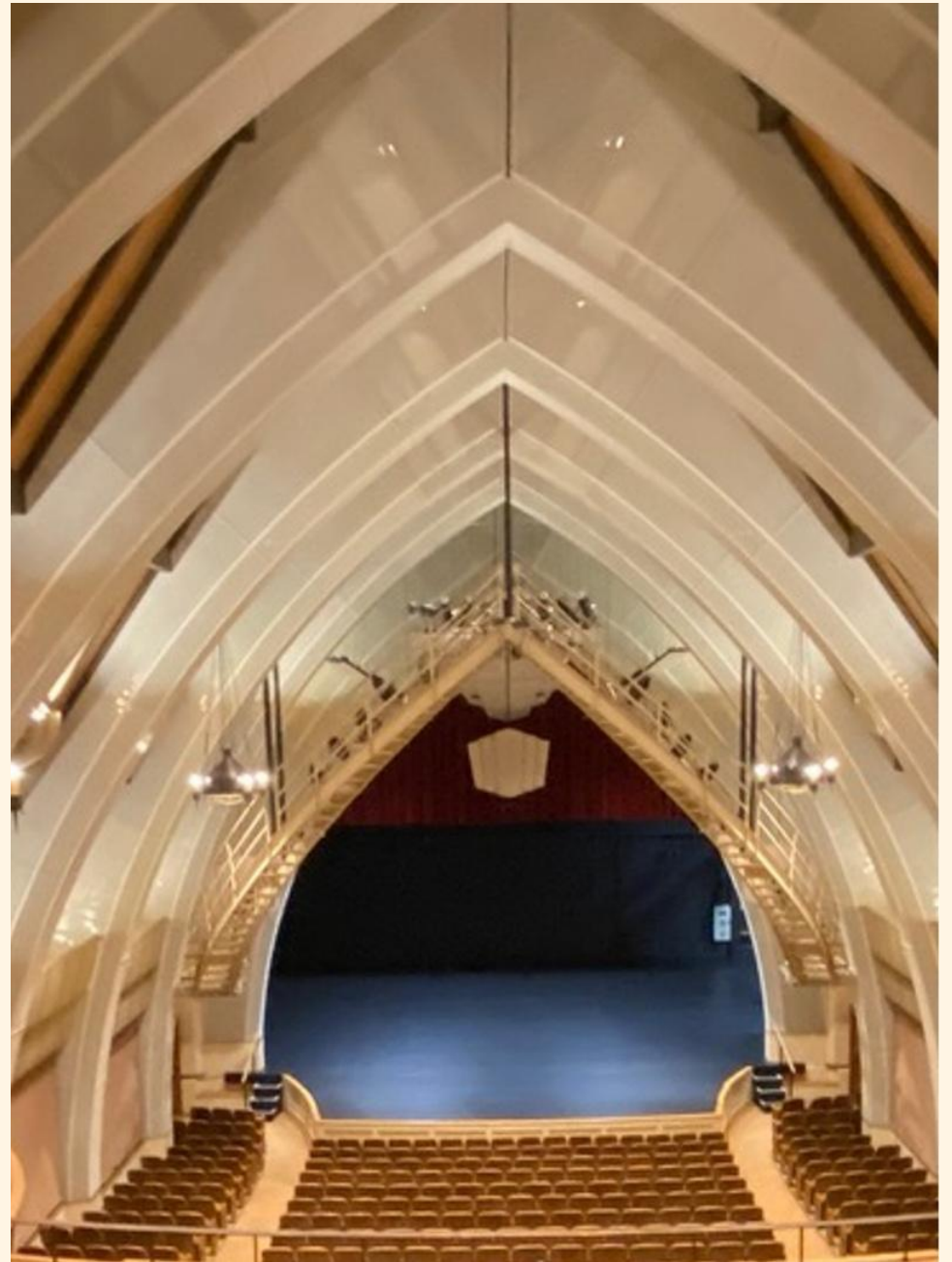


Sunset Center Timeline



2003: Sunset Cultural Center was established to manage and operate the upgraded facility.









