

Society of American Magicians
Magic Endowment Fund
Annual Report | 2024-2025



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The Magic Endowment Fund

The Society of American Magicians has been supporting the magic community since 1902 – the longest-running fraternal magic organization in the world. Charitable giving has always been central to that mission, from early benefit performances to the upkeep of magicians' memorials and gravesites.

In 1986, the S.A.M. formalized that commitment by founding the Magic Endowment Fund (MEF), an independent 501(c)(3) dedicated to advancing magic through sustained philanthropy. To date, the MEF has awarded more than **\$600,000 in grants and assistance**. Two programs drive this work:

The General Fund

Awards competitive grants to projects that grow, celebrate, and preserve the art of magic.

The Houdini Fund

Provides confidential grants to magicians and allied performers facing financial hardship from illness or injury.

Together, they reflect a simple conviction: that the people and projects that make magic meaningful deserve lasting support.

Cover Image:

Detail of "Maskelyne and Cooke's Marvellous Entertainment," ca. 1887
Courtesy of the Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

A Note from the Chair

Fellow Magic Enthusiasts:

It is my pleasure to share with you the S.A.M. Magic Endowment Fund's 2025 Annual Report – a reflection of another year of meaningful impact and a benchmark for the work still ahead.

Over the past year, the MEF distributed over \$26,000 in General Fund grants supporting a range of powerful initiatives that foster the art of magic: scholarships for young magicians to attend camps and conventions; funding for programs that bring magic into communities; and support for ground-breaking research projects that will inspire new work in the field. Additionally, the Houdini Fund quietly and compassionately provided \$3,000 of emergency financial assistance to magicians and allied artists facing unexpected medical challenges – providing a crucial safety net when it is needed the most.

In 2025 we grew the overall Magic Endowment Fund to over \$2.8 million through donations and investment returns. We attained a major milestone to grow the General Fund portion of the MEF to \$1 million in 2025. Reaching this goal allows us to increase our General Fund annual grants from \$35,000 to \$45,000 for the upcoming year and providing a solid financial foundation to provide even greater support for magicians and magic-centered projects for years to come.

If the MEF's work has inspired you, I hope you'll consider joining each of the MEF's volunteer team of Trustees and many others as a donor. Every gift, no matter the size, helps sustain the art we love and people who bring it to life. Thank you for believing in the power of magic to transform, connect and inspire.



Richard Dooley

Chair, S.A.M. Magic Endowment Fund

The Magic of Impact

The Magic Endowment Fund's 2025 General Fund grants reflect the breadth of what it means to support magic as a living art form – from nurturing the next generation of performers to preserving histories that might otherwise be lost. This year, six initiatives spanning youth education, community performance, and documentary filmmaking were selected through the MEF's competitive grant process.

Youth development anchored the year's giving. The MEF provided scholarships for young magicians to attend **Tannen's Magic Camp** at Bryn Mawr College near Philadelphia, where aspiring performers aged 11 to 20 have trained alongside world-class professionals since 1974. The MEF also sponsored three youth events at the S.A.M.'s 2025 Annual Conference in Nashville: the **SAMY Youth Academy**, the **Stars of Tomorrow Show**, and the **Brad Jacobs People's Choice Contest**.

Two additional grants supported bold new ventures. In Chicago, the MEF helped launch **The Magic Institute** at Cosmic Underground Theater, an inclusive adult magic training program founded by Kayla Drescher and Harrison Lampert. And the MEF supported ***The Greatest Illusion***, director Susan Dynner's short documentary film about Miss Blanche, a Jewish magician who used sleight of hand to survive Auschwitz.



Tannen's Magic Camp

“Ever since I took an online Tannen’s magic class, I’ve loved doing tricks for friends and family. Magic is something that I like not only because it amazes others, but because it amazes me too. To get this scholarship means the world to me because I can spread the joy of magic with others.”

Max, a Tannen’s Magic Camp Scholar
& MEF Scholarship Recipient



The Houdini Fund

The Houdini Fund traces its origins to Harry Houdini himself, who was known for quietly supporting fellow performers in financial need. That spirit of generosity has carried forward for decades, sustained by S.A.M. members and donors whose contributions MEF trustees have carefully invested, allowing the fund to grow and to help more people over time.

