DEAR VERMONT ARTS COUNCIL:

“It’s bad when a circus guy runs out of hyperbole. I keep looking for the right words for the grant we received: spectacular, astounding, inspiring, motivating, timely, generous, and kind. We try hard to provide programs that uplift people’s spirits, to remind people what is best about human nature. The grant is a real model for us, reinforcing that people are generous at heart. In return, I promise your bigheartedness will feed the zany, poignant, amazing, heartwarming programs that bring a tear to your eye and a laugh to your belly.”

Ed LeClair
Executive Director
Circus Smirkus

ALTERNATIVE FORMAT AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

JULY 1, 2008 - JUNE 30, 2009

inspiring
a creative state

Always worth the effort

Images: Top: Sam Johnson performing at Governor’s Award honoring Rob Mennie. Bottom: Aerial artist from Nimble Arts

VERMONT ARTS COUNCIL
136 State Street - Montpelier, Vermont 05633-6001

Always worth the effort
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

To the Members of the Vermont Arts Council:

I think we can all agree that the economic rollercoaster we’ve been riding for the past year hasn’t been a lot of fun - not for government, not for business, foundations, not-for-profits or individual citizens. However, I am immensely proud of what the Vermont Arts Council has accomplished despite reductions in funding and staff. Reaffirming our strategic plan, examining and improving our internal processes and extending our partnerships has enabled the Arts Council to continue to provide a high level of support to artists, community arts organizations and arts education programs. Here are the highlights:

- organized, with Vermont artists, an art auction that raised more than $10,000 for the Vermont Foodbank
- co-produced a statewide tour of the State’s Art Collection
- partnered with Lyman Orton and associates and awarded more than $250,000 in commissions to 10 artists to reflect on the findings of the Council on the Future of Vermont’s final report (Art of Action)
- developed and delivered statewide projects at the behest of the National Endowment for the Arts (Poetry Out Loud and The Big Read)
- set-up an economic stimulus program under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to support jobs in the arts - whose impact will be felt in more than 30 communities across the state
- created a Legislative Arts Caucus consisting of more than 40 members of the House and Senate
- and closed out the year by bringing nearly 2000 puzzle pieces decorated by Vermonters, New Yorkers, and Quebecois together at puzzlePALOOZA during the Lake Champlain Quadricentennial Celebration.

None of this could have happened without the support of our funders and our talented, energetic and dedicated staff and board members who’ve worked tirelessly to meet our commitments to artists, arts organizations and our communities.

It was a year to be proud of - and it did turn out to be fun - the photos in this report demonstrate that. With your continued support, we can all work together to inspire a creative state.

Marie Houghton
Chair
Creation grantees support the creation or commission of new work by Vermont artists. Artists often say that the most important thing these grants provide is time—time to create, time to hone their skills and time to reach out to their audience. Artist Development Grants support professional growth opportunities such as attending conferences or developing a business plan.

As an architect, Karolina Kawiaka of White River Jct. designs zero-energy-use houses. As a sculptor, she creates work that educates and promotes alternative energy. In “Forces of Nature” Kawiaka created two sculptures that reveal the power of the sun and wind. “Dervish” is a gauzy cloth structure that levitates and floats on the air currents caused by heat rising through a solar chimney. The rhythmic rise and fall of the fabric makes the air flow visible and is reminiscent of the way a jellyfish moves. “Light and Wall” is constructed of rigid translucent and transparent parts lit by colorful solar-powered LED lights. It demonstrates how light from the sun can be used as a sculptural element. “I hope to elegantly communicate the fact that energy is free all around us,” says Karolina, “and it can be used to beautiful effect.”

The brainchild of Tim Tavcar of Montpelier, WordStage Vermont is a Chamber Music Readers Theater that brings history and literature to life. Performances incorporate letters, diaries, recorded conversations and contemporary chronicles with musical compositions to illuminate characters in history, literature and the performing arts. Last season’s seven offerings spanned the eras. “Flower and Hawk” adapted the writings of Eleanor of Aquitaine and songs of the Troubadours of Poitiers to chronicle the tough queen who led medieval England and France. “Mozart and His Woman” was adapted from the book of the same name and the letters and diaries of Mozart, his sister Nannerl, his wife Constanze, and his musical colleagues of the late 1700s. “Speak Low” is a musical journey from Berlin to Broadway through the correspondence and music of Kurt Weill and his wife, Lotte Lenya.

Tavcar says grant funding was vital to being able to launch this project. “It allows artists more time for their individual artistic expressions, apart from other work they may have to do on a daily basis for self-sustainability.”

