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## **Pottawattamie Arts, Culture, & Entertainment Receives Half Million from Charles E. Lakin Foundation** *Arts & Culture Education and Programming Floor will be named for the late Nancy S. Benson*

**COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA** – Pottawattamie Arts, Culture and Entertainment (PACE), the nonprofit developing a nearly \$27 million, 95,000 square foot arts and culture center in downtown Council Bluffs, recently received yet another significant gift, this time from the Charles E. Lakin Foundation, bringing the Hoff Family Arts and Culture Center closer to completion in 2019. The Foundation donated \$500,000 in honor of Nancy S. Benson, daughter of Charles E. and Florence Lakin.

Benson, a native of Red Oak, passed away in 2015. She worked in both private practice and public schools as a speech pathologist, and had a heart for education.

"My mom had three passions: her family, the arts and early childhood education," said Josie Cellone, Benson's daughter and Charles E. Lakin Foundation board member. "This project combines all three, and connects the Lakin Foundation's focus on children and families with PACE's mission in the community. It's incredibly meaningful to leave a legacy in her name."

An Iowa West Foundation initiative, PACE seeks to strengthen and elevate arts and culture in Pottawattamie County.

"Not only does arts education and programming create memorable experiences for our young people, but research shows it also benefits them in the classroom," said Pete Tulipana, President and CEO, of the Iowa West Foundation. "The children of Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County will thrive because of the Charles E. Lakin Foundation's gift, which will serve as a lasting tribute to Nancy Benson."

Construction on the Hoff Family Arts and Culture Center is officially underway. Featuring a 280-seat theater, rehearsal space, exhibit space, classrooms, and much more, the facility will open in late 2019.

"We are so grateful to the Lakin family for this incredibly important investment," said Danna Kehm, PACE CEO. "Their support will help us build a facility that provides best-in-class arts education experiences and to continue them for future generations. We are truly grateful."

To make a donation to PACE and the Hoff Family Arts and Culture Center, individuals can visit [www.paceartsiowa.org/donate](http://www.paceartsiowa.org/donate).

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### **ABOUT PACE**

**Pottawattamie Arts, Culture & Entertainment (PACE)** is a 35-year-old organization, originally organized as the Bluffs Arts Council, with a mission to promote Council Bluffs as a center for excellence in the arts. Today, its focus is on a strategic approach to arts programming within the community, partnering with the Chanticleer Theater, American Midwest Ballet, Kitchen Council and the Kaneshville Symphony Orchestra in transforming the historic Harvester II building in the Haymarket District of Council Bluffs into a center for arts and culture in Pottawattamie County. For more information visit [www.paceartsiowa.org](http://www.paceartsiowa.org).