Today, the Houdini Fund provides confidential grants to magicians and allied artists (including clowns, ventriloquists, face painters, storytellers, jugglers, and stilt walkers) who are facing financial hardship due to illness or injury. **These are gifts, not loans.** The fund is designed to cover what other resources often don't: co-pays, medications, medical equipment, and other out-of-pocket costs that can add up quickly during a health crisis. Applications are submitted through the MEF's website and reviewed confidentially by a subset of trustees.

We have actively worked for several years to raise awareness of this resource among performing arts communities beyond the S.A.M. membership. As a result, we have begun to see increased applications in the 2025-2026 year. Yet too many eligible performers still don't know help is available.

Please help us spread the word.

\$158k+

Distributed since 1987

\$3,000

Granted in FY 2024-2025



Ira Davenport and Harry Houdini, 1910
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Growing Our Impact

\$1,005,000

General Fund
Year-End 2025

MILESTONE ACHIEVED

More scholarships.

More community programs.

More support for the projects and
people that keep magic alive.

We set an ambitious goal: to grow the General Fund to \$1 million by the end of 2025.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors and the strength of our investments, the General Fund endowment closed 2025 at \$1,005,000 — a milestone that belongs to everyone who believed in the MEF's mission.

Crossing this threshold positions us to increase annual general grant distributions from approximately \$35,000 closer toward our target of \$50,000.

The Secret is Out...

The MEF's grants are open to everyone, and we need your help spreading the word.

Every year, the Magic Endowment Fund awards competitive grants to individuals and organizations working to grow, preserve, and celebrate the art of magic. Projects we've funded range from youth scholarships and convention programming to new performance venues, documentary films, and the restoration of Houdini's gravesite. If you have a project that advances the art of magic, or know someone who does, the MEF wants to hear from you.

Grants are awarded through an open, competitive application process on the MEF's website. There are no membership requirements. There is no single type of project we fund. Our only criterion is that the work meaningfully advances the magical arts.

The MEF's grants remain one of magic's best-kept secrets. That ends with you. Share this report. Tell your assembly. Post it in your group chat. The more people who know about the MEF, the greater our collective impact.

Apply or Learn More

sammagicendowmentfund.org



Ways to Give

Online at:

<https://sammagicendowmentfund.org/donate/>

By check payable to:

