



## **Theatre 55: As we age, we can all face unique challenges related to social isolation, mental health, and access to culturally competent care.**

This is particularly true for LGBTQIA and BIPOC Minnesotans, who experience compounded forms of discrimination and marginalization. For this project, Theater 55 developed and produced a series of educational video segments focused on addressing loneliness and isolation among BIPOC and transgender LGBTQ older adults. This project increases awareness and access to video content among LGBTQ older adults, particularly in underserved communities.

Domain 3:  
**Optimized Health and Longevity**

Strategy B:  
**Promoting Healthy Living**

Objective 1:  
**Increased awareness and adoption of age-friendly frameworks and practices**

## **Overall Project Impact**

### **Lifelong Learning**

Theatre 55's mission is to enrich the lives of elders as actors, audiences, and life-long learners. Their vision is to eliminate ageism and shift the paradigm on aging. Participants learn theatre skills of using their body, voice, imagination, breath control, movement, expression, and self-promotion through social media.

### **Intergenerational Impact**

Arts and creativity enrich our lives at every age, supporting health, connection, and purpose across the lifespan. Minnesotans at every age enjoy having access to local concerts, dances, theatrical plays, comedy shows and other cultural performances.

### **Addressing Loneliness and Isolation**

In May 2023, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy issued a national advisory declaring loneliness and isolation a public health epidemic. Arts participation is an important component to healthy aging, contributing physical and mental health benefits, including fewer doctor visits, less medication use, better morale, and reduced rates of depression.

**"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."**

**Pablo Picasso**



All photos courtesy of Age-Friendly Minnesota



## Impact Snapshot

Theatre 55 was created in 2018 to fill a need in Minnesota: theatre performed by older people. It was formed with the purpose of developing lifelong learning through theater performance and education with a vision to enrich the lives of elders as artists, audiences, and lifelong learners through theatre performance and education.

## Community Grantee Intersections

- [Wonderlust Productions](#) (2023) Podcast and theater production focused on the experience of caregiving. Based on true stories and featuring performances from a mix of actors and real caregivers, the production brings forward the unseen and undervalued labor of caregiving. As an Age-Friendly Minnesota grantee, they offered sold-out shows for their production of Thank You for Holding: The Caregiver Play Project.
- [Giving Voice Chorus](#) (2025) Grant funding was used to strategically engage rural and underserved populations in a pilot initiative building the framework for the launch new dementia-friendly choruses. These choruses provide a much-needed respite for care partners and create a strong sense of community and connectedness for older adults. Giving Voice is leading a worldwide movement to bring dementia-friendly choruses to every community.
- [Aitkin County Friends of the Arts - The Terrace](#) (2023) Grant support for construction of an age-friendly outdoor gathering and arts space in Aitkin's downtown. Called "a beacon of community spirit and cultural enrichment," for transforming what was once an empty lot into Aitkin's newest and most accessible outdoor performance venue for community members of every age.

All photos courtesy of Theatre 55



"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have."

– Maya Angelou