Singer-songwriter Anaïs Mitchell was drawn to the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice because “the hero is a very powerful musician who can battle the powers-that-be with his songs.” HADESTOWN is her original folk opera based on the Greek tragedy. The show first toured in Vermont and Massachusetts in 2007. In 2009 she received a grant to produce an orchestral arrangement of the original score called “The Music of HADESTOWN.” Mitchell traveled to Eau Claire, WI and New Orleans to record guest performers Justin Vernon (Orpheus), Greg Brown (Hades), and Ani DiFranco (Hades’ wife, Persephone). The ambitious and imaginative retelling of the fateful love story has been a labor of love for Mitchell. “Orpheus truly believes that if he can just make beautiful enough music, maybe he can reach somebody,” she says. “I think, as artists, that’s the dream: If you can just create something beautiful enough, you can move the world.”

www.anaismitchell.com

Images: Left inset: Tim Tavcar, photo by Robert Lizzari, Jr Right: Anaïs Mitchell recording HADESTOWN
Here’s a Circus Secret: when you’re trying something new, like learning how to juggle, break it down into smaller steps. First try it with one ball, then two, before going for three. Guess what? This approach is not only fun to learn but also transferable to any learning situation. Last winter Circus Smirkus conducted week-long residencies in 16 schools to teach learning strategies and make school fun. The goal was to use the excitement of circus arts to captivate students’ attention and provide teachers with tools for meeting Vermont State Education Standards. The chosen schools are among Vermont’s most rural, where cultural activities are few and far between and 40% or more students receive free or reduced price lunches. Lessons like Try, Try Again, Slow Down, and Break It Into Smaller Parts became exciting learning experiences when taught through circus skills like acrobatics, balance, stilt walking and hoola-hoops. This is one class where ‘clowning around’ is definitely allowed.

www.smirkus.org

Images: Right: Students in Circus Smirkus residencies Right inset: Vergennes Union Elementary School students performing “The Hobbit”

Breaking it down
circus style...

Arts Learning Grants bring artists into schools for hands-on experiences in the arts. Funding is also available to build the creative skills of teachers and the teaching skills of artists.

“I never thought about it before. I can write many poems, and then put them together to become a little book,” said Rice Ming Fan, an ESL student at St. Johnsbury Academy.

“This is such an amazing thing for me.” Rice participated in a poetry and music residency with poet Verandah Porche. The participants, all 80 of whom were from other countries, created and preserved personal stories in poetry. These were then set to music and performed in a public event at the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum. Robyn Greenstone, project coordinator, said “Underlying tensions exist between cultures; this residency revealed universal concerns and the beauty of each individual.” Actor/director Peter Gould led seniors at Country Union High School in Newport through the process of writing one act plays. His workshops culminated with the performance of nine student-created works, three of which will be produced and performed by students next year. English Teacher Kiah Caldwell said she benefited from the experience as well. “Peter used physical activities...to teach new concepts and reinforce learning. This is something I will be incorporating into my own teaching on a regular basis.”

Some students liked the costumes best; others liked the elf dance or the chance to be on stage. But every student at Vergennes Union Elementary School agreed that the all-school production of “The Hobbit” was a great experience. Under the direction of Don Wright of The Very Merry Theater, students in grades K-6 helped prepare for the two public performances. In addition to learning important theater skills, students learned some valuable life lessons. One 6th grader said, “I learned that cooperation and teamwork are some of the most important parts of a play,” while a 2nd grader said, “I learned that you’ve got to stay with your partner when you rescue dwarfs.”

Images: Left: Students in Circus Smirkus residencies Right inset: Vergennes Union Elementary School students performing “The Hobbit”
The Community Grants program funds projects in venues ranging from sidewalks to symphony halls and everywhere in between. The scale and type of presentations differ, but all create and celebrate communities through the arts.

Theatre Adventure Program (TAP) gives people with disabilities a place in the footlights. Families First of Wilmington and New England Youth Theatre in Brattleboro have created a theater program in which the majority of participants have disabilities and the minority are “typically developing.” This unique model of inclusion allows students with disabilities to dictate the pace and structure of the class. Youth and adults who would otherwise never find their way onto a stage, much less be cast in leading roles, are doing just that. Some use wheelchairs for mobility and some use technology to support their communication skills. Most participate with a caregiver who helps guide the actors through warm-up exercises, singing, creative movement, pantomime, and story development. Performances have included “Snow White” and “The Best of Peter Pan.” Disabilities Specialist Darlene Jenson says, “the performances are opportunities for students to work together to create something larger than themselves and a chance to showcase their abilities, talents and skills.”

