

CAROUSEL PLAYERS

2017-2020 Strategic Plan

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Liz Palmieri & Associates

CAROUSEL PLAYERS

STRATEGIC PLAN: 2017 TO 2020

Executive Summary

The 2007-2012 and 2012-2015 strategic plans have guided the Board and staff of Carousel through some major transitions. In the spring of 2016, Carousel decided to undertake the development of a new plan to guide them through to 2020. Carousel staff and Board worked with consultant Liz Palmieri to review artistic vision, strategic priorities and goals through a strategic planning process that included a Board and staff retreat. This report documents the strategic planning process, Carousel Players' vision and values, artistic vision and identifies new goals and strategic objectives for 2017-2020. A new artistic vision, drafted by Artistic Director Jessica Carmichael, sets an exciting future for the company. The full text of this vision can be found on page 5 of this document.

The Appendices document notes from the consultant's meetings with Board and staff, and identifies the tactical plans for 2017-2020 that relate to the new goals and strategic objectives. The project began in October 2016 and was completed in February 2017.

Special thanks to the Ontario Arts Council's Compass program for their financial support of this project.

These five goals serve as objectives for Carousel Players for the next three seasons and are focused on key activities and factors which affect the organization:

- Goal 1: Maintain Carousel Players' artistic excellence while exploring and developing the repertoire of plays for young people.
- Goal 2: Identify opportunities to strengthen audience engagement and broaden the dissemination of our work.
- Goal 3: Ensure an appropriate balance exists between Carousel Players activities and its human and financial resources
- Goal 4: Ensure that human and financial resources are developed and sustained
- Goal 5: Stabilize administrative and production facilities

The responsibility for the accomplishment of each of these goals lies with Carousel Players' staff, Board and various volunteer committees. This report highlights implementation strategies and includes tactics, responsibilities, time frame and stakeholders.

Background and Context

Carousel Players is one of Canada's oldest and most respected professional theatre for young audience companies. Founded in 1972, Carousel has performed 214 productions to more than 2.8 million children, youth and families predominantly in Ontario. The main audience, however, is in the Niagara Region. Historically, Carousel has performed or presented three to five productions annually either in schools or on the main stage. Carousel has an active new play development program, outreach and theatre school programs, and plays a vital role in the theatre community, both in the Niagara Region and across Canada.

Carousel has a Board of Directors comprised of seven dedicated volunteers with a variety of skills and expertise. The staff team is comprised of the Artistic Director, General Manager, Production Manager (10 months) and an Outreach and Marketing Manager. A bookkeeper works on a contract basis.

Over the past five seasons (2011-2016), the annual operating budget ranges from \$450,000 to \$550,000. During this period grant revenue averaged 65% of total average annual revenue. Other revenue sources include show revenue (14%), other earned revenue (13.6%) and fundraising revenue (7.2%). Over the same period the artistic and production expenses averaged 44% of expenses, followed by staff salaries which include the Artistic Director's (29%), facility and theatre rental (11%), marketing and fundraising (11%) and administration (5%). As of June 30, 2016, Carousel's unrestricted and capital reserves totaled \$17,960. Carousel is also the beneficiary of a \$136,233 endowment fund held by the Ontario Arts Foundation. Income from this fund is annually brought into operations.

The 2007-2012 and 2012-2015 strategic plans have guided the Board and staff of Carousel through some major transitions. In the spring of 2016, Carousel decided to undertake the development of a new plan to guide them through to 2020. There were several factors that influenced this decision:

- Their current strategic plan was developed with the previous Artistic Director
- The General Manager would be leaving in June of 2017 after 10 seasons with Carousel
- Most of the staff at Carousel had been with the company less than two years
- The company recently relocated to new administrative space
- The company had secured new rehearsal space
- The company no longer had a facility that could be rented to other theatre companies

Carousel applied for and received funding from the Ontario Arts Council in the Fall of 2016 to hire a consultant to work with the Board and staff on the development of a strategic plan to guide the work of the company until 2020. Liz Palmieri & Associates was hired to work with the company to undertake the plan's development over a ten-day period between the end of October 2016 to the beginning of February 2017.

The Planning Process

The Human Resource/Nominating Committee of the Board undertook the oversight of the plan's development. Upon securing the Consultant, a time line with anticipated outcomes was prepared and agreed to. Unfortunately, the timeline was altered due to two factors: the sudden death of the Board chair and a serious illness of the consultant. Thus, the planning timeframe was compressed in order to have the final plan presented to the Board in February. Appendix A outlines the agreed to anticipated outcomes for the 10 days of the contract.

On November 8th, the Consultant met with the Artistic Director to discuss the development of the Artistic Vision. This document was critical to the strategic planning process.

On November 15th, the Consultant facilitated a staff planning meeting with the following agenda:

- Review of Strategic Goals from 2013-2017 Strategic Plan. Staff reviewed the strategic goals and responded to these questions: What have you been able to achieve and how have these activities affected your specific responsibilities?
- What are your aspirations for the next 3-5 years?

The detailed notes from this meeting are included in Appendix B.

