

ANNUAL REPORT

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 AMERICAN STAGE



FISCAL YEAR SEPTEMBER 1, 2022 – AUGUST 31, 2023

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MISSION

We seek to reinforce the power of live theatre with high quality productions of compelling plays that excite and challenge a diverse audience. We are passionate about the telling of meaningful stories that inspire audiences to lean forward and engage.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge with honor and gratitude the Tocabaga Peoples on whose ancestral lands I live, work and play. I also recognize with reverence and honor the contributions of enslaved Africans and migrant workers, to the building of this city and state.



FROM THE PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

I would like to start by giving the trustees, staff, and supporters of American Stage a standing ovation. I am thoroughly wowed by the level of passion, commitment, and agility that this theatre has demonstrated through the past year, and I am proud to be among you.

American Stage has pulled itself out of the pandemic and into full producing mode during what was a complicated year. Let me rephrase that – YOU came out of a world-shaking hardship and then were confronted with more difficulties, and still the American Stage prevailed.

Applause all around.

The past season saw five mainstage shows, one pop up holiday show, one park show, a school tour, and numerous community events, classes, summer camps, and our annual Gala. American Stage has navigated and continues to navigate challenges as we endeavor to

return to full attendance and financial stability. At a time when the cost of producing theatre has increased exponentially, and we watch as theatres across the country buckle and close under these new realities, I am heartened by the steadfastness of our supporters. It is evident that you care deeply about American Stage, and believe in its mission to inspire audiences to lean forward and engage in powerful stories.

Yes, it has been a challenging year. But it has also been a rewarding one and there is new and renewed energy as we move into our 46th season. Thank you for the tremendous welcome to St. Pete and American Stage. I am proud of the accomplishments we have all made in the past year and I eagerly await the upcoming season and all of its many chances for us to discover and rediscover our love of theatre!

Your partner in art,
Helen R. Murray



FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

The 2022-2023 season at American Stage was its 45th! We have been fortunate to have had such a long and rich history of providing live theatre in St. Petersburg. A heartfelt THANK YOU for this to all our subscribers, donors, and sponsors through the years. You helped us grow by providing the unwavering support that enabled us to produce theatre at the highest level for our community.

This past season has been a tumultuous one for American Stage and for all the theatres around the country. We all continued our slow journey back from shuttering during COVID. Getting people to return to live theater has not been easy. Couple that with post COVID rising costs and we find ourselves in a situation where regional theatres everywhere are struggling to stay afloat. It is painful to watch these cultural institutions implode or permanently shrink. As one of my fellow Board members said, "...this is devastating for humanity."

In the case of American Stage, despite these difficulties and obstacles, we have persisted in our mission to strengthen our place in the Tampa Bay area as a center of innovative, thought-provoking work and education, and we have succeeded in doing so under the steady leadership of Helen Murray, our Producing Artistic Director, and because of the hard work, dedication and passion of our staff. And, of course, we could not have persevered if it were not for you, our patrons. On behalf of the entire Board of Trustees and staff at American Stage, thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

As we enter our 2023-2024 season, we look forward to sharing more powerful stories, boldly told. Together, let's make year 46 the best one ever! See you at the theatre!

Warmly,
Anastasia C. Hiotis, Board Chair



The season started with the rousing and raucous *Green Day's American Idiot* which was on its way to a sold-out final week when hurricane Ian descended. By luck or by grace, Ian turned south before impacting St. Pete with full force. Weeks after Ian, Helen R. Murray arrived to helm American Stage full time and we hit the ground running on a whirlwind of a year.

"GREEN DAY'S AMERICAN IDIOT SNAPS, CRACKLES AND ROCKS AT AMERICAN STAGE."
- BROADWAY WORLD



Best Musical
BroadwayWorld

Best Set Design
BroadwayWorld

Best Costume Design
BroadwayWorld

Best Lighting Design
BroadwayWorld

Best Direction of a Musical
BroadwayWorld



Following that we engaged with *The Colored Museum* by George C. Wolfe and it's insightful, funny, and challenging questions.