SAM Magic Endowment Fund

445 Brandywine Dr.

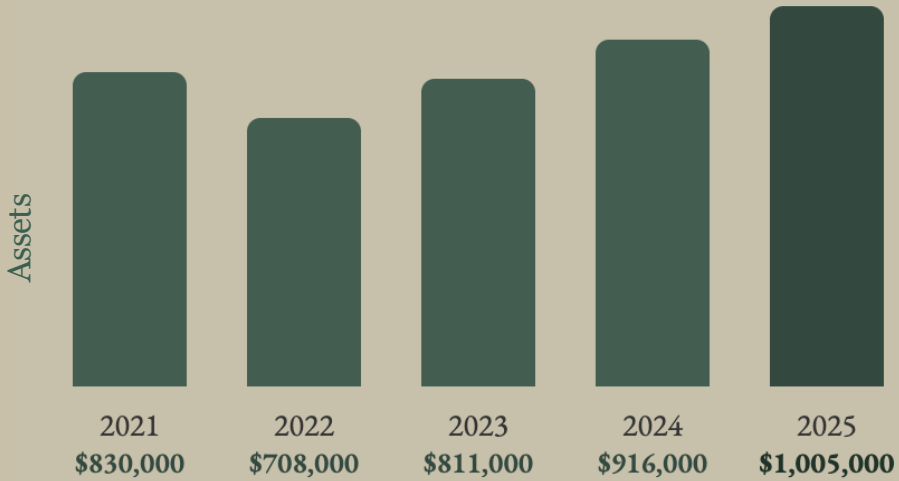
Colorado Springs, CO 80906



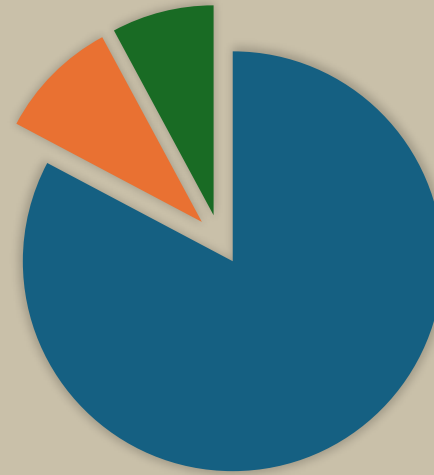
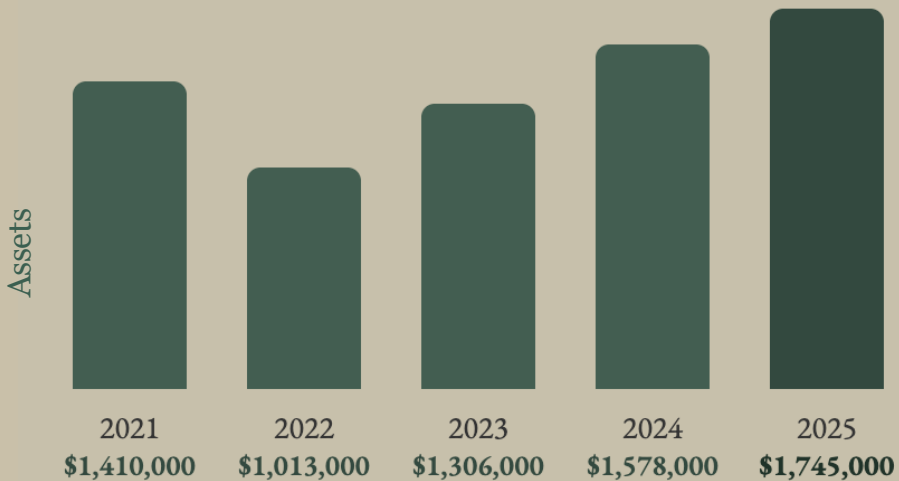
The M.E.F. accepts a donation from the New York Yankees Foundation.

M.E.F. Financials | FY 2024-2025*

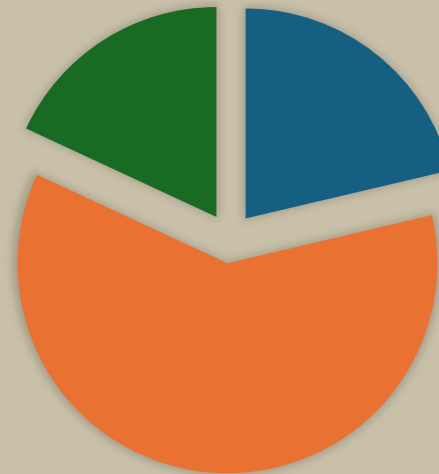
General Fund



Houdini Fund



Expenditures **\$31,993**
 General Fund Grants: \$26,475 (83%)
 Houdini Fund Grants: \$3,000 (9%)
 Administration**: \$2,518 (8%)



Income **\$140,966**
 Investment Income: \$30,054 (21%)
 Capital Gains Distributions: \$85,429 (61%)
 Individual Contributions: \$25,483 (18%)

* The MEF fiscal year begins September 1 and ends August 31.

** Administrative costs include website hosting, domain registration, postage fees, tax preparation and accounting.

Donors

All gifts to the Magic Endowment Fund are invested to ensure the ongoing availability of transformative grants which are in alignment with the MEF's mission to advance the art of magic and support the magic community.

We are deeply grateful to every individual, foundation, and business whose generosity has empowered the Fund to educate aspiring magicians, preserve the history of magic, and provide critical aid to those in need.

We invite you to join our community through one-time, ongoing, and planned giving.

Visit our website or contact us at meftres@higginsmagic.com to discuss your gift.

Thanks to all of our donors, including those who wished to remain anonymous.

\$5,000+ : Robert & Elizabeth Kirkpatrick, Lawrence S. Reichlin

\$1,000+ : Richard & Janet Bowman, Marc DeSouza, Jody Mandel, Mike Miller, Brian Murphy, Ann Skrzyniarz

\$250+ : Nancy Anderson, Robert Braun, Eric Colleary, Jerome Duaine, Tom Gentile, Jann Goodsell, Eric Lampert, Bruce Lish, Trudy Monti, Russ Strobel, Joel Zaritsky

\$100+ : Ronald Ishimaru, Laura Lidums, Debbie Price

This list reflects donors between September 1, 2024 and August 31, 2025. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. If errors or omissions have occurred please contact us so we can correct this immediately and please accept our sincere apologies.



www.sammagicendowmentfund.org