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## As fundraising continues, Cain Center maintains regional promotion of the arts

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*The Charlotte Ballet performed at Lake Norman Charter Middle School as part of the six-month regional focus on the arts coordinated by the Cain Center for the Arts.*

Courtesy of the Cain Center

**CORNELIUS** – The Cain Center for the Arts, the centerpiece of a downtown rejuvenation vision and an anticipated hub of regional arts and cultural celebrations, is making an impact on the Lake Norman region – and it hasn't opened its doors yet.

Through a six-month educational outreach program launched in January, the startup community organization delivered first-hand exposure to the arts to more than 8,000 K-12 students in 26 schools in north Mecklenburg, south Iredell, east Lincoln and west Cabarrus counties.

The nonprofit Cain Center for the Arts was established in 2017 and is in the middle of a \$25 million capital campaign to fund construction of the multi-faceted performance and events venue, which will be built on a 1.85-acre site along Catawba Avenue, across from Cornelius Town Hall.

While fundraising continues – the campaign is more than halfway to its goal – the Cain Center partnered with well-known Charlotte arts organizations such as Charlotte Ballet, Charlotte Symphony and Children's Theatre of Charlotte to bring performing arts to students.

"Our goal was to present high quality art programs through partnering with established organizations," says Justin Dionne, executive director of the Cain Center. "We see this outreach as a flagship program for our organization. We had a very positive response from students, teachers and parents. Principals have sent letters acknowledging the impact of the programs."

For some students, the close interaction with the arts can be life changing.

"For many children who see live theatre in their school, it is the first time they are seeing themselves in a creative way," said Margot Parrott, Children's Theatre of Charlotte touring performance coordinator. "To watch that lightbulb turn on is nothing short of pure joy."

The Cain Center hopes to launch a second installment of the program in the spring of 2020, and is actively looking for sponsors. Allen Tate Realtors and the Rotary Club of North Mecklenburg have already signed on to support the next season.

## The Cain Center vision

The non-profit Cain Center for the Arts was established in 2017. The facility will be a home for creativity, learning, entertainment and community for the Lake Norman region. The center will include a 400-seat theater, gallery space, an outdoor venue and classrooms. In addition to providing a home for national and regional shows and performances, it will also be a location for community, private and civic gatherings.

A \$4 million bond project for redeveloping the arts district in historic downtown Cornelius, approved by Cornelius voters in 2013, combined with a foundational gift of \$5 million from Cornelius residents Bill and Ericka Cain, have put the center well on its way to a \$25 million fundraising goal.

A collection of local residents and regional arts, marketing and planning professionals are on the organization's board of directors, and an assortment of sponsorship and campaign support opportunities are available. For more information, visit [cainarts.org](http://cainarts.org).