

## **Cameo Cinema Foundation : Frequently Asked Questions**

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**Why is it so hard for independent Art Cinemas like the Cameo to make a profit?** With just one screen and 140 seats, the economics of scale do not work in our favor. Just 25-30% of the Cameo's income is from ticket sales, with an occasional boost when we screen a 'blockbuster' like "Star Wars." The theatre depends on concessions, which are tied to ticket sales, for another 40% of revenue. The CCF has to make up the difference each month to keep the doors open.

**Do other small theaters rely on donations?** Independent Art House Cinemas are in the same class as venues like the San Francisco Ballet or the Lincoln Theater. Despite differences in ticket price, a recent survey of performing arts venues confirmed that, across the board, just 22-25% of their income comes from ticket sales. Alternate sources of revenue, like the Drive-In, concessions, gift cards, events and memberships can help the Cameo with the bottom line. Arts venues have razor thin margins that make sustained donor support crucial to their survival.

**Why don't ticket sales yield a sustainable profit?** All movie theaters split ticket sales with the movie's distributors. Sometimes they require as much as 63% of your ticket fee go back to the studio. So you can see why raising ticket prices doesn't really address the shortfall. With just 140 seats, most of the increase goes into the studio's pocket.

**What are the Cameo Cinema's main sources of income each month?** With ticket sales accounting for only 25-30% of our monthly income, the Cameo relies heavily on concession sales to make the bottom line. Concession sales are tied to ticket sales, making them an unpredictable, but very important source of income. Added to ticket sales, concessions can provide up to 55-70 % of the needed revenue. Sustained financial support from the CCF keeps the theater open.

**How has the success of the new Drive-In Movie Theater contributed to the Cameo's bottom line?** With COVID19 looming in the background this summer, Cathy felt that the community needed a fun, family friendly, socially distanced, outdoor activity. She had the solutions - a Drive-In Movie Theater. Because of the cost of additional equipment and staffing, the theater just barely covers the cost of the drive-in, even when we have a full house.

**How does Cathy decide which movies to book and for how long?** Booking movies is a creative dance done on a high wire. Cathy relies on her understanding of her audience's tastes, her knowledge of the film industry and of course, what she thinks will sell tickets! Current releases usually hit smaller theaters like ours within two weeks of their national release. Blockbusters (think James Bond) are only available on 'opening day' if Cathy books them for an extended pe-

riod of time. Arthouse, foreign, and documentary films have their own booking rules. It is an art.

**Why is the Cameo Cinema so important to Main Street and Napa Valley?** Under the leadership of Cathy Buck, the Cameo has become a key player in the Napa Valley arts ecosystem. It is a touchstone in the Valley as a place that sparks our creativity, a sanctuary for art and cinema, and a place for us to be collectively entertained and escape reality, even if only for an hour or two. The theater's programs celebrate local culture and heritage. This improves the quality of life in the Valley and encourages positive community connections.

**How does a vibrant Cameo Cinema benefit the financial health of this community?** Many communities have overlooked the importance of the local theater to a vital downtown. A 2018 study estimated that local moviegoers spend on average \$21.27 on Main Street over and above their ticket purchase. *Americans for the Arts* have shown that having a cultural organization in your community not only results in greater tax revenues, but can increase nearby residential property values by up to 20 percent.

**Which Cameo programs are funded through CCF donations like mine?**

Each month, your donation allows the CCF to provide a stipend to Cathy that gives her the ability to create:

- Film-Food-Wine programs, featuring local chefs and vintners
- invite noted film makers, artists and scientists for Q&A sessions and film forums
- offer discounted rental rates to local non-profit groups and social organizations
- offer hands-on workshops for students in the art and science of film
- provide scholarships to the Cameo Film Camp
- feature the best in independent, documentary, foreign and classic art house films
- organize the Family Film Festival of Napa Valley and Student Short Film Competition
- keep tickets prices affordable for every member of our community

**In what practical ways does my donation help the Cameo?**

Each year, the CCF sets aside a percentage of donations to cover capital improvements and maintenance to the theater. These funds are allocated towards keeping everything from the popcorn machine to our laser projector to our air-conditioning units running smoothly. We want the theater to always be the best that it can be for all our patrons.

**What measures will be in place now that it has re-opened so I feel safe returning to the theater?**

The Cameo is part of the National Association of Theaters (NATO) **CinemaSafe** program. CinemaSafe theaters make a commitment to:

- reductions in tickets available for each showtime
- appropriate social distancing protocols
- sanitization protocols that include a thorough cleaning of touchable surfaces before and after each show, including bathrooms.

- mandatory mask wearing by all guests and associates
- hand sanitizing stations
- nightly disinfecting and deep cleaning

**Once I make a donation, what else can I do today to support the Cameo Cinema?**

- rent one movie a week on our streaming platform **Cameo@Home**
- see a movie at the theater this week
- Indulge yourself at the concession stand whenever you visit the theater
- take advantage of our new '**Movie Night**' rental program
- encourage your friends and family to support the Cameo

*Friday, September 25, 2020*