The Warebrook Contemporary Music Festival opened at the Irasburg Town Hall with one of the oldest works on the program, “Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano” by Charles Ives. When asked why she chose that particular piece, Festival Director Sara Doncaster said, “Who else would you perform in a beautiful turn-of-the-century hall with a slightly out-of-tune piano?” For 16 years the Warebrook Contemporary Music Festival has presented modern chamber and vocal music in the Northeast Kingdom. The world-class performers are chosen based on their experience collaborating with composers and their dedication to bringing contemporary music to a wider audience. Doncaster says, “I guarantee that you will hear something you’ve never heard before, something surprising, and inspiring…the classics before they become classics.”

The Mentor Connector in Rutland County has a special program that connects girls who have a strong interest in art but limited means, with adult artists. Over the past year, girls ages 10-14 have been meeting with female visual artists to visit galleries and museums, study art, and create work for an exhibit. They learned about line, texture, color, form and design, and created collages, drawings, paintings and sculptures. All of the participants, both mentors and mentees, have signed up for next year’s program. It is unlikely that these relationships would have formed without the help of the Mentor Connector. The girls wouldn’t have access to professional artists or the kind of in-depth arts experience the program provides, and the artists would not have been approached to mentor a child. “We all have personal memories of how art improved and enhanced our childhood,” said one artist. “This program gives us a chance to show how to produce beautiful objects that will brighten their world.”

www.mentorconnector.com

Images: Left inset: Student in New England Youth Theatre’s Theatre Adventure Program
Left: Artwork from Mentor Connector program
Imagine the Saturday morning children’s story hour at the Charles B. Danforth Library in Barnard: a semi-circle of attentive preschoolers spellbound by the day’s tale when suddenly one has an urgent call of nature. Hold everything—literally. There’s no potty. Built in 1927, the library has continually provided community programs, book clubs, guest speakers and storytellers, all without the convenience of a restroom. A cultural facilities grant is changing that. Construction of an accessible bathroom will allow the library to expand its programs to include activities like painting (washing hands and rinsing brushes), movies (two hours can be a long time to wait) and even a snack service (running water means coffee and tea). Trustee and librarian Melissa Strayton says, “A working bathroom will have an immediate effect on the comfort of library staff and patrons and the ability to expand gatherings and programs in the quaint and cozy space.”

Images: Right Inset: St. Johnsbury Athenaeum
Right: Exterior and interior of the Charles B. Danforth Library

Stay, even when you have to “go”...

Charles B. Danforth Library
Barnard, Vermont

The Cultural Facilities Grant Program helps improve, revive or refurbish historic Vermont buildings as community and cultural gathering places. The program is a partnership between the Arts Council, the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation and the Vermont Historical Society.

The voices of Sarah Bernhardt, Groucho Marx and others still echo in Rutland’s Paramount Theatre. These icons of the silver screen filled the theater during its 44-year run as a movie house. In 1999, a $3.5 million renovation restored the 850-seat theater to its 1930’s grandeur and allowed the return of music and theater performances. A cultural facilities grant will bring back the big screen but with state-of-the-art digital projection, Dolby sound system and a glass-beaded screen. Paramount Director Bruce Bouchard looks forward to welcoming new and long-lost audiences to the theater. “It will be a theater for the entire community…a perfect compliment to our live performance offerings.”

Both floors of the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum are adorned with art, from “The Song of Hiawatha” mural in the children’s reading room to Albert Bierstadt’s “Domes of Yosemite” in the center of the gallery. “And everywhere there is art, there is the need for conservation and protection from harmful UV light,” says Athenaeum director Irwin Gelber. The Athenaeum houses the town library and a collection of priceless 19th-century paintings, sculptures and rare books. A cultural facilities grant has allowed it to install an interior UV-filtering system on the interior of all windows. The system will also provide enhanced energy efficiency and climate control. “Whether for summer art students engaged in a tour of Hudson River paintings, or for literary enthusiasts gathered on a cold winter night, this project will keep them comfortable, and will allow the art to be cherished for generations,” says Gelber.
Shaping Vermont’s Future Through Art

Vermont philanthropist and art collector Lyman Orton and Arts Council Executive Director Alex Aldrich were paying close attention to the issues emerging from the Council on the Future of Vermont’s (CFV) work and the implications for Vermont communities. The two began toying with the idea of challenging artists to think creatively about these issues and create work that broadens the conversation beyond the written and spoken word. “Alex and I thought that if we could unite a group of today’s artists with a broad mission of addressing the challenges we face, an interesting dialogue could result,” Orton said.

Over the next several months, THE ART OF ACTION: Shaping Vermont’s Future Through Art developed as a public/private partnership between Orton and the Vermont Arts Council. 300 artists from 26 states and three foreign countries applied for the project and ten were chosen. Their task was to create two-dimensional works of art that tackle the issues identified by the CFV. Their commissions, averaging $25,000, are among the largest awards the Arts Council has given to individual artists.