We joyously mounted a one man reading of *Wonderful Life* during the holidays starring local favorite Matthew McGee.



45TH

SEASON IN REVIEW



In the new year audiences took in an American classic with *Crimes of the Heart* by Beth Henley.



"RAGTIME IS AN IMPORTANT SHOW, BRILLIANTLY WRITTEN AND PERFORMED WITH SO MUCH HEART."
- BROADWAY WORLD



The spring brought us *Ragtime the Musical* by Terrance McNally, in the park with the largest cast in American Stage history.

As we moved toward summer audiences, we were enthralled by the deftly acted *Disgraced* by Ayhad Ahktar.



"DISGRACED IS EARTHSHAKING IN ITS POWERFUL DRAMATIC PEAKS" - BRADENTON TIMES



The season came to a close with American Stage's first bilingual mainstage production, *La Gringa* by Carmen Rivera.



"I COULD UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE EVERY MOMENT OF THIS PLAY, REGARDLESS OF LANGUAGE - AN EXCELLENT TESTAMENT TO THE CRAFT OF THE ACTORS, THE DIRECTOR, AND THE PLAYWRIGHT."
- THE GABBER

We welcomed four nationally recognized directors, Keith Arthur Bolden, Elizabeth Margolius, Sharifa Yasmin, and Tatyana-Marie Carlo.



Dante Murray (Colehouse Walker, Jr. from *Ragtime*) sang at the dedication of Terrance McNally's childhood home.



We shined a light on our actors by having casts sing the National Anthem at the Rays stadium pregame.



Our newly expanded Lift Every Voice New Play Festival featuring five play readings from the most BIPOC writers to date, and having Regina Victor as the keynote speaker.



OTHER NOTABLE ARTISTIC MOMENTS FROM THIS PAST SEASON

- *Crimes of the Heart* featured an all BIPOC cast
- In an overwhelming boon to our local and national arts economy, American Stage employed over 300 artists, technicians, consultants and performers in the 22-23 season!
- We celebrated the one-year anniversary of the First Mondays staged reading series in partnership with Creative Pinellas.
- American Sign Language interpreted performances are now being done for every mainstage production.



"Having the opportunity to take part in this fellowship taught me an abundance of skills and techniques to become a successful director. I also had many opportunities to work with directors from all over the country and direct my own projects to build my professional resume. I'm looking forward to utilizing everything I have learned to continue carving out space for diverse storytelling in our community and beyond."

– Alexa Perez, Artistic Fellow



"My time as a fellow at American Stage provided me with the tools to converse openly about the operations of a theatre and our purpose in serving our community. These skills guide me in uplifting the diverse stories held within our world and help me continue the challenging conversations that create a safer space for all!"

– Marygrace McManus, Arts Administration Fellow

WHY DOES ARTS EDUCATION MATTER?

Because art is the canary in the coalmine. Art sees and enlightens us to the dangers and beauties surrounding us. So let's help our children be the light in the darkness.

"Our bilingual students loved seeing their language in action. All students learned kindness and how to include all students in activities... our school has been having American Stage come to entertain our students for over 25 years. We always enjoy your shows and the interaction with the actors." -Holy Family School Elementary

American Stage believes that arts education is the catalyst that inspires profound connections. Students learn to connect with their peers, their teachers, communities and their inner-selves. We believe that theatre is the great communicator that creates bridges between the world of the student and uncharted worlds which students may explore in new ways. American Stage educational programs strives to create new opportunities for students to increase

self-confidence, strengthen collaborative skills, improve learning, and expand their world-view.

After a couple of years of pivoting to finding new ways for our students to connect virtually, this year our focus was to get them to come together into spaces that were safe to play in no matter of race, socio-economic background or experience, and where creativity and imagination can thrive.

"American Stage carefully creates a classroom culture of inclusivity and inspires the students to dream big. I love this program and am grateful for the countless students they have impacted. We live in a world where individualism and creativity are not valued, and this program is vital." - Elizabeth Halsted, Teacher Lakewood High School



EDUCATION

43

Teachers and performers employed.

