

2019-2020 POCONO ARTS COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT



Now in its 45th year, Pocono Arts Council continues to serve the artists, residents and visitors to the Pocono region. The following programs, services and events were the highlights of this past year.

PA PARTNERS IN THE ARTS (PPA) – Our participation in PA Council on the Arts (PCA), Partnership in the Arts program serving five counties – Monroe, Pike, Wayne, Lackawanna, and Luzerne ended in 2020. Since beginning the re-granting program, **\$2,225,627** has been granted in the five-county region. The council thanks Tassy Gilbert who coordinated the grants program for over 17 years.

• GALLERIES/EXHIBITIONS

- **Pocono Arts Exhibitions** – 2020 PoconoArts exhibitions featured a variety of theme shows located in various venues around the county. The monthly shows took a hiatus between March and June this year due to Covid-19 closures and cancellations. Each show is generally judged for prizes by an artist or industry professional from outside the area. At each show, approximately \$175 in prizes are awarded. John MacAllister, local artist and instructor, continues to serve as our gallery curator, masterfully hanging each show. PoconoArts presented the following shows starting in February, with the annual **“Student Exhibition”** for area K-12 students. 54 pieces of art were exhibited with large crowds on hand to celebrate our up-and-coming artists. In April, **“The Earth Speaks – A Juried Exhibition on the Environmental Crisis”** was CANCELLED; however, the exhibition was relocated to the PoconoArts website as a “virtual gallery.” This collaborative effort was a regional call for artists whose work spoke to the environmental crises; 61 works by 31 artists were exhibited virtually. Co-sponsor of this event is arts council member Mark Lichty and corporate sponsors NCC Monroe, UGI Corporation and Monroe County Environmental Education Center. In response to the pandemic, our programming pivoted outdoors and we successfully hosted a **“Drive-By”** exhibition, featuring a dozen artists from all over the county. This was inspired by local artist Susan Washington. Exhibitions resumed in Suite 402 in July with **“Present Tense”** which focused on art created during the pandemic pause.
- **Public Galleries** – showcasing the work of PoconoArts member artists throughout the year. Eight galleries currently exist throughout the county. The Main Street window gallery at 610 Main St. in Stroudsburg and the Yetter Family Gallery at Pocono Cinema & Cultural Center in East Stroudsburg are the latest additions to the public gallery list. Exhibitions run for two months. If you are interested in exhibiting – or have not been contacted in a while – please let the office know, and we will place you on the master list.
- **Holiday Store** – December 2019 holiday store was NOT held due to the move to 701 Main Street but was reimaged in 2020 and is currently being held at The Olde Engine Works in Stroudsburg.

• PROGRAMS

- **Studio Courses** - The children’s summer fine arts camp, a week-long summer camp at Mountain View Park was NOT held in July. The council has discontinued hosting classes, acting instead as a facilitator/conduit for classes already being held in the community.
- **“Annual Members’ Exhibition”** –This annual show was not held in May this year; it was rescheduled to October at our Community Gallery at 701 Main Street and showcased 49 artists. Prizes in every category were awarded by this year’s judges Cindy Vojnovic and Lisa Kovacs. Best in Show was awarded to Tracy Granger of East Stroudsburg for her work entitled **“Auditioning the Stash.”** The winning entries were moved to the Eastern Monroe Public Library.