Each artist chose to tackle a different subject. Curtis Hale of Danville is exploring the aesthetic implications of constructing bridges, transmission towers, and wind turbines. Janet McKenzie of Island Pond is documenting the evolving diversity of Vermont’s population including recent immigrants and Vermont-born minorities. Phillip Godenschwager of Randolph examines development issues, and Kathleen Kolb of Lincoln is looking at logging and the forest landscape.

From September 2009 through June 2010, the completed work, exceeding 100 pieces, will travel to 24 Vermont communities. Some will be exhibited in non-traditional arts venues such as storefronts, car dealerships, town halls and community centers, while others will be in galleries and museums. Senator Patrick Leahy will host an exhibit in the Russell Senate Office Building Rotunda in Washington, DC in April 2010. The project will culminate with a live auction at Main Street Landing’s Performing Arts Center in Burlington on July 17, 2010.

In addition to inspiring dialogue and citizen action around the issues, the project has a broader aim: to expand the national market for Vermont’s creative and entrepreneurial artists. Orton maintains that outside the state people primarily envision Vermont art as pastoral mountains and maple trees. He hopes this project will ultimately showcase the heart of what makes the state unique. “I think it’s our creativity.

We have a history of firsts…of innovation. We’d like to reinvigorate that quality.”

ART OF ACTION SEMI-FINALISTS
Each semi-finalist and finalist received $2,500 to support research and proposal development.

MARIELLA BISSON, Stone Ridge, NY
COLIN BRANT, North Bennington
THOMAS DEINGIER, Bristol
CLAIR QUINN, Fairfax
DAVID QUINN, Philadelphia
CHARLES HUNTER, Bellows Falls
KAROLINA KAWAKA, White River Junction
DAVID KEWINS, Johnson
ELIZABETH TORAK, Pawlet
DANA WIGDOR, Brattleboro

ART OF ACTION FINALISTS
SUSAN ABBOTT, Marshfield ........................................... $25,000
GAIL CHANDLER BOYJAN, Cambridge, MA ............... $25,000
DAVID BREWSTER, Harfia ......................................... $20,000
ANNEMIE CURLIN, Charlotte .................................. $15,000
PHILLIP GODENSCHWAG, Randolph ..................... $25,000
CURTIS HALE, Danville ............................................ $25,000
VALERIE HIRD, Burlington ....................................... $29,000
KATHLEEN KOLB, Lincoln ........................................ $25,000
JANET McKENZIE, Island Pond ............................... $25,000
JOHN MILLER, Coventry ......................................... $10,000

American Masterpieces is a grant program funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. Community organizations can receive funding for performances and workshops featuring artists whose work celebrates Vermont’s rich cultural heritage and represents centuries-old traditions that are native to this region or are rooted in the family and community traditions of Vermont’s European settlers. 2009 brought the 400th anniversary commemoration of Samuel de Champlain’s arrival at the lake that now bears his name. Many communities received grants to include artists from the American Masterpieces roster in their celebrations.

The Burlington Irish Heritage Festival presented Celtic music from Vermont’s renowned MacArthur and Flanders collections, as well as original compositions by Atlantic Crossing. Lothrop Elementary School in Pittsford and Leicester Central School both hired artisan Judy Dow for multi-day residencies. She taught workshops on Abenaki basketmaking and educated students about life in Vermont before the arrival of Europeans. Students at Harwood Union High School in Duxbury wrote the grant application and created a program featuring Jeremiah McLane and Pete Sutherland. The two were joined by Karen Sutherland for a performance at the Vergennes Opera House “Veillee.” The evening included a traditional French-Canadian supper dance workshop. Michèle Choinière took to the stage in performances at the Flynn Center in Burlington and at the two-day St. Albans Franco-American Heritage Festival. The Burlington International Waterfront Festival received a special allocation to support the 12-day extravaganza. The Champlain Stage in City Hall Park hosted daily concerts of Vermont artists including The Beaudoin Project, Counterpoint, Michèle Choinière, Jeremiah McLane, Peter Sutherland, Peter Burns, Atlantic Crossing, and Tim Jennings.

Woodstock’s place in history, especially as it relates to the Civil War. Burlington City Arts is at the hub of a city-wide renaissance in the arts. Its Firehouse Gallery provides studio and exhibition space and is one of the few Vermont institutions that showcases large-scale contemporary art. Vermont Arts Exchange in No. Bennington partners with area social service agencies to engage ‘at-risk’ youth and their families in programs and services that provide creative and positive outlets for individual expression.

VSA Arts of Vermont provides professional development workshops for artists with disabilities to help further their careers. Cultural access programs help teaching artists and cultural organizations include people with disabilities in their classes, performances and audiences.