63

Kids & teens taught in Drama School.

80

Students investigated a theatre career by speaking to American Stage Staff.

81

Adults taught in Drama School.

130

Students immersed in the world of theatre through residencies in Pinellas County.

140

Students who wrote their first plays in the Write On! Program.

240

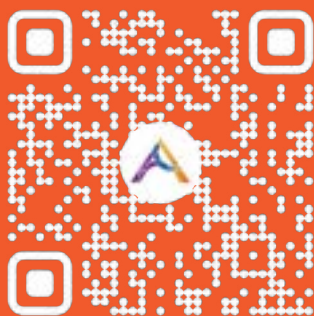
Campers who participated in Summer Camp.

4,800

Students between grades 3-5 reached with *Cinderella Eats Rice & Beans* School Tour.

\$30,000

Of financial aid scholarships awarded.



SCAN CODE TO WATCH THE HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR 2023 SUMMER CAMP!



WHEN WE ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY IT IS AN ACT OF ARTISTRY.

Our community engagement mission states that American Stage has a responsibility to our staff, community, the Tampa Bay Region, and our nation to ensure that all communities, cultures and people have the access, awareness and support to benefit from the transformative power of live theatre, which inspires honest and thought-provoking dialogue. It is imperative that we create programming that bridges our cultural communities, as we understand all people deserve to be seen, heard and celebrated.

With over 50 events, including talkbacks, community conversations and council convenings American Stage is engaging with its community with intentionality and depth.

Conversations included:

- *Is Our Democracy in Danger?*
- *Stereotypes, Satire, & Black Theatre*
- *The Balance between Tradition and Westernization*
- *Homeland vs Hometown: A look at Cultural Identity in America*

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS

Pinellas County Schools
Family Center on Deafness
Mindful Movement
Today's Church
LGBTQ Resource Center
Community Tampa Bay
Your Real Stories
Stetson University
St. Petersburg College Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions
Satiated Artists
Pinellas Community Foundation
Blackburn Law Firm
St. Pete Pride
The James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art
National Association of Asian American Professionals
Jewish Federation of Florida's Gulf Coast
Non-Profit Leadership Center
St. Vincent de Paul Cares
Florida Humanities
St. Petersburg Arts Alliance
The Studio @620
The Woodson African American Museum of Florida
Warehouse Arts District ArtsXchange
Arts Conservatory for Teens
Creative Pinellas
Florida Humanities
African American Heritage Association
DJ L Mo & Company
University of South Florida St. Petersburg

PARTNERING MUSICIANS

JJ Pattishall, Community Musician Liaison
Jessica Albino
Chris Barbosa
Blaine Krauss
Shankh Lahiri
Matthew Morris
Shevonne Philidor
Janelle Richardson

PARTNERING VISUAL ARTISTS

Tania Figueroa
Dallas Jackson
Ashley Rivers
Fredrick 'Rootman' Woods

We are deeply appreciative of all those willing to engage in meaningful conversation with American Stage.

IDEA COUNCIL

The true work of creating welcoming spaces requires intention and conscious effort to acknowledge and embolden narratives and experiences that are different from our own. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion must be proactive and mindful. We must also acknowledge that it will be imperfect but that we will keep trying. We recognize that the storyteller matters, that the visionary at the helm of each production matters, that the individuals supporting and crafting the experience matter, and that the human beings we see on stage conveying these stories matter. American Stage will be an ally, an advocate, and a defender for marginalized communities because their lives matter. American Stage has reimagined the former DEI Committee and established the IDEA Council. This collective of community stakeholders and organizational & business leaders engages with IDEA work - Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility.

Members of the Council help ensure collective accountability for building, maintaining and actualizing connections between our stages, their organizations and our diverse communities. The council works towards actionable goals in hopes of seeing an immediate return on our in-depth conversations and subsequent actions.

