

Celebrating 50 in 2020

ARTS AND HUMANITIES COUNCIL
OF TUSCALOOSA COUNTY, INC.

ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 1, 2019 - MAY 31, 2020

THE ARTS
COUNCIL

From the Director

While 2019-2020 has been a challenge for the entire community, The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa is celebrating its 50th Anniversary. The Arts Council was established on June 26, 1970 after a group of citizens dedicated to the arts came together with the common goal of creating an organization that would use its influence to promote the arts in Tuscaloosa County. I hope that you will visit the Arts Council timeline on our website, which highlights significant events in our history. We are poised to enter the next 50 years with a renewed vision that will ensure this special organization respects its past while helping to build and expand our community for generations to come. The Arts Council continues to serve the community through its educational outreach, member organization assistance, and managing and maintaining the historic Bama Theatre and the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center. By working together with the community, we strive to create better access to the arts and provide opportunities for artists and educators. Our local arts organizations offer enrichment for tourists, help to attract and retain businesses, and play an important role in the economic revitalization and vibrancy of our neighborhoods.

During the current pandemic, we are all finding ways to respond to the new reality. For those of us in the arts community, the loss of human interaction through the arts hits us hard. Artists and arts organizations are searching for ways to maintain connection and share the joys that bind us together through art. We have missed welcoming people into the Bama Theatre and Cultural Arts Center. While both spaces have been closed, your Arts Council staff has been hard at work behind the scene to renovate the Greensboro Room, Lobby, Vestibule, and the interior and exterior of the box office. The Cultural Arts Center Grand Hall, Black Box Theatre, and Gallery also have a fresh coat of paint. We are ready to welcome you with best practices in place for the safety of the staff and community.

Your membership is a vital part of sustaining The Arts Council at this critical time. On a global scale, what we are experiencing right now is unprecedented and our arts community, like so many others, is facing historic challenges. Our connection to the arts is the very thing that reminds us of our humanity and our resilience. We need the arts now more than ever.

If you have ever considered becoming a member or making a donation, we ask that you join us now. We are committed to standing alongside our community as we emerge from this moment, but we need your help to do it. Together, we can ensure the continued growth of the arts in West Alabama as we look toward a reimagined future.

Please stay well, and we hope to see you very soon.



Sandra Wolfe, Executive Director
The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa

History & Purpose

Established in 1970 by a group of citizens dedicated to the arts, the mission of The Arts Council is to promote and encourage the arts and humanities in Tuscaloosa County. The Arts Council serves as the umbrella organization for 50 Member Organizations, offers educational programs, and manages the historic Bama Theatre and the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center.

Staff

Sandra Wolfe, *Executive Director* | Sharron Rudowski, *Education Director* | Kevin Ledgewood, *Publicity*

Shannon McCue, *West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative Director* | Jason Armit, *Bama Theatre Manager*

Sheriah Gibson, *Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center Manager* | Benji Stockton, *Bama Theatre Assistant Manager*

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Cover: The Arts Council will celebrate its 50th Anniversary on June 26, 2020, the date of its articles of incorporation.

community

Music Themed Exhibit in Conjunction with Druid City Music Festival



August 2019

The Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center hosted a music-themed exhibit corresponding with the Druid City Music Festival featuring the work of local and regional artists.

(Left, Works by Sydney Gruber at the DCMF exhibit at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center)

Alabama Small Business Development Center



August 21 and October 24, 2019

The Alabama Small Business Development Center, The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa, and the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama presented Create Tuscaloosa, two seminars for artists and their professional business development.

Tuscaloosa Can!



March 3-6, 2020

The Tuscaloosa City Schools presented the third "Tuscaloosa Can!" project at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center and Bama Theatre. The event featured over 20 school teams that created large sculptures made from canned food items. 17,840 pounds of cans were donated to the West Alabama Food Bank at the conclusion. (Left, Eastwood Middle, Public Choice Award winner)

Theatre Tuscaloosa SecondStage: A Festival of One Acts



March 4-8, 2020

The Theatre Tuscaloosa SecondStage program is designed to produce innovative work in non-traditional venues outside the Bean-Brown Theatre and brings their work into the downtown area. Theatre Tuscaloosa and The Arts Council presented *A Festival of One Acts* which brought together three one act plays utilizing a myriad of local directors and actors. (From left: Vickie Davis, Angie Bella Mamola, and Sarah Kathryn Bonds in *Thank Goodness for Hats*. Photo by Porfirio Solorzano.)



bama

Rental Income & Restoration

- Rental: \$70,650
- Restoration Fund: \$26,158
- ***Subsidy to Member Organizations: \$23,502