Rockingham Arts & Museum Project (RAMP) in Bellows Falls serves as a bridge between artists and the community, actively promoting the essential role artists play in cultural, social and economic community development.

A group of organizations exist at the heart of Vermont’s community programs that the Arts Council refers to as our Local Arts Partners. These core institutions focus on programs and collaborations that cultivate and sustain the arts in their respective communities. While each approaches this goal in different ways, their common vision is to “inspire a creative state.” Here are some examples of how these organizations serve their respective communities:

The year-round, weekly Farmers and Artisan Market at the River Arts facility in Morrisville is one example of how River Arts views its role in workforce development, incubating new small businesses and supporting local interests in the community.

Burlington’s Flynn Center for the Performing Arts has created Words Come Alive! projects in Highgate, Hinesburg and Burlington which offer a successful, affordable model for arts integration in rural educational settings.

A partnership among Pentangle Council on the Arts, Woodstock High School, and the Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Park gives students a deeper understanding of Vermont’s place in history, especially as it relates to the Civil War. Burlington City Arts is at the hub of a city-wide renaissance in the arts. Its Firehouse Gallery provides studio and exhibition space and is one of the few Vermont institutions that showcases large-scale contemporary art. Vermont Arts Exchange in No. Bennington partners with area social service agencies to engage ‘at-risk’ youth and their families in programs and services that provide creative and positive outlets for individual expression.

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Rockingham Arts & Museum Project (RAMP) in Bellows Falls serves as a bridge between artists and the community, actively promoting the essential role artists play in cultural, social and economic community development.
When the Arts Council launched Palettes of Vermont in January 2006, it couldn’t have foreseen its impact. The statistics alone were impressive: nearly 40,000 Vermonters (6% of the population) took part, representing more than 150 organizations and 145 schools from every corner of the state. Beyond the body of work that was created, the real significance of the project was the number of community connections that were made. It brought people, communities and the entire state together through a shared artistic experience. It uncovered a need for creative expression and the desire to be part of something larger than oneself.

The popularity of the project challenged the Arts Council to find ways to build on the relationships that resulted from the Palettes project. After much deliberation, puzzle pieces were chosen to symbolize the connections people make through communities and art.

Art Fits Vermont launched in April 2008. Funding from corporate sponsors and partnerships with the VT Department of Tourism and Marketing and the Vermont Wood Manufacturers Association allowed the Arts Council to distribute 10,000 wood and 50,000 paper puzzle pieces to individuals, arts organizations, community groups and schools across the state.

The majority of organizations that took part were not arts agencies or galleries, but community groups such as Chambers of Commerce, historical societies, libraries, senior centers, and recreation departments. At Fletcher Allen Health Center in Burlington, 38 departments created and joined the 15” puzzle pieces to illustrate how each area plays an important role in patient care. One hundred community members from Springfield used puzzle pieces to create a mural memorializing the 112-year-old Park Street School. And at the Dale Correctional Facility in Waterbury, incarcerated mothers and their children created pieces to symbolize that despite their physical separation, their lives are still connected.

Some detractors have questioned whether Art Fits Vermont has fostered artist development or the growth of appreciative art audiences. Others accused the Council of sacrificing artistic standards in order to appeal to the greatest number of people. Arts Council Executive Director Alex Aldrich responds by saying, “Palettes of Vermont and Art Fits Vermont have dramatically increased the number of people who are no longer shy about expressing their interest in the arts. These projects are audience-building, inclusive, and expand the universe of people who participate in the arts. They are an extension of, not a replacement for, the programs and services we provide that celebrate and honor artistic quality.”
“When I started out, some people called me an idealist, a pie-in-the-sky kind-of-guy,” said Rob Mermin, founder of Circus Smirkus and recipient of the 2008 Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts. “But folks, let me be clear: I’m strictly a pie-in-the-face kind of man.” This award is the state’s highest honor in the arts. It is presented annually to an artist who demonstrates exemplary standards of professional integrity and personal commitment to cultural life in Vermont. At a State House ceremony where the 200 attendees wore red clown noses, Governor James Douglas said, “Rob has shown citizens of the world that an idealist, a pie-in-the-sky kind-of-guy,” said Walter Cerf, Dorset Theatre Festival founder and recipient of the Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts. “One of the great forms of censorship and destruction of artistic spirit that exist elsewhere are not so powerful here,” he said.