During this season's community conversations we explored, discussed and deepened our understanding around cultural identity, cultural acceptance, the dismantling of the construct of whiteness, the state of our current democracy, the importance of up-lifting culturally specific and inspired theatre and the aftermath of colonialism within America and the world.

IDEA COUNCIL THEMES:

Since the inception of the IDEA Council we have explored themes around the importance and purpose of land acknowledgements and the need for protecting sacred lands on which we work, play and live. We spoke at length around the numerous forms of accessibility and the inclusion of accessibility into our missions, visions and overall community engagement. We have discussed the importance of building policy and procedures for engaging and working with advocates, sponsors and donors from all walks of life and with a multitude of view points.

IDEA COUNCIL ATTENDEES:

Ajori Spencer

Performing Arts Specialist - Pinellas County Schools

Andridia Hosey

Community Activist & Retired Educator

Anthony Verdeja

Executive Director - Family Center on Deafness

Barbara St. Clair

Executive Director - Creative Pinellas

Caryn Nesmith

Director of Community Relations - University of South Florida

OUR VALUES

WE SEEK TO PRESENT **POWERFUL** PLAYS.

WE STRIVE TO ACHIEVE **EXCEPTIONAL** QUALITY.

WE ENDEAVOR TO BE **ACCESSIBLE** TO ALL.

WE CELEBRATE **DIVERSITY** IN OUR STORIES & CHARACTERS.

WE **RESPECT** OUR ARTISTS, OUR STAFF AND OUR COMMUNITY.

WE BELIEVE THAT GREAT ART THRIVES UNDER FISCAL AND OPERATIONAL **RESPONSIBILITY**.

Clayton Sizemore

Executive Director - Mindful Movement Florida

Dex Fabian

Founder- I Love the Burg/ That's So Tampa

Dr. Doral Pulley

Spiritual Leader - Today's Church Tampa Bay

Jana Prewitt

Josh Sidorowicz

10 Tampa Bay Anchor

Joyce Carpenter

Judith Scully

Lawyer & Educator - Stetson University

Kara Gold-Harris

Director of Arts, Jewish Federation of Florida's Gulf Coast

Kimberly Jackson

Executive Director - Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions

Kimberly Malhoit

Producer, Digital Designer

Lawerence Parker

Financial Manager - North Western Mutual

Leigh Davis

Director of Donor Relations - Pinellas Community Foundation

Nashid Madyun

Executive Director - Florida Humanities

Nathan Bruemmer

LGBTQ Consumer Advocate - Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Nicole Berman

Executive Director - St. Pete Pride

Sherry Williams

Stephanie Adamo

Steven W. Walker

Entrepreneur

Susna Gore

Executive Director - LGBTQ Resource Center

Suzanne Pomerantzeff

Executive Director - Academy of Ballet Arts

Terry Marks

CEO - St Petersburg Arts Alliance

Paula Lacey

CEO RSV-Media

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The road back has not been easy, but we are seeing the light. American Stage’s financial year and season began in September 2022 with a robust line-up along with hopes to return to pre-pandemic levels of attendance and revenue. Due to several external factors, our attendance levels, earned revenue, and donations did not achieve full budget projections. This has resulted in our 2022/2023 season ending in a predicted deficit of \$500k.

The biggest financial challenge we faced this season was the significant cost increase for goods, services, and skilled labor. These increases were more than projected in our 2022/23 budget and coupled with lower than pre-pandemic attendance, the season came in at a loss. The aid of stalwart supporters and the fiscal insight from our Board of Trustees helped navigate these financial waters. Our current income split remains the same as 2021-22 at a 30:70 ratio of earned to contributed income, with our goal being to return to a 50:50 ratio for the next season and beyond. While American Stage hit its lowest cash position of the last three years in the lead-up to our 2023 Park production, our cash reserves and a healthy endowment policy were able to offset the need for any drastic measures.