Bama Art House Film Series Attendance

- Summer 2019 (June/July)- 5 films: 344
- Fall 2019 (August/September)- 5 films: 344
- Winter 2020 (January/February)- 5 films: 667
- 2019 - 2020 BAH Total Attendance: 1,355**

Completed Renovation

- Painting of the following: Greensboro Room, Lobby, Vestibule, Trim throughout, Lower Level Restrooms, Interior and Exterior of the Box Office
- Lower Level Restrooms updated with new mirrors and soap dispensers

Restoration Total: \$5,258

***All Arts Council Member Organizations pay dues of \$85 per year. In addition to other benefits, this entitles these organizations to receive discounted rental rates for both the Bama Theatre and Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center. "Subsidy" in this report refers to the financial gains received by these organizations as a whole in 2019-2020 as a result of these discounted rental rates. The Arts Council considers these gains as direct financial contributions to these organizations.

DWCAC Background and Income

The Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center (CAC) is a hub for the arts in Tuscaloosa, managed and maintained by The Arts Council. The CAC houses the Alabama Power Grand Hall, perfect for weddings and private event rentals, and The Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa Black Box Theatre which provides a location for performances in an intimate setting for family programming and educational opportunities. The University of Alabama rents a gallery space and The Arts Council maintains a gallery within the CAC. The facility also houses offices for the Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra, the Alabama Blues Project, and the West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative.

- Rental Income: \$50,835
- Maintenance including new tile floor in catering kitchen, termite treatment, and painting throughout: \$10,792
- ***Subsidy to Member Organizations: \$22,600

Arts Council Income

- Income: \$703,889
- Expenses: \$665,251

Attendance

- Overall Attendance Bama Theatre and Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center: 77,750

Website Statistics

tuscarts.org

Sessions: 13,796
New Users: 10,802
Average Time on Site: 1 min 12 sec
Percentage New Visitors: 88.3%
Pageviews: 24,040

cac.tuscarts.org

Sessions: 5,577
New Users: 4,705
Average Time on Site: 1 min 27 sec
Percentage New Visitors: 90.3%
Pageviews: 10,435

bamatheatre.org

Sessions: 22,022
New Users: 16,725
Average Time on Site: 1 min 5 sec
Percentage New Visitors: 85%
Pageviews: 42,463

firstfridaytuscaloosa.com

Sessions: 2,971
New Users: 2,374
Average Time on Site: 1 min 5 sec
Percentage New Visitors: 86.9%
Pageviews: 5,136

Public Art

The efforts to introduce public art to local citizens have been a result of the combined goals of The Arts Council and the City of Tuscaloosa. With large scale sculpture already in place on The University of Alabama campus and in local PARA parks, the transition to public spaces within the city was an obvious goal. The benchmarking trips established by the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce introduced the participating citizens to cities that valued public art and the relationship the art had to overall economic impact of the arts. Composed of representatives from the City of Tuscaloosa, The Arts Council, and The University of Alabama, the Tuscaloosa Public Art Committee was formed alongside the development of standards to help consistently guide each project from beginning to completion. Monster Takeover, an extension of the Monster Makeover program established by the *Tuscaloosa News*, is utilized as a method to bring the work of participating artists to the public through small scale 3-D bronze works installed throughout the downtown area.

Visit monstertakeover.com to view the student art cast in bronze and their locations in downtown Tuscaloosa.



Clockwise from above, “Minverva” by Caleb O’Connor and Craig Wedderspoon commissioned for the Tuscaloosa Bicentennial Year; Monster Takeover piece, “Rockie” by Myrtlewood student Sophie Porter and UA Student Catherine Robinson; “A Holt of Trees” by Steve Davis installed at Hudson Poole Fine Jewelers on Greensboro Avenue.



Clockwise from top, Bike Rack by Pat Hoban; Mellow Mushroom Elephant; Black Warrior River timeline commissioned for Tuscaloosa's Bicentennial Year by Craig Wedderspoon

Collaborating Artists Program Grants

The Arts Council received a grant for a Collaborating Artist Program. Greensboro Elementary presented Richard Wallace and Moundville Elementary hosted Colton Crowe in Theatre Games and Techniques for fourth grade students.

The goal was to improve reading comprehension in:

- Context
- Conflict/Resolution and
- Point of View

Wallace and Crowe utilized techniques in theme, rising action (climax, falling) and language (adjectives and adverbs) to reach the above goals.

Alabama State Department of Education Grant

The Arts Council received a \$20,000 grant from the Alabama Arts Education Initiative to implement an arts integrated curriculum for second graders at Cottondale Elementary School. The arts integration component will focus on developing students cursive handwriting through visual arts while training non-art teachers in the field of arts integration.

Art Teacher In-Service at DWAC

The Arts Council hosted two in-service training sessions for art teachers with a grant from the Alabama Arts Alliance's Visual Arts Achievement program. A third was sponsored by Sargent Art Supply Company.