Citations of Merit are presented to artists, organizations, educators and others in recognition of distinguished service to the arts in Vermont. In his 14 years as the Vermont Youth Orchestra’s Artistic Director, Troy Peters touched the lives of hundreds of young musicians in Vermont. He was honored for the leadership and vision he brought to the organization and for his impact on Vermont’s musical community. Jane Lendway received a Citation Award for her unwavering commitment to preserving the character and unique qualities of Vermont communities during her 33 years in the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Mark Vogelzang, former President and General Manager of Vermont Public Radio, was cited for his dedication to delivering quality public broadcasting to Vermont. Mark grew VPR to statewide coverage and created millions of dollars of advertising revenue for public radio in Vermont. Mark received the Vermont Arts Council’s National Broadcast Service Award for Excellence in the Arts.

GRANTS TO ARTISTS:

Creation

Jospeh Campaillou Cleary

$3,000 to support the design of a piece of modern mountain family.

Sarah Frechette

$3,000 to support the creation of puppet piece titled “The Snowflake Man.”

Wayne Hankin

$3,000 to support the creation of the film “7 Sistas.”

Meredith Heich

$3,000 to create an animated video concerning walls, freedom of movement, and undreamt Vermont dairy farm workers.

Karolina Kawaka

White River Junction

$3,000 to support the creation of the two solar-powered kinetic sculptures.

Karen Kevra

Montpelier

$3,000 to support the recasting, editing, and production of a CD recording of romantic music for flute and piano.

Anais Mitchell

Montpelier

$3,000 to support the creation of a studio recording of the “folk opera” HADESTOWN.

Teresa Stores

Norwich

$3,000 to support the creation of a young adult novel entitled “Letters to Hadley.”

Timothy Tavecz

MONTPELIER

$3,000 to support the creation and production of five new theatrical performance pieces.

Upper Valley Arts Norwich

$3,000 to support the creation of a collaborative film about the history of Vermont.

Artistic Development

Ken Anderson

Westtownshend

$428 to attend a workshop at the Augusta Heritage Center’s Intensive Guitar Week in Elkins, W.V.

Michael Arowitt

Montpelier

$725 to support training necessary to complete the development of a digital system for visually-impaired musicians.

Rachel Baird

Middlebury

$500 to support the creation of a website.

Barbara Benoit

Brattleboro

$250 to attend New England College’s 2009 conference in Forest Grove, OR.

Dianne Cloutet

Brattleboro

$450 to upgrade the storybike.com website.

Michelle Colling

Underhill

$350 to support the development of a website.

Arline Dister

Brattleboro

$500 to attend Vermont Studio Center while completing a manuscript.

Rachael Elliott

Burlington

$1,000 to record a storytelling CD.

Robert Blass

Montpelier

$450 to study the Elgar Cello Concerto with Maureen Neuman.

Meg Brazill

South Woodstock

$405 to support attendance at the Vermont Artists Residency Week at the Vermont Studio Center in Johnson.

Patricia Burleson

Townshend

$500 to build a website.

Michael C. Caduto

New York

$1,000 to record a storytelling CD.

Lisa Goodrich

Brattleboro

$500 to attend the National Music Teachers Association’s 2009 national conference in Atlanta, GA.

Wylie Sofia Garcia

Burlington

$400 to support the creation of a textile installation for the Champlain Quincentennial Celebration.

Tossey Garrett

Northfield

$375 to attend a workshop in mold making and casting at Metal Werx.

Linda Goodrich

Esses Junction

$500 to attend the Vermont Arts Council’s 2009 conference in Nashua, NH.

Erich Hall

West Townshend

$250 to participate in the Provincetown International Film Festival in Provincetown, MA.

Karen Kevra

White River Junction

$3,000 to support the creation of the two solar-powered kinetic sculptures.