Our Public/Private Partnership

City of Carmel

- Owns the Campus
- **Provides \$750K** annually
- Includes Capital Improvement budget

Sunset Cultural Center

- Independent nonprofit Board of Trustees
- Manages operations, programming & marketing
- **Raises \$2.25M+** from tickets, rentals & fundraising
- Free meeting space & 10 free rentals to Carmel groups

3:1

Return on City Investment

Every \$1 of public funding generates
\$3 in private revenue

Our Vital Role in Carmel-by-the-Sea



A cornerstone of our Village's identity, rooted in its heritage as a cultural destination.

200K+

Annual Visitors

25%

From Outside the Area

**Regional
Economic Driver**

Supporting local arts & community

Proudly supports local arts organizations & their missions.

Serves as a vibrant gathering place for our community.

Sunset Center Is Also Home To



Historic Presenting Partners

- Carmel Bach Festival
- Carmel Music Society
- Chamber Music Monterey Bay
- Monterey Symphony Orchestra

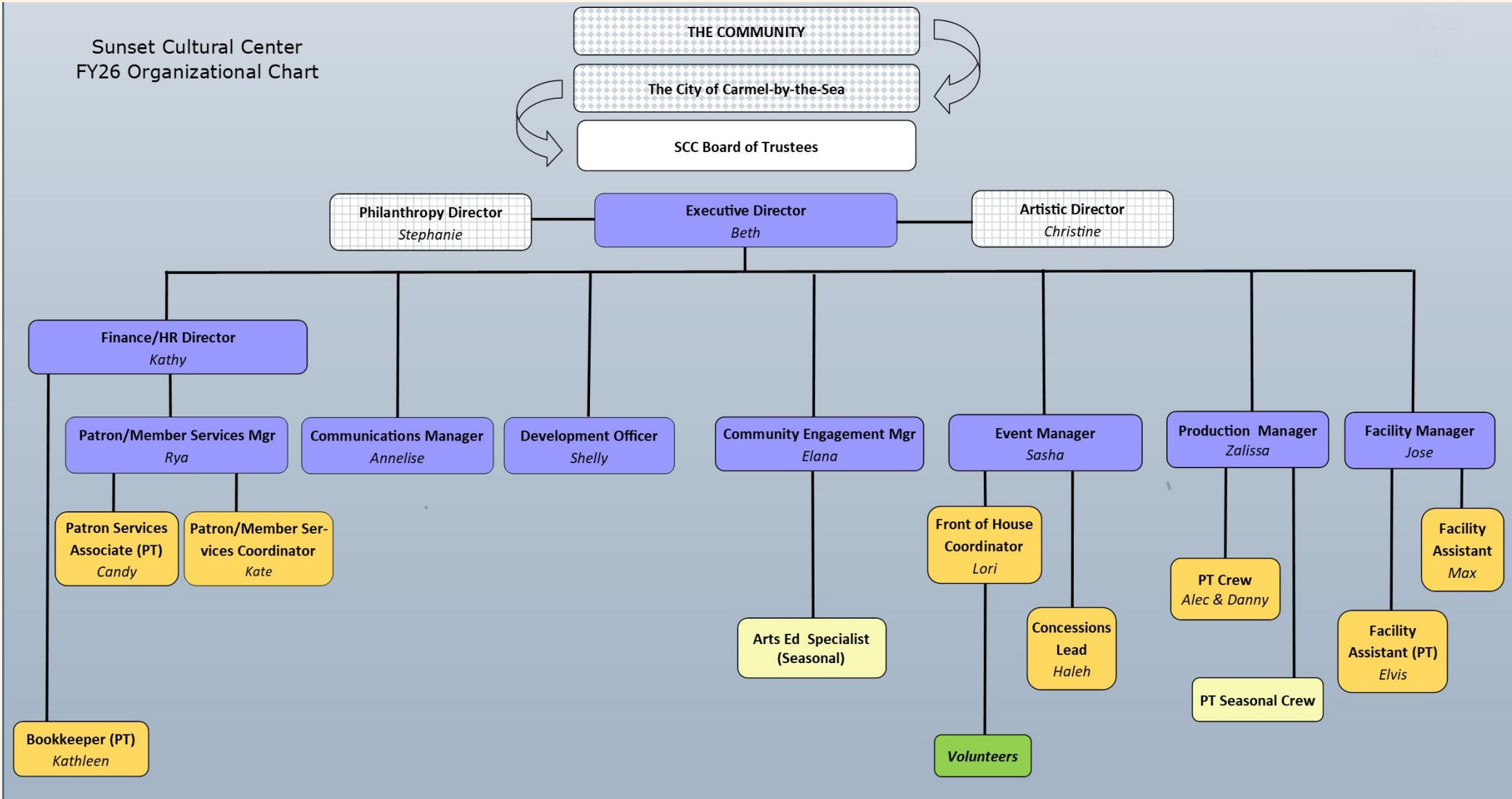
Campus Tenants

- Center for Photographic Art
- Carmel Bach Festival
- Sally Russell Art Studio
- Yoga Shala By-the-Sea
- Carmel Adult School Pottery Studio
- Harrison Memorial Library Book Drop

The SCC Team



Sunset Cultural Center
FY26 Organizational Chart



SCC Board of Trustees



Officers:

- * Stephen Lee, Chair
- * Graeme Robertson, Vice Chair
- Phillip DePaul, Treasurer
- * Dave Mosley, Secretary

Trustees:

- Meg Dingae
- Ric Handler
- * Kathryn Harrison
- Tom McGurn
- Jim Sims
- Tom White
- Martin Wolf

Committees:

- Executive
- Governance
- Finance
- Audit
- Philanthropy & Communications
- Strategic Planning
- Programming (Ad Hoc)

* *Carmel by the Sea Resident*

Our Programs



Historic Venue & Partner

- Affordable venue use for historic partners and community nonprofits
- State-of-the-art theater and meeting space to artists, businesses, community members, and visitors
- Full-service ticketing and production to theater clients

Arts for All – *Free Youth Art Education & Community Outreach*

- *Arts Education: Classroom Connections* - student access to professional performers
