



May 12, 2017

Seth Taylor, Executive Director
Community Redevelopment Agency
City of Clearwater
112 S. Osceola Ave.
Clearwater, FL 33756

Dear Mr. Taylor,

Ruth Eckerd Hall, Inc., is pleased to submit the attached request for funding in the amount of \$100,000 to the City of Clearwater's Community Redevelopment Agency. Funds would be used to pay for expenses Ruth Eckerd Hall incurs during the production of a series of events the organization produces in downtown Clearwater.

This series, which includes Miracle on Cleveland Street, Cruisin' at the Capitol Theatre, and the Blast Friday events, draws tens of thousands of individuals to downtown Clearwater for family-friendly fun; helps establish downtown as a destination for Tampa Bay area residents and visitors; and showcases and supports existing merchants to event attendees. This year, we are poised to expand Cruisin' at the Capitol by a half-day for a display of classic motorcycles, pending increased funding from the Clearwater Downtown Development Board.

Ruth Eckerd Hall is pleased to have a longstanding and mutually beneficial partnership with the City of Clearwater, and thanks the Community Redevelopment Agency for its thoughtful consideration of this funding request.

Please contact me at 712-2704 / zbuffman@rutheckerdhall.net or Darren Rivera, Ruth Eckerd Hall's grants manager, at 712-2761 / drivera@rutheckerdhall.net if you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Zev Buffman
President & CEO

**Blast Friday
Miracle on Cleveland Street
Cruisin' at the Capitol**

Presented by:
Ruth Eckerd Hall, Inc.
Downtown Clearwater Events, Inc.

Purpose

The purpose of the festival series of Blast Friday, Miracle on Cleveland Street and Cruisin' at the Capitol is to consistently attract residents and visitors to downtown Clearwater to showcase the district's assets and foster economic growth. Ruth Eckerd Hall, in conjunction with the City of Clearwater and Downtown Clearwater Events, Inc. has continued to steward and strengthen the Blast Friday brand launched in 2009, as well as produce other signature events that establish the downtown as a destination for Tampa Bay area residents and visitors.

Summary and History

Ruth Eckerd Hall's programming, production and marketing expertise delivers a level of quality to outdoor festivals consistent with the Ruth Eckerd Hall brand. Demonstrated results include consistent crowds of approximately 4,000 attendees for each **Blast Friday** event; growth in popularity of **Miracle on Cleveland Street** that set an attendance record of more than 10,000 last year; and the signature vintage car show, Cruisin' at the Cap, which drew more than 5,000 attendees in its third year. The success of Cruisin' at the Capitol has led to the possibility of increasing the event by a half-day to add a classic motorcycle show.

While the momentum is palpable and the model is growing in creativity with new themes, partnerships and activities, we also recognize the work as a service to the downtown done in the spirit of fulfilling a duty to support our community as its entertainment partner. Ruth Eckerd Hall views it as an investment in a viable, healthy future for the downtown district.

Early commitment from event sponsors and partners affects our ability to produce a quality experience:

- **Community Awareness:** Individuals and families can mark the dates on their calendars, get excited about the performances and themed events, and spread the word to others in the community. We have also opened our promotional opportunities for other community non-profit organizations.

- **Vendors:** The diversity of events enables us to attract quality vendors that are more willing to commit for the entire series.
- **Retailers:** Merchants will have information to promote the events, plan promotional opportunities, offer special discounts, etc.
- **Media/Media Partners:** Media partners will have the information to include in more listings and the ability to approach potential media/radio sponsors. Having Cox Radio as a partner enabled us to secure the appropriate station support whether it is a country, oldies, R&B or rock artist.
- **Sponsors:** A confirmed list of concerts and themed events allows stakeholders to sell the “experience” and gives sponsors greater and more frequent media visibility. We secured a new presenting sponsor this year (Bank of America) that should help further promote the event throughout the community.
- **Artists:** Early solicitation and confirmation of artists capitalizes on artist availability and the ability to leverage marketing plans.

Ruth Eckerd Hall will be directly responsible for booking the performances, and producing, marketing and managing the events. Themes will be announced once entertainment is contracted.

Tentative Schedule

The suggested dates for the seven events are as follows:

1. December 2, 2018 – Miracle on Cleveland Street
2. January 26, 2018
3. Middle February – Cruisin’ at the Cap [date(s) TBD]
4. February 23, 2018
5. March 30, 2018
6. April 27, 2018
7. May 25, 2018

Financials

The cost to present, produce and manage the seven events (including Miracle) is estimated at \$500,000 (see attached project budget) of which \$452,000 is paid for via in-kind and cash sponsorships, and contributions from Ruth Eckerd Hall which include management and production services in excess of \$33,000. These contributions include booking, marketing, promotions, public relations, design work,

sponsor solicitation and service, accounting and volunteer management. Each Blast Friday event requires approximately 140 hours of staff preparation and planning before the day of the event in the height of season.

Ruth Eckerd Hall is grateful to the Community Redevelopment Agency, Downtown Development Board and Clearwater Parks and Recreation department for their ongoing sponsorship of this series of events. Although the series' media partners continue to be generous, the cost of hosting a free public event (while meeting the challenge to do so over a larger area to broaden its appeal) requires a financial commitment that is beyond Ruth Eckerd Hall's resources alone.

Accordingly, this \$100,000 request of the Community Redevelopment Agency, the City of Clearwater sponsorship, cash support from the Downtown Development Board (a \$39,000 request) and in-kind advertising support from the *Tampa Bay Times*, Cox Media and WTSP 10 News are critical to sustaining this effort for the community.

Ruth Eckerd Hall has contributed more than \$283,000 since 2010 to produce Blast Fridays and Miracle on Cleveland Street and Cruisin' at the Capitol. The organization believes the mix and number of events is more successful than ever, as evidenced by the many thousands of individuals who have been drawn to downtown Clearwater, and hopes cash support from the Community Redevelopment Agency will continue so that this vibrant series of events may continue as well.