Anais Mitchell

Montpelier

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Tom Barlow

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Burlington
Brattleboro
Wire seminar at North Country Studios.
materials.
$500 to videotape a performance for
Middlebury
Puppeteers of America National Festi-
$700 to support attendance at the
New England Center for Circus Arts
Brattleboro
$530 to send two staff members to the
American Youth Circus Organization’s
Education Camp in Boulder, CO.
New England Youth Theatre
Brattleboro
$300 to attend a training conference in
New Hampshire.
Paramount Theatre
Rutland
$1,000 to support a two-day retreat for the
trustees and Executive Director led by
Jessica Andrews.
River Arts of Morrisville
Morrisville
$500 to support education and strategic
planning efforts for River Arts.
Rochambeau Museum and Project
(RAMP)
Winooski
$7,500 to support stage improvements in
the music and performance space in Lincoln.
Rutland Creative Economy
$15,000 to support improvements of Burn-
ton Town Hall.
Rutland
$17,000 to support the purchase of stage
equipment including high-quality video
projection equipment and a mid-size screen.
Merristown Historical Society
Merristown
$18,000 to support the construction of an
elevator.
Northern Vermont Arts Council
Wardham
$5,150 to support the purchase and
installation of new granite steps and
handrails at the entrance of the hardwood
Town House.
Paramount Theatre
Rutland
$13,313 to support the installation of a
state-of-the-art large screen for the
“Big Flicks at the Paramount” Paramount
Center initiative.
St. Johnsbury Athenaeum
St. Johnsbury
$31,000 to support the installation of a
UV-filtering interior secondary glazing
system.
Town of Londonderry
South Londonderry
$7,500 to support stage improvements in
the Town Hall.
Town of Stratford
Stratford
$4,100 to support the purchase and
installation of a safe LP gas heating system
in the 1799 Town House.
Waitsfield Falls
$275 to support marketing/fundraising
capabilities to the RAMP website.
Vermont Youth Orchestra Association
Colchester
$5,000 to support the construction of a
state-of-the-art large screen for the “Big
Flicks at the Paramount” Paramount
Center initiative.
West Rutland
Carving Studio & Sculpture Center
$1,000 to support the installation of a
state-of-the-art large screen for the “Big
Flicks at the Paramount” Paramount
Center initiative.
Putney
$10,800 to support the commissioning of
two major new works.
Brattleboro Museum and Art Center
Brattleboro
$5,000 to support a series of new
workshops, advocacy trainings and award
ceremonies. This year, dozens of advocates
took the opportunity to lunch with their
legislators, and many toured the State House
art collection with State Curator David Schütz.
The highlight of the day came at the opening of
the House assembly. A few weeks earlier,
Council staff met with singer/songwriter Jon
Gaimer to create an original song for the
occasion. Advocates learned and rehearsed
the tune on the morning of the event and
joined Gaimer in the House chamber.
The words to “The Arts Will Get It Done” were
distributed to legislators who joined in the
chorus. The rousing performance received a
standing ovation, and many people reported
that the catchy tune was stuck in their head
the rest of the day.
When the staff of the Vermont Arts Council learned that as many as one in four Vermonters might need help from the Vermont Foodbank last winter, they felt compelled to do something. They organized “doing our pART,” an online art auction, and invited the state’s creative community to contribute. Seventy-five artists and arts organizations stepped to the plate, donating an array of items that included original art, home décor, jewelry, theater tickets, photography sessions and art lessons. Several musical groups offered to perform private house concerts, and poet Verandah Porche gave bidders the chance to have a personalized poem written in their honor. When the bidding closed, $10,254 in art had been sold and the Vermont Foodbank received 100% of the proceeds. The contribution equates to 15 tons of food, or approximately 27,000 meals for hungry Vermonters. Everyone involved felt good about the effort. Porche said, “I am glad that starving artists can help feed the people.” They did... in more ways than one. www.vtfoodbank.org Image: Alen Anderick presents check to staff of the Vermont Foodbank.
Let us shake your hand.

Because of you, the Arts Council came within a hair’s breadth of achieving its financial goals for FY 2009. Given the nation’s tumultuous economic situation, this is a real accomplishment!

The message that resounded most clearly was that arts = jobs in Vermont. During the past five years, the Arts Council has provided 30,000 employment opportunities for artists and arts educators through our grant programs. We appreciate, too, the recommendation from the Governor and the Legislature to keep the Arts Council level funded. This is a strong acknowledgement of the value of the arts to Vermont communities. On the federal level, the chorus of arts advocates across the nation and resulted in a 28% increase to the National Endowment for the Arts budget—which translates to a $117,000 increase to the Vermont Arts Council—proving that your voice really can make a difference.

We are always grateful for opportunities to meet people who may not be aware of our programs and services. Sue Schiller, a longtime supporter from Norwich, held a benefit concert in her home featuring pianist Michael Arnowitt and Steve Klimowski on clarinet. A slightly different kind of friend and fund-raising gala took place in Burlington at the second “Stompin’ With the Stars.” Eight Vermont celebrities teamed up with professional dance coaches to kick-up their heels in support of the Arts Council and hundreds of people purchased ‘votes’ in support of their favorite celebrities.

We often receive gifts designated for specific programs or services. Circus Smirkus founder Rob Mermin was the recipient of the Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts and contributions made in his honor will support the American Masterpieces program. These grants fund artists whose work celebrates Vermont’s rich cultural heritage and centuries-old traditions that are native to this region. John Nassivera, founder of the Dorset Theatre Festival, received the Walter Cerf Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts. Gifts in his honor will be used to promote community development through the arts.

We encourage you to visit our website and subscribe to our e-newsletter, ArtMail, to see how your investment in our work continues to impact the state. On behalf of the board and staff, we thank you for your support and friendship to the arts!