The Consultant facilitated a Board retreat on November 15th. The agenda for this meeting included:

- Review of Carousel's Vision and Values
- Review and confirmation of the new Artistic Vision
- Exploration of the following issues:
 - Facilities
 - General Manager transition and impact
 - Board succession planning
 - Business of selling public shows vs. being presented
 - Balance between planned activities and the human and financial resources
 - Impact on the Company of doing 3 shows a year
- Aspirations over the next 3 years

The detailed notes from the Board retreat are included in Appendix C.

Following both planning meetings, the Consultant met again with the Artistic Director and General Manager to review draft goals, followed by a meeting with the rest of the staff to draft tactics, timelines, human resources, and key stakeholders. A draft of the plan was presented to the Human Resources/Nominating Committee for revisions prior to being presented to the December 5th Board meeting. The plan was then fine-tuned in subsequent meetings and presented to the January Human Resources/Nominating Committee meeting for final review prior to being presented at the February Board meeting.

Carousel Players Vision and Values

Our Vision:

Carousel Players is an award-winning professional theatre company for young audiences. We are committed to the development of new work and the production of theatre that entertains and challenges our audiences. We present inspiring and creative plays for children aged 5 to 15 years in theatres, schools and other performance venues. We ensure that our performances, summer theatre school, and outreach programs can be accessed by all children and families regardless of their socio-economic background.

We believe live theatre develops artistic awareness, learning skills and a sense of well-being in children.

Values

- **Professionalism:** We are committed to a consistent, professional quality of work and maintaining our reputation for artistic excellence.
- **Respect:** We strive to be sincere, respectful and playful in our relationships with children and their caregivers.
- **Ideas:** We are eager to share, explore and stimulate new ideas.
- **Appreciation:** We like to show appreciation for our friends in the world around us.
- **Responsibility:** We strive to be a helpful colleague and good citizen in our discipline (theatre for young audiences), in our field (performing arts) and in our community (the Niagara Region).
- **Legacy:** We are dedicated to making all our children's first exposure to professional theatre a playful, enlightening and memorable experience.
- **Balance:** We are committed to helping employees achieve a healthy balance between their personal and professional life.

Carousel Players Artistic Vision

Since 1972 Carousel Players has created and produced compelling, challenging, and entertaining live theatre for young audiences. Consistently within its vision the company has articulated a need to put the audience first. Our audiences are the future. They are bright, curious individuals who are growing up in a world that is continuing to change before they have an electoral right to have a say about it. Our work as a company is to listen to that voice and reflect it in our work. Young people are at the heart of our work. Carousel is committed to inclusive and diverse stories that contribute to a dialogue about how youth interact with their peers, their friends, their families, teachers, education system and society at large. We provide a space where youth's stories and dreams can be supported and heard, and where they can be active contributors to their current narrative.

Carousel Players considers nurturing and development of new work one of its core activities. Our new play development program will continue to strive for the achievement of entertaining and challenging new productions that expand the body of work for young audiences in North America. We will do this by seeking out collaboration with professional Canadian playwrights. We will give the playwrights the necessary resources and time to develop their plays. Access to our audience is crucial. Involving young people, their parents, and teachers, as well as art advocates from the community into the process of development, whenever is appropriate, provides an opportunity for dialogue. Invited readings, meeting artists in the classroom, witnessing parts of rehearsal are integral modes of communication for us to hear our audiences and to respond to them.

In our community and beyond we will work to provide family programming that inspires life-long lovers of the theatre. We are interested in how young people engage with theatre, and how it transfers into their everyday lives. We must continue our efforts to develop a deep appreciation for the artistry of our work within our audience. Looking at contemporary theatrical trends and learning from them is one way to remain current in a field that continues to change. Emphasis on building our craft that is courageous, intelligent, and bold in practice and aesthetic and which celebrates the power of imagination, will strengthen how we make transformative theatrical experiences. Our advocacy for the arts is through not only providing theatrically compelling work, but through our mentorship of how we make it. We must continue to find ways to extend our reach beyond our stage through learning, outreach and engagement opportunities that will directly impact on our community's art scene. As we look to our 50th year, we wish to cultivate passion for the arts in our community and, most importantly, in the schools where our audiences first grow. This is our vision for Carousel Players as we move from our 45^h to our 50th season.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND STRATEGIES

These five goals serve as objectives for Carousel Players for the next three seasons (2017-2020) and are focused on key activities and factors which affect the organization. Appendix D highlights the implementation strategies and include tactics, responsibilities, time frame and stakeholders.

- Goal 1:** *Maintain Carousel Players' artistic excellence while exploring and developing the repertoire of plays for young people.*
- Create and implement an artistic timeline to allow more time for partnership and creative development.
 - Identify and develop new creative and supplier partnership opportunities and relationships.
- Goal 2:** *Identify opportunities to strengthen audience engagement and broaden the dissemination of our work.*
- Develop understanding of local, national, and international presentation opportunities, priorities and timelines.
 - Create marketing strategy with focus on deepening and broadening relationships with key stakeholders, including presenters and schools) while utilizing most appropriate and effective communication tools.
- Goal 3:** *Ensure an appropriate balance exists between Carousel Players activities and its human and financial resources.*
- Review human resource needs relating to strategic priorities and realign staff and volunteer responsibilities accordingly.
 - Develop criteria to determine feasibility of producing 3rd show in a season.
 - Review resource implications of summer camp, March Break, Playlinks and PD days and make recommendations on continuing and/or changing.
 - Develop criteria that will guide decision on whether to undertake new programs.
 - Develop and implement policy with respect to sharing Carousel human and production resources with community.
- Goal 4:** *Ensure that human and financial resources are developed and sustained.*
- Create, implement & monitor a 3 to 5 year capital replacement plan which includes potential funding sources.
 - Develop mechanism to ensure professional development opportunities (both formal and informal) for Board and staff are planned, included in the budget and utilized.
 - Develop and implement a 3-year fundraising strategy that aligns with strategic, artistic and operational priorities.
 - Develop Board skill matrix and recruitment strategy.