Moving forward into our next season, we have completed an in-depth analysis of our 2023-24 budget to ensure it reflects rising costs and audience trends, and puts American Stage on the path to growth and increased profitability. We also start the new season with a generous grant from the Hough Family Foundation, which will fund much needed upgrades and replacements to our lighting, sound, and IT equipment. Furthermore, we have received a wonderful legacy gift from one of our great supporters. This will help to bolster our operational funds as we start the new fiscal year. In our upcoming season, American Stage remains committed to our mission of powerful stories, boldly told. We are working to stabilize the financial health of an arts organization impacted by the global pandemic.

We are embarking on a new chapter with many new staff members including leadership, a higher level of organization for the company, and a deepened commitment to inclusion, accessibility, diversity, and equitability. Our current and dedicated donor base remains enthusiastic about the upcoming season and the future of American Stage, prompting confidence to project higher donations. The best is yet to come.

AMERICAN STAGE COMPANY, INC. PROFIT AND LOSS REPORT 2022-2023 SEASON

INCOME		EXPENSES	
Donations	675,000.00	Production	850,000.00
Foundations and Endowment	55,000.00	Park Production	350,000.00
Fundraising Events and Gala	300,000.00	Production Overhead	150,000.00
Grants	300,000.00	Concessions	45,000.00
Employee Retention Tax Credit	255,000.00	General Operating	250,000.00
Total Contributed Income	1,585,000.00	Marketing	215,000.00
Tickets and Subscriptions	505,000.00	Development and Gala	57,500.00
Park Production	385,000.00	Education	80,000.00
Education	110,000.00	Payroll	1,500,000.00
Concessions	115,000.00		
Processing Fees	50,000.00		
Total Earned Income	1,165,000.00		
Savings and Endowment Transfer	250,000.00		
Total Income	3,000,000.00	Total Expenses	3,497,500.00
		Net Operating Income	(497,500.00)

OUR SUPPORTERS

I am so grateful for the incredible gifts that so many have bestowed on American Stage. Beyond it being what we need to survive as a company it speaks to a bigger common understanding among our supporters — that what we do makes life worth living.

– Helen R. Murray

THE LEGACY SOCIETY OF AMERICAN STAGE

Anonymous
Michael Alford
Mary Lou Ambrose & Joseph A. Barkley III
Sandi & Richard G. Averitt III
Anne Barrins & Ken Slaby
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William Studdiford
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Mary Lou Warner & Burrage Warner
Tim Watson
The Whittle Family
Phyllis Stover Williams
Donna A. Woolums

AMERICAN STAGE ANNUAL FUND

PRESENTING LEVEL (\$25,000+)

Bank of America, Inc.
Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation
The Estate of Sherri Richey Burke
The Estate of Marsha Carson
Willi Rudowsky & Hal Freedman
The Estate of William Hough
Hough Family Foundation
Thomas A. & Mary S. James Foundation
The Milky Family Foundation
The Estate of Diana Norris Eldred
Pinellas Community Foundation
Raymond James
Brian Reale & Fred Wilcox
The Shubert Foundation
Florida Dept of State Division of Arts & Culture
The Estate of Robert E. Williams

PRODUCING LEVEL (\$10,000 - \$24,999)

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Sabal Trust Company
Cathy Swanson

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LEADING PLAYER (\$1,000 - \$1,999)

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Sylvia Rusche
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Dean Walsh
William Ward
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Daryl DeBerry
Kathy & Peter Forde
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Nicola Gafinowitz
Mary Gamble
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Anne Ferrante Ghosh & Jay K. Ghosh
William Hein
William Holden
Cristina Hudson
Mr. & Mrs. William Israel
Catherine Kane
Sumaiyya Khan
Mike Kingsford
Marcia Lipscomb
Jan McClure
Debra Mitzman
Robin Munroe
Kyle Norberg & Tom Handcock
Cheryl Pachell
Davis Perkins
Dorothy Poli
Lisa & John Posey in Honor of Brian Reale
Robin & Joseph Reed
Sharlene Sakol
Bryan Schmick
Margaret & Arthur Silvergleid
Drexey Smith
Thomas Steck
Susan Sullivan
Karen & Dave Surplus
Jesse Turtle
Sharon Wallace-Platt
Andrea Wilson
Debbie Yones