- **Suzanne Anderson Scholarship for Visual & Performing Arts Students** – Two \$500 scholarships are granted through a bequest by Suzanne Anderson and are available to one visual and one performing arts high school senior annually who will further their education in the arts. The scholarship was not presented in 2020 due to Covid-19 closures and cancellations.
- **FUNDRAISERS & EVENTS:**
 - **Mac & Cheese Bake-Off.** This annual fundraiser was the only fundraiser conducted in FY 2019-20.
 - **Bus Trip.** Sponsored a trip to Scranton Cultural Center for a Manheim Steamroller concert in partnership with a PA Citizen's for the Arts grant.
 - **Spring for the Arts.** The 12th annual Spring for the Arts event was CANCELLED.
 - **16th Annual Festival of Wood** was CANCELLED. Thanks to Lori McKean from Grey Towers, PoconoArts will continue to receive a federal grant from the US Forest Service to help offset expenses should the festival be allowed to continue in 2021.
 - **34th Annual Pocono State Craft Festival** was CANCELLED in favor of a Virtual Craft Show on the PoconoArts website, www.poconoarts.org. 19 fine artisans and craftspeople participated in the virtual gallery. Special thanks to Joni Oye, Paul & Amanda Reiche, and Helen & Al Weichman from the Pocono Chapter of the PA Guild of Craftsmen, and to Tiffany Black and the staff and volunteers at Quiet Valley for their assistance with the show and for the problem-solving involved in cancellation of the physical show.
 - **Stroudsburg Arts Festival, Halloween Along Main, First Saturday Art Walks.** PoconoArts volunteers and board members continue to provide leadership and volunteers for downtown Stroudsburg events.
- **MEMBERSHIP** – Membership in the Pocono Arts Council declined slightly in the 2019-2020 fiscal year and rounds out the year with approximately 500 active members. **Membership is by far the most important income stream and budget-sustainer at PoconoArts.** These funds pay the overhead to keep the council running. I encourage all members to invite their friends and family to join - the website and e-newsletter alone is worth the small membership fee, and there are discounts to all members on entry fees. If you are a current member, please pay attention to the renewals you receive in the mail or in your email. PoconoArts needs your financial support to keep the doors open. In 2015 we began a sustaining membership program through which a small amount is taken from an account you specify monthly. Several members are taking advantage of this program and it is very helpful to PoconoArts. Finally, don't forget the benefits of membership for you – if you have a web presence, please provide us with a link for our artists' directory. Also, please like us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and forward any arts related events to your family and friends. Membership is available to join or renew online.
- **COLLABORATIONS** – as in the past, PoconoArts collaborated in the community on several projects during the year:
 - **Northampton Community College, Monroe Campus** – Programming in the Dunning Gallery was largely suspended following the November 2019 show entitled "**Resorts, Ruins and the Rural Landscape**" which featured local photographers. It was presented in partnership with Monroe County Historical Association. Although the annual **Earth Speaks** exhibition was not held physically in the Dunning Gallery, an online version was made available on Pocono Arts Council's website. Winning artists' statements can be found on PoconoArts' You Tube channel as well.
 - **Creative Drive Billboard Competition** – Seven billboards created by local artists were on exhibit on local highways throughout the year through a partnership between ArtsQuest Lehigh Valley and Adams Outdoor Advertising. This year, the selected artists were Kim Hogan (mosaics), Frank Smith (photography), Sandra Corpora (painting), Laurinda Faye (photography), Terry Stout (painting), High School – Alyssa Landolfi (painting); People's Choice – Thomas Kaye (photography).