- Review and update Carousel's bylaws to align with new Ontario Non-Profit Corporations Act.
- Develop mechanism to monitor staff overtime and vacations.

Goal 5: *Stabilize administrative and production facilities.*

- Formalize relationship with Folk Arts that aligns with Carousel's short-term strategic and operational priorities, needs and resources.
- Develop shared vision with respect to long-term relationship with Folk Arts.

Appendix A

Outline of the services to be provided by the consultant in the development of Carousel Players 2017-2020 Strategic Plan

- Day 1 - Consultant reviews the above resources and meets with staff in November to do a quick SWOT analysis, identify trends; review of strategic priorities; artistic & administrative goals as it relates to core programs, revenue generation, outreach, Human Resource/Nominating, building.
- Day 2- Meet with Artistic Director to review draft Artistic Vision statement to be presented at the Board retreat. Meet with Strategic Planning Committee to review strategic planning process, to present draft materials being presented at the Board/staff retreat and to identify final format of “summary document”, format of “shared vision document” and format of final strategic plan for 2017-2020.
- Day 3 – Consultant to finalize the documents to present at the Board/staff retreat on November 19th that will clarify vision, mandate, brand, organizational priorities and identify any new organizational priorities. Jane Gardner will organize the retreat & potluck, take notes at the Board retreat, write them up for analysis by the consultant.
- Day 4 – Consultant creates a summary document that consolidates retreat ideas & issues and identifies any vision, mandate, brand, and organizational priorities that need to be modified. The document will also identify organizational and resource development needs, themes and issues that need to be addressed in the 2017-2020 strategic plan.
- Day 5 – Meet with Strategic Planning Committee to review the summary document before it is shared with the Board and other stakeholders for their feedback. Identify stakeholders to be interviewed for their feedback on the summary document.
- Day 6 – Meetings with Stakeholder groups/individuals for feedback on summary document.
- Day 7 – After stakeholder interviews are completed, our goal is to have a “shared vision” document presented by the consultant at the December 5th Board meeting and to obtain agreement in principle by the Board on strategic priorities, goals, key issues and revenue generation strategy to support the plan.
- Day 8 & 9 & 10 - Create a practical, realistic tactical plan with time frames and measurable outcomes to achieve the goals of the new strategic plan. Draft 2017-2020 strategic plan presented to Strategic Planning Committee in January for their review. Final 2017-2020 strategic plan presented to Board in February 2017 for their approval. Consultant is invited to present the report at that Board meeting.

Appendix B

Staff Strategic Planning Notes - November 15, 2016 Meeting 10am to 12:30pm

Present: Jessica Carmichael, Jane Gardner, Lauren Hundert, Kate Leathers, Liz Palmieri

1. Introductions - Everyone answered the questions: How long have you worked at Carousel? What is your role? What attracted you to apply to Carousel for your position?

2. Review of Strategic Goals from 2013-2017 Strategic Plan. Staff reviewed these strategic goals and responded to these questions: What have you been able to achieve and how have these activities affected your specific responsibilities?

A. Maintain Carousel Players' artistic excellence while exploring and developing the canon of plays for young people.

- commitment to work developed by Carousel vs. plays developed by other companies.
- value partnerships with other companies so our work is presented at their theatres.
- pressure to remount and tour a third play.
- pressures on time, money & planning: creating, touring, new play development
- engaging audiences in the development of our work - example of *Hana*. Varied level of comfort by playwrights when considering inviting audiences to a workshop reading.
- deepening our relationships with principals, educators and consultants. Need to communicate the value of Carousel, artistic excellence and also draw connections to curriculum. Different modes of communications and challenges in accessing them. Long path towards building relationships with them.
- Changing the grade level of touring plays - this year *Tick* is offered to Grades 5 to 8 students and *Boys, Girls and Other Mythological Creatures* offered to Grades 1 to 4.
- Participatory theatre - how we communicate these words. *Peg and the Yeti* was a participatory play. Not all plays will be developed to involve participation - we want to stay open and not commit in advance to participation.
- Needy schools - Carousel Caravan, fundraising through service clubs and Foundations, help to bring Carousel shows to needy schools each year.
- Increasing competition from other Niagara companies offering to Niagara schools theatre performances to Niagara schools (Yellow Door, PAC, Linus Hand Productions) or young audience programs (Niagara Symphony).
- Granting deadlines are shifting and more funds for touring will be available through the Canada Council. For touring of remounts, 2 to 3 year advance planning required to secure contracts with presenters.