Sincerely,

Diane Scolaro
Communications & Development Director

Barbara Morrow
Development Committee Chairman

Vermont Arts Council 2009

Fahrenheit 451 is Ray Bradbury's visionary parable of a society gone awry. Firemen burn books and the state suppresses learning while citizens sit around in a drug-induced, media-saturated indifference. The Arts Council chose the classic novel for its 2009 Big Read project, an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts designed to restore reading to the center of American culture and address the national decline in literacy reading. The Council distributed 790 books plus reader and teachers’ guides to 29 libraries, 34 schools and 11 community organizations across the state.

In addition to encouraging Vermonters to read the book, the Arts Council promoted community discussions about how artists like Bradbury use their work to inspire public awareness and affect social change. Amy Goodman, host of Democracy Now! was the keynote speaker at the kick-off event. She linked the work of Bradbury to issues of free speech and censorship in today’s news. The Council commissioned independent filmmaker Deb Ellis to create a documentary about artists who are social activists. Six Vermont Artists features interviews with poet Major Jackson, filmmakers Alan Dater and Lisa Merton, papermaker Drew Cameron, performance artist Janice Perry, and Bread & Puppet founder Peter Schumann. Each discusses the issues of censorship, protest, media bias and the role of the artist in a democracy.

The Brownell Library in Essex Junction was a dynamic partner in The Big Read. They helped organize the kick-off event and distributed 50 books to their patrons. They hosted “451 Reasons Why . . .” a mock town meeting where community members discussed the power of books and issues of censorship. They also organized “Read and Recite,” where participants selected passages from books they would save. The Arts Council is grateful to Penny Pillsbury, Kat Redniss and the staff of the Brownell Library for their dedication and support of this project.

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Poetry Out Loud is a national competition that encourages high school students to memorize and perform great poems. Created by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, the program builds on the resurgence of poetry as an oral art by the National Endowment for the Arts and that encourages high school students to $500 for the purchase of poetry books.

A senior at People's Academy, Audrey traveled to Washington, DC for the 2009 national finals. She performed for a panel of judges that included Garrison Keillor, actress Tyne Daly, and poets Suji Kwock-Kim, Patricia Smith, and Luis Rodriguez, and was ultimately chosen as one of the top 12 finalists. She received a $1,000 award, which was given for the purchase of poetry books. Poetry Out Loud is a national competition that encourages high school students to memorize and perform great poems. Created by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, the program builds on the resurgence of poetry as an oral art by the National Endowment for the Arts and that encourages high school students to $500 for the purchase of poetry books.

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Vermont personalities were paired with dance for money,” said PR maven founder Zeb and instructor Kevin Laddison took top honors.

Could purchase ‘votes’ in support of their was the Mistress of Ceremonies. The public...
During difficult times the tendency is for people to “circle the wagons” and in general, behave more conservatively. With few exceptions, this behavior is also true for corporations, foundations, and other critical sources of support for the not-for-profit sector. It is behavior that is entirely understandable and especially, given the context of the year just past, expected.

What is less expected is a condition that I have witnessed at the Arts Council. People doing more. People opening up and sharing their resources. People being generous with their time, their talent, their art. People being concerned about their future more than about their present.

As a state arts agency whose capacity for service and support is based entirely on the generosity of the American public—and in particular the Vermont public—it is gratifying to work with such outstanding representatives in Washington and in the Vermont State House. Where other colleagues of mine around the country are dealing with huge cuts to their programs and services, Vermont’s delegates, like its citizenry, have an intuitive understanding of the role that the arts play in our daily lives.

For some this role is their life’s work, and for them we have a broad array of programs and services to help them complete their work, market and promote it, and bring audiences to it. For others, the role of the arts is something else entirely. For kids separated from their incarcerated parents, it is a vehicle through which they are able to express their sense of connectedness to the absent parent. For people with limited income, it is an opportunity to turn a hand made creation into a cash donation to a food bank so that others might have a hot meal.

We are occasionally criticized for having abandoned our artistic standards in the pursuit of projects and collaborations that expose new audiences to the benefits of participating in the arts. But nothing could be further from the truth—to receive support, artists and arts providers must still adhere to the very highest standards of excellence that are the hallmark of the Council’s panel review system. What community arts projects achieve is entirely different. They bring new/more people to the arts in fun, non-threatening ways. It is this service to the public (who, remember, enables us to exist to begin with) that distinguishes us from our work a decade or two ago.

And it is likely to be a staple of what we help to foster across the state for decades to come.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]
Alexander L. Aldrich
Executive Director

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<tr>
<th>STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>FY2009 Statement of Fiscal Activities *</th>
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<td>REVENUE</td>
<td>AMOUNT</td>
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<td>NET ASSETS</td>
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* Unaudited - Audit Report available upon request