- **Strauser Gallery at East Stroudsburg University** – For the past several years, PoconoArts has worked with the Strauser Gallery committee at ESU. This partnership has evolved into a committee entitled the ESU Heritage Collection and will now include other art-related endeavors at the university.
- **Future of the Arts Summit** – prompted by the pandemic pause, Pocono Arts Council and Rich Berkowitz of the Sherman Theater collaborated on a region-wide meeting with arts stakeholders in our community. The initial meeting was attended by over 50 people. Plans to engage in marketing efforts and partnerships are in the near future.
- **GOVERNMENT SUPPORT** – While state grants remain at an all-time low, PoconoArts received steady support through the PA Partners in the Arts Program during FY 2019-20. At the local level, PoconoArts continued to receive funds from several local municipalities and the Monroe County Commissioners, including the continued lease of office space at 701 Main Street for a period of up to one year; and month-to-month following the completion of the lease in March of 2021. One of the best ways to keep up to date with what is going on in Harrisburg is to join Citizens for the Arts, the state-wide advocacy group that monitors arts support. By joining Citizens and monitoring their emails & website, you will have the most up to date means for arts advocacy. PoconoArts is an active member and participates regularly with calls for action.
- **FINANCES & CORPORATE SUPPORT** – PoconoArts fell short this fiscal year in gains in revenue through corporate donations and sponsorships during the past year. This was due, in part, to the cancellation of fundraisers and events that typically result in corporate support. **Corporate Support** is one of the most important levels of support. Corporate support is money that can often be used for overhead. Corporate support lagged slightly during the year and increasing our corporate asks will be a goal for the coming year. If you have a business, or know of someone who does, please consider donating to PoconoArts. Memberships are available at many levels, as well as sponsorships for different programs.
- **MARKETING & OUTREACH**
 - **Pocono Arts Council Website** – Thanks to Darice Pauselius of Full Cup Co, the council has a fully interactive website, www.poconoarts.org. In 2021, our staff will be continually working on updating the member artist directory with website links and exploring more virtual programming which has helped with continuity during the Covid closures and cancellations. Logos for corporate and municipal sponsors scroll across the bottom of the screen giving organizations extra value for their sponsorship.
 - **Newsletter** – Our newsletter has switched to a quarterly e-news blast that is distributed through MailChimp. The distribution list is approaching 5,000. We are exploring a price structure for members interested in sending an email blast about specific events.
 - **Social Media** – PoconoArts maintains a social media presence throughout the year on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Please make sure to follow what is going on!
- **OFFICE STAFF** Thank you to Tassy Gilbert who has served as PPA Grants Program Coordinator for over 17 years. 2019-20 was the final year for PoconoArts serving as the partner for the PCA's Project and Program Stream grant program. Tassy's new title will be "Community Engagement Coordinator," and she will be responsible for membership, marketing, and administrative duties in the office. Judy Moeller, our bookkeeper, was hired on a part-time basis. John MacAllister acts as our gallery curator on an as-needed basis. PoconoArts could not function without the dedicated support of our staff and dedicated board members and volunteers. We welcome East Stroudsburg University art student, Michaela Sorton, who is completing her internship at PoconoArts.

- **BOARD TRAINING:** Following a board retreat which was held in June 2019 with facilitator Ann Haggerty Raines, the Board of Directors officially adopted a new vision statement. In short, the vision is forward-looking and focuses on embracing and choosing change. The statement in its entirety is below.

Pocono Arts Council Vision Statement for the Future

Written by Pocono Arts Council Vice President Thomas O'Connor

The future of the Pocono Arts Council will build on our past strengths: local knowledge and connections; an enduring passion and commitment to the arts; and an inclusive membership model that embraces artists and art lovers of all ages and abilities. Importantly, our vision is forward looking and will embrace and choose change over attempting to repeat “the way things always have been done.” In order to broaden and strengthen our leadership, we will build our board capacity by inviting different individuals with vocations and skill sets (such as legal or IT). We will explore new revenue options, such as those provided by grants and sponsorship. We will also look to close our technology gap – building a model that connects people to the arts and builds arts-driven communities through technology rather than an outdated (and expensive) brick & mortar model.

To this end, the Pocono Arts Council will be a true community organization, with meetings and opportunities held throughout our service area. The PAC is excited to be more nimble, responsive to change, and eager and able to seek out new opportunities. Our vision for the future includes forging and strengthening new and existing partnerships within the community and across other arts organizations. We will seek to build a social support network for both individuals and groups, both online and on ground to connect artists and art lovers on the web and to invite access and meet-ups in person as well. The Pocono Arts Council will serve as a hub that gathers and collects information and events in a single, easy-to-use space online: connecting artists and fostering collaboration; organizing outings, experiences, and salon-like gatherings; developing opportunities for arts education while also spotlighting existing educational options within the community; and creating spaces across the community in galleries, businesses, schools, and community spaces and buildings to feature the visual and performing arts.

(Adopted February 2021)

As we know, the arts touch all our lives at many levels. It is time for all of us to continue to join together and move forward. ***Culture Creates Community!***

Susan Randall, Executive Director

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