- Building relationships with presenters with long-term plans shared with presenters in order to secure touring slots in their seasons: YPT, MTYP.
- When an AD changes at a theatre, re have to rebuild relationships: is TYA programming to be a part of The Grand Theatre in London with the new AD?
- Carousel successfully toured *Peg and the Yeti* to Manitoba & northern Ontario. *Spelling 2-5-5* had a Nova Scotia tour thanks to partnership with Autism Nova Scotia. It's been a while since YPT has included us in their season.
- New plays that we've developed since Jessica joined Carousel 2 years ago: *Hana Hashimoto*, *Sixth Violin*, *Tick*, and *Boys, Girls & Other Mythological Creatures*.
- New tools are required to promote our work - social media, promotional videos, digital communications in schools, etc.

B. Identify opportunities to strengthen audience engagement and broaden the dissemination of our work in the light of community developments.

- Playlinks was a huge success - deepened the experience for the students and was of great value to educators. Good sales tool because the workshops were an additional benefit for those who booked a Carousel performance.
- how to fund Playlinks is the challenge (needs a 2-3 year commitment by a funder)
- need to look at a more sustainable model for Playlinks
- Focus on Niagara and Hamilton schools in terms of our market reach. Need to expand Brantford contacts for Falen's show.
- Building presenter relationships for "block booked tour" requires attending CAPACOA and/or Ontario Contact.
- International touring requires attending IPAY and building relationship with specific companies. Perhaps contemplating an artistic exchange of shows with an international company. Long-term advance planning required for building international tour.
- Summer camp programs important - what are the human and financial costs for our Outreach programs (PD days, March Break, and theatre school plans).
- We have made good use of Trillium grants in the past - their new criteria and once a year deadline requires us to do long-term planning to access their funds.
- New Programs and Partnerships - can we develop a set of questions that will help us assess whether to pursue an outreach project or partnership.

C. Ensure an appropriate balance exists between Carousel Players activities and its Human Resource/Nominating.

- We have a good Board - there will be turnover in years to come - 4 new Board members in past 3 years (Dave Thomas, Jenniffer Anand) and two have moved away (Judi, Norm)
- Need Board to help open doors to expand fundraising opportunities for Carousel
- 3 new staff hired in past 2 years.

- Succession planning for Board and need to bring new people on Committees (a tool to move them from Committee member to Board member)
- Need to diversify our Board - more representation from culturally diverse community.
- Discussion of what are standing committees (Outreach & Marketing and Nominating/HR) and what are advisory committees (Facilities, Carousel Caravan). Discussion of what are staff roles on these committees.
- Volunteer needs are changing - no longer need ushers, high school students at summer camp. We are looking to develop internships/individualized training experiences with post-secondary students.
- Additional staff - additional support for Lauren and Kate. Discussion of paid vs volunteer/intern staffing. Discussion of role of interns/co-op placements of Niagara College/Brock students to work on specific project. Kate is building job description for Chelsea Wilson, a Brock student to work with her. Jane & Lauren will craft a job description for a college/university student for a Spring placement to help with Marketing.
- Getting to know individual Board members is important role for AD and GM. Having coffee/social time to get to know them individually is good idea.
- Volunteers needed to help move (Kate often barter volunteers for equipment)
- Accommodation providers needed
- Need to develop "Ambassadors" who will promote Carousel in the community.
- During GM transition process - need for Nominating/HR Committee to look at Lauren and Jane's job descriptions. New GM hire may require some shifting in job description.
- Board governance issues the relate to new Ontario legislation that requires clarification on "Membership" and theatre's by-laws.

D. Find a new home and successfully relocate the company.

- Kate did a great job in organizing move, inventory in Courthouse and shaping plans for fit-up of theatre in Folk Arts
- We successfully closed the Courthouse and established new partnerships with the 5 organizations where our activities are taking place.
- The draft contract for our partnership with Folk Arts being developed - Dave Thomas helping to shape the draft contract. Jessica & Kate want to be included in all future meetings with Jeff Burch. We have established dates for 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 for use of The Robby's upstairs that will be integrated into draft 2 year contract with Folk Arts in exchange for free rent. Carousel will maintain ownership of theatre equipment.
- Jane working with Silver Spire and Folk Arts on their health and safety programs - each company in various stages of implementation of their health & safety policies & procedures.
- Kate working on fit-up of new theatre space - engineer finally approved drawings - expect the new theatre to be installed in early December.

- Staff time and resources required to managing the Folk Arts theatre space to be addressed in Folk Arts contract
- Community continues to come to Carousel for production/technical support even though we don't operate in the Courthouse. Do we need to start charging for equipment rentals? When people want Kate's expertise - is it a staff function or is it a freelance contract that she can negotiate with an expectation to be paid.
- What relationship do we want to have with the PAC? A meeting to discussion our relationship and their vision would clarify things.
- Kate & Jessica will look at needs of Facilities Committee and future goals/objectives.

E. Build a capital reserve fund.

- We have a small capital fund and there is a description of the purpose of the fund.
- We have sold some Carousel assets during the Courthouse move. Once the fit-up of the theatre at Folk Arts is complete, we will know what remaining resources that can be sold.
- We have not been budgeting for operating surpluses.
- We have no current annual capital needs plan. We need to put together a plan that addresses our truck, touring equipment, office equipment needs over the next 3 to 5 years.

