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## Local leaders focus on the positive in Tulsa during first Good News Summit

By Kyle Hinchey Tulsa World 14 hrs ago 1





## Good News Summit presenters

- Kiva Tulsa
- Early Childhood Education Institute at OU-Tulsa
- Tulsa Airports Improvement Trust
- Take Control Initiative
- Tulsa's Table
- Tulsa Opera Inc.
- Outreach Education Initiative
- Hilti
- Pathways to Health — Community Health Improvement Plan
- Tulsa Talent Hubs
- Resonance Center for Women Inc.
- Coalescent Community Development Corporation
- City of Tulsa Mayor's Office of Performance Strategy and Innovation
- Tulsa Debate League
- Indian Health Care Resource Center of Tulsa
- The Rowland Group
- HYPE Tulsa



Hundreds of people packed into an auditorium at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa campus Thursday to witness the city's first Good News Summit.

The event, which was designed to showcase positive and encouraging undertakings by local companies and organizations, featured 24 presenters throughout the afternoon.

One of those speakers, Greg Weber, general director and CEO of Tulsa Opera Inc., praised the success of a program that has reintroduced vocal music education to some area schools.

Tulsa Opera and Tulsa Public Schools teamed up to create Raise Your Voice in response to state budget cuts removing music courses from numerous schools. So far, the program has brought the courses back to four middle schools and one elementary school.

Weber stressed the importance of teaching children the value of music.

"Singing is one of the first conversations we have with our parents after we're born, and that language continues for the rest of our lives," he said. "Music connects us. It connects all of the parts of our lives together."

A common debate, Weber said, is whether music actually matters in a child's development. To answer that question, he read responses from several students who have taken part in Raise Your Voice.

- Up With Trees
- T-Town Tacos of Youth Services of Tulsa
- Reading Partners
- Family Safety Center Inc.
- YWCA Tulsa
- Still She Rises, Tulsa
- Tulsa World Media Co.

### Tulsa World announces website for good news

The Tulsa World, which sponsored the Good News Summit, announced a new website featuring all of Tulsa's good news in one place. All stories, photo galleries and videos that include good news will now be posted at [tulsaworld.com/goodnews](http://tulsaworld.com/goodnews).

One girl told him the program finally gave her a reason to go to school. Another said the opportunity to sing helped her overcome her shyness and learn how to talk with strangers. A third girl said music brought her hope and that on some days, it was the only positive thing she had in her life.

"Music is happiness," Weber said. "Happiness spawns hope. Hope creates dreams, and dreams become reality."

Christy Moore, founder and CEO of Tulsa's Table, a community cafe with a pay-what-you-can-afford pricing model that offers healthy local foods, spoke of the need to help kids develop professional skills early.

The goal of Tulsa's Table, which is a project of the nonprofit StoneSoup Community Venture, is to create opportunities for at-risk teenagers in west Tulsa to obtain job and life skills.

Teens in the program are given paid internships that offer real-world experiences and engage in hands-on activities that help them explore their strengths and passions. They also are accompanied by adult mentors who share their expertise.

Moore said it is essential for teens to have work opportunities to increase their chance of a successful future. Having those experiences makes them more likely to graduate and seek full-time employment or go to college, she said.

"There are thousands of teens in our city waiting for these kinds of opportunities, experiences and caring adults to accompany them on a journey to success," she said. "We want every teen in Tulsa to have access to the kinds of ingredients to build their own recipe for their own success."

Another presentation centered on Kiva Tulsa, a nonprofit that combines lending and crowdfunding so that new businesses can

have access to loans of up to \$10,000 without interest. The internet-based microfinancing platform also allows anybody to become a lender to those businesses at \$25 a piece.

Of the \$2.7 billion lent by the Small Business Administration in 2017, only 32 percent went to minority-owned businesses, while 15 percent went to female-owned businesses, said Casey Allen, project lead of Kiva Tulsa.



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“I don’t need a PhD in finance to know that this is a problem,” Allen said. “It’s a problem because you need money to fund your business. If we only give money to certain people and not to others, then those other people miss out on their ability to fund their dreams. And we miss out on incredible businesses.”

She said Kiva takes that power out of the hands of a few and into the hands of everyone by enabling them to contribute to budding businesses and help them grow.

A \$10,000 loan funded at \$25 a piece would need 400 investors. If that many people are willing to contribute their money to a loan, Allen said, then that business has the drive and the vision necessary for success.

The harsh reality, she said, is that not all of the businesses funded through Kiva are successful, adding that 90 percent of startups fail within the first year.

“Entrepreneurship is one of the hardest thing that a person can do,” Allen said. “You’re literally having to go from zero to one. But when a person can do that, the economic benefit is enormous.

“... If we can make it 1 percent easier for people, and that 1 percent leads them to create a stronger and more sustainable future, then we have stimulated huge economic change.”

Mayor G.T. Bynum said the Good News Summit provided a great opportunity to remind people of all the good things happening in the city.

“What we find is the best way to promote our city, to bring more people here and to encourage the growth of our city, is word of mouth,” Bynum told the Tulsa World. “I think all too often, your average Tulsan doesn’t know all the great things that are happening in our city right now.”

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### Staff Writer Kyle Hinchey

Kyle joined the Tulsa World in May 2015 and covers law enforcement, breaking news and other general assignment stories. He previously worked at The Oklahoman and graduated from Oklahoma State University with a journalism degree. Phone: 918-581-8451



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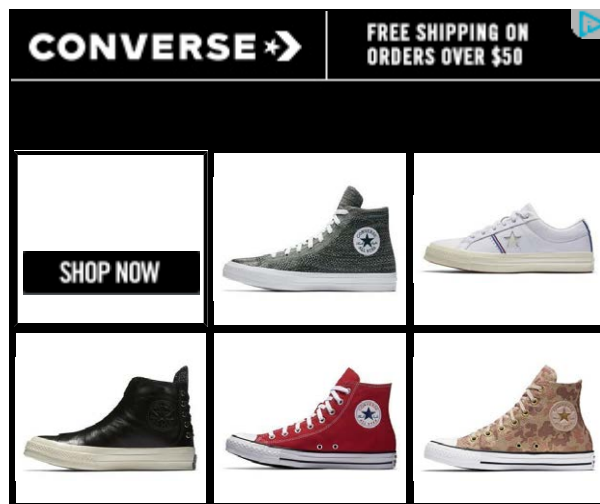




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