- *Local Arts Spotlight: Marjorie Evans Gallery Art exhibits, Terrace Hour, Third Thursdays*
- *Community Events: Jazz at Lincoln Center Livestreams, Wednesday Watch Party, & Holiday Party*

Sunset Presents – *Annual Performance Series*

- Nationally and internationally acclaimed performers with diverse cultural offerings
- Ticket discount & donation to organizations and under resourced communities
- Affordable ticket prices



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The Mystical Arts of Tibet

Sacred Music, Sacred Chants

Fri. May 22, 2026 7:30 PM

[LEARN MORE](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

[📅 SEE ALL EVENTS >](#)

Theater Utilization



Industry Benchmark

- Healthy range: **50–70%** utilization for venues our size
- Standard baseline: **260 available days/year** (accounts for maintenance, setup & holidays)
- Common myth: venues should run 365 days — not true

61%

Utilization Rate

158 events in 2024/2025

Target: 50–70% ▼ On track with room to grow

Financial Overview



Operating Budget: Approximately **\$3 million**

City Support: \$750,000 annually through a 2017-2032 lease agreement with the City of Carmel

Public Support Includes:

- Donations, membership, sponsorships, and grants

Earned Revenue Includes:

- Venue rentals (tenants, theater, North Wing), service fees (box office, handling, facility use), *Sunset Presents* ticket sales, and concessions

Expenses: 50% Personnel, 35% Direct Costs, 15% Costs of Goods Sold

Note: *Tickets sales do not cover Personnel or Direct Costs*

Looking Ahead



1

Centennial Celebration

A series of events to honor Sunset School, our North Wing, opened in 1926 and the theater in 1931.

2

Expand Fundraising Capacity

Launch campaign for programs, capital needs, and an endowment.

3

Invest in Youth Arts & Outreach

Strengthen staffing and partnerships to expand impact and access.

4

Maximize Venue Use Equitably

Create a clear booking model; optimize use across all spaces.

5

Maintain a State-of-the-Art Facility

Develop a capital reserve fund to continually pursue facility upgrades.