3. Staff Responses to this question: What are your aspirations for the next 3-5 years

- solid relationships with schools and consultants
- time to think about marketing and long-term planning for outreach - how it happens, our programs, who we reach out to and how lead it
- playing to as many schools and places as possible
- produce the best productions possible
- tour high quality productions
- create quality work, hire great artists and do work of importance
- establish legacy for Debra
- expand performances in Hamilton & develop strong relationships with Education Foundation of Niagara and with Julie Densham's Board in Hamilton.
- Grow relationships with Folk Arts & Silver Spire that address our facility needs
- Grow our relationship with Shaw Festival with new AD at their helm
- Offer meaningful training opportunities for emerging artists and Brock & Niagara College students through production & outreach work placements that benefit Carousel & individual student.
- new Board members elected through Board succession planning.
- successful training & integration of new GM into organization.

Appendix C

Notes from Carousel Players Strategic Planning Workshop for Board & Staff – Nov 19, 2016 10am – 2pm

Present: Jenniffer Anand, Jessica Carmichael, Sande Farrauto, Jane Gardner, Kate Leathers, Sarah Lynch, Carolyn Mackenzie, Liz Palmieri, Paddy Parr, Dave Thomas. Regrets: Corey Miles

1. **Overview of Strategic Planning process & Introductions.** Everyone answered the questions: Who you are, what you do and why you said yes to joining Carousel Players. Tell us something that will surprise us about you.
2. **Review of Carousel Players Vision & Values** – everyone was asked to keep the vision and values front of mind throughout today’s discussions.
3. **Artistic Vision Presentation** – Jessica reviewed the document. Questions for the Board’s consideration: Does the artistic vision align with Carousel’s vision and values? Any other feedback? Discussion around articulation of “audience engagement.” We want to instill a love of theatre in children. We strive for excellence in our plays, productions and outreach. Learning, outreach and engagement are all important goals to strive for with our audiences. Vision makes sense – nothing is missing. This document builds upon Pablo’s vision. With our work we want to stand up and be counted and allow children to have a voice. When we say we are nurturing new work, this does not exclude remounts. This document can also be shared with peer assessments when asked to submit “vision” for future grants.
4. **Issues to Explore**
 - **Facilities:** Carousel is developing a 2-year agreement with the Folk Arts Centre with respect to the shared use of The Robby. Questions discussed by the Board: What are the key priorities that should be considered in this relationship? What do you see as the long term vision with respect to facilities beyond the 2 years? Here are the ideas shared:

Folk Arts - Key principles: access to rehearsal space, access to storage space, and the need to share space. Our challenge is to access “uninterrupted rehearsal space” with the demands of many users of The Robby. What relationship do we want to have with Folk Arts – in the short term (free rent in exchange for a number of commitments including an investment of up to \$5000 by Carousel in 2016-2017) – we want to fit up the downstairs theatre space with our “loaned” equipment for use by Folk Arts and the community, work with Folk Arts & Scottish Country Dancing Club to improve the upstairs hall (curtains for the stage, curtains for the other windows, sound improvements, and portable lighting), get access to storage for our sets & production equipment, storage of our summer camp resources which can be shared with outreach & community programs for youth managed by Folk Arts staff and use of the upstairs hall at The Robby for two 4-week slots for our rehearsals, a one-day Carousel Caravan fundraiser and 8 weeks of summer camp. In the long term – we want to help Folk Arts manage The Robby as a vibrant arts and community hub, to develop the parking area into a garden, help to expand The Robby building for Carousel’s new offices or to find future office space within the main Folk Arts building. We also want to provide arts outreach opportunities for children of their clients and pursue a joint theatrical project with them that celebrates newcomers. What resource sharing and programs at Folk Arts do we want to get involved with? Do we want to participate in their annual Festival (perhaps just a workshop or play reading)? Do we want someone from Carousel to sit on their Board? We have applied to become a member of Folk Arts and Jane currently sits on their User Group Committee, their Health and Safety Committee and works with their staff to select children who will receive bursaries to attend our summer camps whose families are clients of Folk Arts. Question: what kind of footprint do we want with an expansion of The Robby? Can we assist them with signage for parking? If leadership at

Folk Arts changes – what is our long term future? Who is on the Folk Arts Board? Is a feasibility study a good next step when pursuing an expansion of The Robby. After 1 to 2 years rehearsing and doing outreach activities at The Robby, we find that it's not a good match for us – what other options do we have available to us for rehearsal and storage space? Suggestion that our agreement with Folk Arts be a flexible one with a one-year notice exit clause for both parties. Our first year is a great opportunity to get to know Folk Arts' staff, programs, facility plans, Board and member user groups. Jessica, Kate and Jane will all be a part of the strategy to get to know Folk Arts on many different levels.

Silver Spire - Key principles: access to office space for Carousel, access to office space for ECT (no plans to share office space with other companies), option to access Silver Spire gym/other rooms for new play development activities and outreach programs. Since moving to Silver Spire in May, we're aware of the many users of the facilities and the activities of the congregation. The upstairs gym is used from Fall to Spring by badminton club so an "uninterrupted rehearsal space" at Silver Spire is problematic. Our relationship with Silver Spire is a good one – our lease is an annual that can be renewed year to year. We see ourselves at Silver Spire for at least 2 years given the lack of office space available at Folk Arts in its current configuration.

