

West Valley Arts Foundation Announces Leadership Transition to Support Long-Term Vision

Board Affirms Commitment to Stability, Accountability, and Community-Centered Growth

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The [West Valley Arts Foundation](#) announced today that [Executive Director Jeff](#) Olsen will be concluding his tenure with the organization, effective June 25, 2025. This leadership transition follows a comprehensive internal review of the Foundation's first year as an independent nonprofit and reflects the Board's commitment to aligning leadership with the organization's evolving priorities. During this transition, the Foundation's Executive Committee will oversee day-to-day operations, with [John Sweeney](#) serving as [Acting Executive Director](#) in partnership with Artistic Director Vanessa Olson. A national search is currently underway to identify a permanent executive leader equipped to guide the Foundation into its next phase of growth.

"We're thankful for Jeff's passion and community mindset throughout our transformative inaugural year," said Board President Kate Rufener. "As with

any new venture, we encountered both meaningful progress and growing pains. This leadership change reflects our intention to address those challenges directly and ensure the Foundation is positioned for long-term success—financially, operationally, and artistically."

Since the 2024 transfer of the West Valley Performing Arts Center from city ownership, the



logo for West Valley Arts



WVAF logo



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Foundation has worked to establish itself as a vibrant, community-rooted arts institution. The shift from public to private management came with new demands, including the unexpected funding changes from both Federal and State leaders.

“When our community fought to preserve this theater, they entrusted us with more than a building—they entrusted us with a standard of leadership, transparency, and trust,” Rufener added. “As stewards of that trust, we are taking deliberate steps to strengthen the systems and structures that support our mission.”

The Foundation’s current season has had a strong first half, with performances of Alice By Heart continuing as scheduled and Theater360 summer camps nearing capacity. The interim leadership team brings robust experience in nonprofit management, fundraising, and community engagement to ensure continuity during this important period of transition. For more information, visit www.wvcarts.org or follow @wvcarts on social media.

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