

Igniting Inclusive Storytelling Non-Profit Spotlight

Steel River Playhouse

Steel River Playhouse is transforming what it means to belong in the world of live theater. Located in downtown Pottstown, this dynamic nonprofit produces more than **90 performances** each year and welcomes **over 10,000 visitors**.



With the support of a grant from Pottstown Regional Community Foundation (formerly Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation), Steel River launched **Steel River Spark: Igniting Inclusive Storytelling**, an initiative designed to make theater more accessible for neurodiverse audiences. Through this program, the Playhouse introduced **Relaxed Performances** that include softened lighting and sound, flexible seating, emotional regulation tools, and designated quiet spaces. These performances create a welcoming environment for individuals with ADD, ADHD, autism, dementia, sensory sensitivities, and anyone who may benefit from a more flexible theater experience.



In 2024, all six of Steel River's MainStage productions offered relaxed performances, drawing nearly 400 patrons. Titles like *Rent*, *The Prom*, and *Steel Magnolias* highlighted themes of community and acceptance, while teen-led shows such as *Legally Blonde* and *Peter and the Starcatcher* inspired younger audiences to see themselves on stage. With its first relaxed performance of 2025 already sold out, the program has quickly become a core part of Steel River's ticketing strategy.

This work also positioned Steel River to join the Art-Reach ACCESS program, offering \$2 tickets to patrons with disabilities receiving public assistance. From joining in July 2024 to , they've distributed over 300 discounted tickets, reaffirming their belief that live theater should be for everyone.

As Executive Director Rita Pederson shares, "The support of the Foundation allowed us to be more responsive and inclusive. We are thankful for this partnership and hope to find more ways to partner in the future."

Steel River Playhouse is currently gearing up for **Guys & Dolls**, its **Summer Teen Intensive** production running July 25 through August 3.

To buy tickets or learn more visit: **[Steelriver-playhouse.org](https://steelriver-playhouse.org)**

We thank Steel River Playhouse for being a driving force for the arts in Pottstown. Through your dedication to inclusion, education, and creative expression, you enrich our region inspiring individuals to discover the power of storytelling.



**Pottstown Regional
Community Foundation**

Connecting Generosity with Community Needs

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