- **General Manager Transition & Impact:** With the transition to the new GM there is an opportunity to realign responsibilities amongst the staff. Questions for the Board's consideration: What responsibilities of the GM does the Board consider as essential for this position to maintain? Are there any issues or concerns that need to be addressed with the transition?

Here are the ideas shared: Essential responsibilities for the GM: day to day management of the company, budgeting, writing grants, generation of revenues, financial management, Human Resource/Nominating, contracts and community partnerships with facilities. During Pablo's and Kim's tenure, the GM managed marketing, summer camps and fundraising too. The AD and GM share responsibilities for long term planning and management of the company. There is a Human Resource/Nominating conundrum – do you adapt the job for the person once they've been with the company for a time or do you find the best person to fit the job description. Do we need a part-time staff person to support marketing – can they be a short-term contract to manage a specific task/project or can they be a work-placement or internship to mentor with a specific staff person to fill the staffing needs of the company/be a Section 38 worker? Do we need to hire a part-time fundraiser and how much money would they need to bring in to offset additional fundraising costs and salary? Are there criteria we can develop to look at our programs and staff resources to assess new projects or current programs and to ask ourselves can we afford to do the program? Carolyn is working with Kate on Chelsea's Brock University work placement in production at Carousel. Lauren & Jane will work on a job description for an internship for a Niagara College student using information from Jennifer Anand at Shaw as to what has worked best for them. If these two placements are successful, it will solve short-term Human Resource/Nominating issues in marketing & production. We have a detailed job description that we've circulated in the hiring process for a new GM. We expect to make a decision by March 6th about the new GM. The transition plan is in place with an overlap and financial resources available to the incoming GM to train with the outgoing GM by June.

- **Board Succession Planning:** There has been a change in the leadership of the Board, albeit on an interim basis. There are also Board members who have served 8+ years. Questions for the Board's consideration: What strategies does the Board want to put in place to ensure the right skills set, that aligns with Carousel's vision, values and strategic plan, is reflected on the Board? What process does the Board want to undertake with respect to determining a new chair?

Here are the ideas shared: Within the last 8 years, a number of long-time Board members have stepped down and new people have joined the Board (including Dave who has returned to the Board after a 15+ year absence). In the past 3 years, 5 new Board members have joined us but two moved away last year. We have written policies on Board terms, but we have ignored them. Our policy is a 3 year term that can be renewed up to 6 years. Board members are elected annually at the AGM. We have used Committees as a tool to identify new Board members. Carousel Caravan has also been a source of potential Board members. The Nominating/Human Resource/Nominating Committee is responsible for Board succession planning and the committee meets at least twice per year. The Committee wants to add 2 more Board members and look at the issue of diversity and adding an educator to the Board. The Nominating/HR Committee is recommending that Carolyn Mackenzie be nominated as Board Chair at the next Board meeting.

With new Ontario non-profit requirements – it is recommended that we review Carousel’s by-laws as it pertains to membership and be proactive in looking at by-law updates. When the new act is passed (not clear as to when or if changes to the current draft legislation are).

- **Business of Selling Public Shows vs Being Presented:** The Human Resource/Nominating involved in selling public shows are significantly more than when Carousel is presented by a 3rd party (i.e. PAC, Grand Theatre). Normally when we sell the shows ourselves, the net revenue is usually less and is not guaranteed, which would have a financial impact. Questions for the Board’s consideration: What is the value in Carousel doing public shows? What are the risks to Carousel if we stopped presenting ourselves? What are the risks to Carousel if we focused on being presented by a 3rd party?

Here are the ideas shared: Consensus is we like to see public shows for Carousel each year, to enable family audiences, sponsors, colleagues and community groups to see our shows. It's also good for the actors to do a public show. What are the costs to us for mainstage shows - at the Grand - it costs us more to go there than we receive in guarantees. For the PAC presented shows this year - we make a profit. What are our touring criteria for public shows - if we are presented - should the guarantee cover our costs? If we self-present added costs staffing costs including running the box office, marketing & advertising the show and organizing front of house? Suggestion that we create a set of criteria to use when looking at being presented or self-presenting at a Niagara area venue (non-school). Discussion about being presented by libraries, Shaw Festival, Grand Theatre, Burlington Performing Arts Centre, Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre and potential venues in Niagara. We don't always have to do a public show in St. Catharines - it can be in other Niagara based venues. There was great enthusiasm in moving our public shows to communities around Niagara. Can we find the resources to have our public shows presented and/or sponsored by third party organizations.

- **Balance between planned activities and our financial & Human Resource/Nominating:** The previous strategic plan was created with the understanding of stability in leadership of the Artistic Director. It was a very ambitious plan that had to be put on hold with the change in AD. With the hiring of the new General Manager, most of the staff will have been in place less than 2 years. To ensure the effective operation of the organization while delivering all of the programs and events, staff have been experiencing overtime, have found it difficult to take their vacation and have not been able to take advantage of professional development opportunities. Questions for the Board’s consideration: How can our values and strategic plan reflect the importance of work/life balance for our staff?