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Anonymous in Honor of the Clement Family
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Tom O'Keefe
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Kristin Turner
David Tyler
Ann Vickstrom
Grace Wagenman
Chuck Wasson
Joan Weaving
Linda Welsh
Paul Wilborn
Robert Willis
Cris Wolfe
Judith Woodworth
Tara Yoder
Brian Zubee
Candace Zubee



WAYS TO SUPPORT & GET INVOLVED

THE GIFT OF SUPPORT

We are committed to making the best possible use of your gift, to shape and advance the theatre we share with our community each year. Your support enables all the work we do. We invite you to become a donor today.

- Become a Donor
- Become a Corporate Sponsor
- Support our Gala

THE GIFT OF PARTNERSHIP

Promote your company's name, logo, & services – enjoy marketing & experiential benefits – become an American Stage Partner!

- Catering Partners
- Local Business Partners
- Hospitality Partners

THE GIFT OF SERVICE

Volunteers play an important role in ensuring our patrons have an outstanding experience. We rely on our dedicated volunteers to make American Stage performances and initiatives possible. Come join us!

- Serve as a Volunteer
- Serve on a Committee
- Serve as a Board Member

THE GIFT OF AMBASSADORSHIP

When we engage with community it is an act of artistry. Support American Stage by helping us build & maintain the connections between our stages & our diverse communities.

- Bring a friend
- Spread the word
- Give the gift of theatre

OUR PEOPLE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CHAIR

Anastasia C. Hiotis
Carlton Fields (Retired)

VICE CHAIR

Will Hough
Directed Capital

TREASURER

Trevor Wells, CPA
Pfizer

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Gina Clement
Gator Cases (Formerly)

TRUSTEES

Elizabeth Brincklow
Elizabeth Brincklow Arts, LLC

Dexter Fabian
RKC & I Love the Burg & That's So Tampa

Alistair Flynn
*Carlson Group at
Merrill Lynch Wealth Management*

Jose Fourquet
Merrill Lynch Wealth Management

Joel B. Giles,
Carlton Fields

Alais L. M. Griffin
Griffin Strategic Law Advisors PLLC

Robyn Rusignuolo
SoleVenture, Inc.

Sherri Smith-Dodgson
Miss Science®

Cathy P. Swanson
Seacoast Bank

Steven W. Walker
Entrepreneur

Joe Weldon
Raymond James

Evan Whittle CFP
Ameriprise Financia

STRATEGIC ADVISORY BOARD

Sandi & Dick Averitt

Susan R. & Robb Hough

Beth A. Houghton & Scott K. Wagman

Alfred T. May

Mary & Mark Myers

Brian Reale & Fred Wilcox

Willi Rudowsky & Hal Freedman

Laura Shaw

Dr. Jean Spencer-Carnes

AMERICAN STAGE STAFF

ARTISTIC

Producing Artistic Director
Helen R. Murray

Artistic Associate
Marygrace McManus

Production Associate
Alexa Perez

Costume Shop Manager
Megan Szloboda

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Director of Community Engagement
Erica Sutherlin

EDUCATION

Director of Education
José Avilés

Education Assistant
Jessica Jennelle

John Perez
Education and Outreach Associate

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Director of Marketing and Communications
Avery Anderson

Audience Service Manager
Annie Curasi

Video Producer
Travis Hawkes

Graphic Designer
Curtis Waidley

Box Office Coordinator
Linda Fajvan

Box Office Associate
David S Monge

PRODUCTION

Director of Production
Timon Brown

Technical Director
Thad Engle

Assistant Technical Director
John Millsap

IT'S SOMETHING
UNPREDICTABLE,
BUT IN THE END IS RIGHT
I HOPE YOU HAD
THE TIME
OF YOUR LIFE.

- *Green Day's American Idiot*



FISCAL YEAR SEPTEMBER 1, 2022 – AUGUST 31, 2023