

LIBERTY THEATRE

823 8th Avenue • Columbus, Georgia

June 26, 1997

Cultural Center, Inc.

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Community Projects Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 2425
Columbus, GA 31902

Dear Tom:

I want to thank you and the trustees of the Community Projects Foundation for consideration of our application for a grant from the foundation. We at the Liberty Theatre Cultural Center are very excited about the growing interest of the performing arts in the Greater Columbus area. We are very pleased to have an organization the caliber of the Community Projects Foundation working on behalf of cultural performing arts in this community. We look forward to working with you as a participating organization in the on going developmental process of fund raising for the needs of our growing market.

As you may well know, the Liberty Theatre was originally opened in 1924 to serve the black population of Columbus when segregation was at its height. At the time of its original opening, the Liberty was the largest and most luxurious movie house in town, and the only one with air conditioning. Although its main purpose was as a movie house, the Liberty also became the mecca of the African American social scene because it played host to all of the great performers of the time. In its heyday the Liberty Theatre's stage was played by such greats as **Gertrude "Ma" Rainey**, **Bessie Smith**, **The Duke Ellington Orchestra** and many of the greatest performing artists of that time. However, as a direct result of desegregation, the Liberty Theatre experienced sharp audience decline and neglect and was forced to close its doors in early 1974.

In 1983 an initiative to revive the Liberty was launched. With support from federal, state, city, and private funding organizations the newly opened facility was renovated at a cost of \$1.5m.

The Liberty Theatre Cultural Center, Inc. is a non-profit charitable organization governed by a board of directors. The mission of the organization is to preserve and to interpret works of performing art and materials of historical significance that represent the cultural heritage of the United States, the Southeast, and the lower Chattahoochee River Valley region, take into account European,

African, and Native American roots. The Theatre's goal is to stimulate awareness in these areas with attention to cultural interrelationships; and to cultivate further understanding through performances, public educational programs and events.

In pursuit of this mission the Liberty Theatre has already played host to many varied types of events including: **Jennifer Holliday In Concert**, **Lou Rawls United Negro College Fund Telethon**, **Ms. Wheelchair Georgia**, **Progressive Dance Studio Recital**, **Community Forums**, **Rigdon Road Elementary School Honors Ceremony**, and **Corporate meetings** to name a few. Additionally, The Liberty Theatre will proudly host many other cultural arts organizations for events in this upcoming 1998 season including **The Springer Theater**, **The Columbus Symphony Orchestra**, **The Columbus State University Jazz Band** and others.

Although we are very proud of our hard work and accomplishments to date, we are also very cognizant of the fact that the work we've completed is merely a first step toward our overall goals. In order to complete the revitalization of the Liberty area physically and artistically, and to assume our proper place in the cultural arts community, we must aggressively pursue completion of the development of the entire "Liberty District" which we view as a critical element of the overall cultural, economic, and social environment of uptown Columbus and this region of the state.

We are fully aware that all of the financial needs of our organization cannot be funded through the Community Projects Foundation. However, the significant contribution that can come from you will substantially help us to accomplish the goals that we have set as an organization in a timely manner. Therefore, we respectfully submit to you the following grant request of \$1,155,298.00 for the purposes of (1) completing the renovation of the Liberty Theater's administration building (2) funding of equipment for educational programs and (3) the establishment of an endowment fund for operational purposes.


The funds will be spent for the following:

•	Completion of renovation of the Liberty Theatre	
	1. Partial Demolition	\$ 18,500.00
	2. Construction Cost	555,400.00
	3. Landscaping of plaza, sidewalk development and facade lighting	17,640.00
	4. Furnishings and Interiors	68,000.00
	5. Design Fees	79,804.00
	6. Contingency	<u>65,954.00</u>
		805,298.00
•	Theatrical & Technical Equipment	50,000.00
•	Operating endowment for Liberty Theatre	<u>500,000.00</u>
	Total Request	\$1,355,298.00

We look forward to discussing this request with you and the trustees. As a participating organization we thank the Columbus Projects Foundation and the Columbus Challenge for the opportunity to participate in the allocation of grants from the Columbus Challenge fundraising effort.

Your consideration of our request is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,


Calvin Smyre
President