Here are the ideas shared: Our goal is to find a better balance for management of overtime and vacation time for staff. Professional development also needs to take place. At annual performance reviews staff

self-identify professional development opportunities they want to pursue and a year later, we assess whether the PD activities took place - there is always money in the PD budget for these activities. What have been the barriers to people taking their vacation? The Nominating/HR Committee is happy to look at this issue. This year we should send 2 people to PACT conference in May - we will commit to sending Jessica and Kate to Charlottetown for the conference May 24-27. As raised before, we will look at internship/work placements this year as a way to address workload. Priority to develop job descriptions for each new person/internship/placements.

- **Impact of Company on Doing 3 Shows per Year:** Our mandate includes the development of new work and the production of theatre for young audiences. Producing 3 shows per year, undertaking new play development, offering summer camp and PD programs are all part of our on-going work. Questions for the Board's consideration: What is the risk to Carousel if we produced 2 shows per year while maintaining an active new play development program? What criteria could be implemented to determine the value to Carousel of implementing and/or continuing programs? What is the risk to Carousel if these criteria were implemented?

Here are the ideas shared: Do we want to do more presentations like iChild as our third show each Fall and who would be our potential partners? What are the timelines required if our third show is a remount from past seasons? Do we need to make a long term plan about what will tour and who we want to approach. Do we want to tour to the United States or internationally? Where do we want our shows to go? What are the basic touring costs for each of the shows we want to tour. Do we want to do a Fall show for family audiences and schools? Would we be competing for school sales and family audience sales with YellowDoor and Linus Hand Productions and their December programming? Would we need to pre-sell a Fall school tour in Niagara by June in order to secure school sales? If we did a Fall school tour or family audience show would we be competing with our Winter & Spring Tour sales. How many times will one school book us - three times in one year? Discussion about whether our local market is max'd out in Fall. What are our goals for our outreach programs this year: (Playlinks, summer camps, PD days and March Break)- artistic and financial goals and estimating of staff time to support these outreach programs? What are our criteria for doing them and how will we evaluate their success?

5. Aspirations for Carousel over the next 3 years: Board members shared the following answers. Stability. A permanent home that meets all our criteria. Growing fundraising and formalizing a donor program. Finding more inroads to schools and into the community. Finding opportunities in Niagara to do public shows - we are very St. Catharines focused in our public shows. Have a greater reach in the Niagara Region - look at growing arts hub opportunities in other communities and outreach projects outside of St. Catharines. Provide a link to many generations to experience the arts together. Gain respect due to Carousel for the quality of work we produce. Celebrate how we're different and what we offer. Bring new people to Caravan to experience Carousel - provide opportunities for groups of individuals to come together and purchase a show. As Board members, we have a responsibility to bring people to Caravan and to Carousel's shows. The Board are important influencers who use their networks to introduce people to Carousel.

6. Debra McLauchlan Memorial Donations: Carousel Players has received over 60 donations totalling over \$5000. in memory of Debra McLauchlan. Here are ideas shared on how to recognize Debra McLauchlan's Legacy and how to use her memorial donations. The use of the donations should be focused on kids. Provide a free show to school each year in Debra's name. Fund the development and printing of Carousel's study guides each year. Fund Playlinks workshops in schools. Recognize Debra in our study guides. Recognize Debra on our touring van in the location where other donors recognized with words "Friends of Debra McLauchlan" Provide bursary to summer camp for child with limited resources (mechanism for selection can be through an agency-FACS, Folk

Arts or Big Brothers, Big Sisters). Goal is to establish a special fund and use a portion of the donations each year. We can also fundraise each year to add to the fund. We will share these ideas with Debra's family and get their input on what ideas they favour most. The Board will make a decision on the use of the donations & description of the ongoing fund at their December 5th meeting. After that we will send out a thank you letter & tax receipt to all these donors and follow it up with a personal phone call by mid-December.

Meeting wrapped up at 2:03pm.

APPENDIX D: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

GOAL: 1.0 Maintain Carousel Players' artistic excellence while exploring and developing the repertoire of plays for young audiences				
Strategies	Tactics	Responsibility of	Time Frame	Stakeholders
1.1 Create and implement an artistic timeline to allow more time for partnership and creative development	Develop understanding of relevant grant criteria and timelines Develop artistic schedule to 2019-20 encompassing new play development Annually update the above to 2021 Annually update the above to 2022	AD, GM, PM	Plan for 2017/18 developed in spring 2017; thereafter annually in the fall	Other theatre companies; Playwrights; Funders; Agent (international touring)
1.2 Identify and develop new creative and supplier partnership opportunities and relationships	Develop understanding of tour schedule for TYA shows and festivals; establish expectations /outcomes for attending; determine which staff member should attend; ensure adequate travel cost included in budget	AD, GM, PM	Annually in September	TYA companies; festival presenters
	Evaluate models of using children in new play development	AD, GM, PM	Fall 2017	Internal
	Identify networks of presenters; Determine which staff member(s) should represent Carousel; Include cost of attending in annual budget	AD, GM	every June	PACT, Ontario Contact, PAONE, IPAY, Assitej
	Developing new supplier partnerships	PM	every September	Internal

AD - Artistic Director, GM - General Manager, PM - Production Manager, OMM - Outreach & Marketing Manager

GOAL: 2.0 Identify opportunities to strengthen audience engagement and broaden the dissemination of our work				
Strategies	Tactics	Responsibility of	Time Frame	Stakeholders
2.1 Develop understanding of local, national, and international presentation opportunities, priorities and timelines	see 1.1 above re network	AD, GM, OMM	May 2017 (after preparation of 3 yr. plan); annually thereafter in September	See above
2.2 Create marketing strategy with focus on deepening and broadening relationships with key stakeholders (including presenters and schools) while utilizing most appropriate and effective communication tools	Develop terms of reference and desired outcomes; Create and recruit ad hoc marketing and development task force; develop strategy; present to Board in September	OMM (lead), GM, AD, key Board members	April to September 2017 (for 2018/19 season)	Presenters, educators

GOAL: 3.0 Ensure an appropriate balance exists between Carousel Players activities and its human and financial resources				
Strategies	Tactics	Responsibility of	Time Frame	Stakeholders
3.1 Review Human Resource/Nominating needs relating to strategic priorities and realign staff and volunteer responsibilities accordingly	Meet with staff, realign staff and committee responsibilities accordingly	HR, GM, AD	December 2016 to December 2017	Internal
3.2 Develop criteria to determine feasibility of producing 3 rd show in a season	Write a 'go-no go template' including financial criteria	PM (lead), GM, AD	December 2017 to June 2018	Internal
3.3 Review resource implications of summer camp, March Break, Playlinks and PD days and make recommendations on continuing and/or changing	Create data gathering tools; Gathering data - financial, artistic, evaluation (programmatic and experiential); Analyze data; Make recommendations	OMM, GM (lead), AD	August 2017 to December 2017	Internal
3.4 Develop criteria that will guide decision on whether to undertake new programs	See 3.2 relating to new programs	OMM, GM (lead), AD	May- June 2018	Internal
3.5 Develop and implement policies with respect to sharing Carousel human and production resources with community	Develop inventory list and assess rentability Develop rental/community access policy Develop understanding of external HR demands/requests Develop & implement appropriate HR policy	PM; HR Committee	April to Dec. 2017	Internal

GOAL: 4.0 Ensure that human and financial resources are developed and sustained				
Strategies	Tactics	Responsibility of	Time Frame	Stakeholders
4.1 Create, implement and monitor a 3 to 5-year capital replacement plan which includes potential funding sources	Undertake complete inventory of Carousel production and administrative equipment; estimated when equipment will be deemed obsolete; identify potential funding sources; apply for grants and/or include in operating budget	PM, GM	May -June 2017 to develop list; with annual review and update each October	AD, Staff
4.2 Develop mechanism to ensure professional development opportunities (both formal and informal) for Board and staff are planned, included in the budget, and utilized	Include PD discussion as part of annual staff evaluation; for each employee and the Board create an annual PD plan; setup process to monitor on a semi-annual basis	AD, GM, Board	Mechanism developed by May 2017; Annual plan developed each May for Board and each staff	internal
4.3 Develop and implement a 3-year fundraising strategy that aligns with strategic, artistic, and operational priorities	see 2.2 above	see 2.2 above	see 2.2 above	see 2.2 above
4.4 Develop Board skill matrix and recruitment strategy	Review skills needed on the Board relevant to strategic plan; establish matrix that aligns with skill set; inventory skills of current Board members; review Board orientation materials and update accordingly; review Board manual and update accordingly; annual review manual and orientation materials; update committee structure once Marketing and FR Task Force Report recommendations accepted	HR Committee	April to June 2017	Board members
4.5 Review and update Carousel's bylaws to align with new Ontario Non-Profit Corporations Act	Review Carousel's bylaws; review new Act; make recommendations to Board on updates; once approved file with appropriate government ministry	GM, Dave Thomas	by June 2017	Board members; current membership
4.6 Develop mechanism to monitor staff overtime and vacations	Review HR policies; setup mechanism to record and monitor staff overtime and vacations	HR Committee	by June 2017	Staff

GOAL:				
5.0 Stabilize administrative and production facilities				
Strategies	Tactics	Responsibility of	Time Frame	Stakeholders
5.1 Formalize relationship with Folk Arts that aligns with Carousel's short-term strategic and operational priorities, needs, and resources	Develop use of equipment policies (PM)	PM, GM	Jan-March 2017	Folk art staff
	Finalize contract	GM, Dave Thomas (PM, AD input)	Jan-March 2017	Internal
	Implementation of health and safety policies	GM	Jan-June 2017	Folk Arts user groups, other Folk Arts users, and stakeholders
	Evaluate production cycles in The Robby	PM, AD, GM	April - annually	Folk Arts
5.2 Develop shared vision with respect to long-term relationship with Folk Arts	Carousel representative on Board and involved with Health and Safety Policies	GM/AD	April - annually	Folk Arts
	Develop understanding of Folk Arts LT Vision and how they operate – transition relationship from GM -> AD	GM -> AD		
	Bring back to fall Board retreat to determine next steps	Ad Hoc Committee		