Member Organizations

The Arts Council serves as the umbrella organization for over 50 member organizations representing the visual, performing, and literary arts, and also museums and philanthropic organizations. Any non-profit arts group (IRS-501c3) located in Tuscaloosa County can join The Arts Council as a member organization. Member organizations have access to the community calendar, are eligible to receive grant funding, receive a discount when renting the Bama Theatre and Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center, and can attend workshops presented by The Arts Council geared toward issues facing arts non-profits. The Council also sponsors the Druid Arts Awards and Community Arts Conversations.

Grants

The Small Grants program was established to aid Tuscaloosa County non-profit organizations, educators, and artists in their pursuit of projects contributing to the greater good of local students and citizens through the arts. Since the advent of the program in 1986, local artists and organizations have received more than \$140,000. The Arts in Education Grant was established to award funding from the Arts in Education Fund within the Community Foundation of West Alabama. Tuscaloosa City/County/Private School educators pursuing a project with an arts-based element are eligible for this grant.

Small Grants - Organizations

\$1000: Tuscaloosa Children’s Theatre | \$800: Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra
 \$800: The Alabama Blues Project | In-kind: Theatre Tuscaloosa
 \$800: Alabama Choir School

Small Grants – Individual Artists

\$600: Amber Quinn

Arts in Education Grant Awards

\$750: Hillcrest Middle School | \$120: Flatwoods Elementary
 \$1000: Hillcrest High School | \$250: Holt Elementary

Total Amount Awarded: \$6,120

Exhibits

The Arts Council provides local visual artists two venues to display their art as well as competitions that provide advancement and connection with other artists. The 14th annual Double Exposure Photography Competition hosted entries in its Junior Division, and as Alabama’s only statewide photography competition, it is especially valued by teachers in public and private schools. The West Alabama Juried Show provides a network for area artists and opportunities to display their work. In both The Arts Council Gallery in the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center and the Junior League Gallery in the Bama Theatre, exhibit space is made available to individuals and groups through an application process.

June Jamie Adams
July Chris Davenport
August Music Theme in conjunction with Druid City Arts Festival
September Susan Vitali
October Noelle Mercurio
Nov-Dec West Alabama Juried Art Show

February Black History Month
Feb-March Visual Art Achievement Awards at the Bama’s JLG
March-April Cancelled due to COVID-19
May-June Selections from The Arts Council’s Permanent Collection

Programming

The Arts Council provides arts education opportunities to students at the Bama Theatre, the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center, and on site at West Alabama schools. Disciplines include theatre, music, dance, visual art, and literary arts. The Arts Council's programming exposes students to a wide range of activities conducive to academic and social development. Students also benefit from curriculum-based activities that complement their work in the classroom.

Bama Fanfare, Fanfare Caravans, and Spectra served 12, 418 pre-k and elementary and high school students and teachers across West Alabama in 2019-2020.

Poetry Out Loud



The Arts Council serves as regional coordinator for Poetry Out Loud, which is sponsored by the Alabama State Council on the Arts. The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation partner with state arts agencies to support this contest which encourages youth to learn about poetry through memorization and recitation. The program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritages. The Education Director administrates the competition on the local level (District 3) by providing information to teachers and students, and The Arts Council hosts the District 3 final competition and student workshops.

(Pictured: 2019 District 3 Poetry Out Loud Winners at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center)

Visual Arts Achievement Program

As district coordinator for the Alabama State Council on the Arts Visual Arts Achievement Program, The Arts Council provides gallery space for local students who are accepted to the competition on the local level. Winners from the district advance to the statewide competition where they are exposed to work by their peers from across the state.

VAA Winners at the State Level in Montgomery:

- Best of Painting, Middle School "Dimetrodon" by Emily Craig, 8th grade, Watercolor, Teacher: Laura Thompson, Echols Middle School-Tuscaloosa County Schools
- Best of Painting, High School, "My Friend Catherine" by Natalie Crespo-Merchan, 12th grade, Oil on paper, Teacher: Tricia Schuster-Holy Spirit Catholic School

Adopt- A-School



The Arts Council serves the students of Westwood Elementary through the Chamber of Commerce Adopt-A-School program. The program gives local organizations the opportunity to make connections with local schools and contribute to their specific needs through an area of specialty. In this case, that area is the arts. Students participate in activities such as Spectrafest, Read Across America, Art Month at the Bama Theatre, and Job Shadowing.

(Pictured: Caricature Drawing demonstration during Spectrafest at Westwood Elementary)

Background

The West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative completed its second full year of programming in 2019-2020. In 2018-2019, it had two large-scale arts integration residency programs and doubled that reach to four programs in 2019-2020. In the fall of 2019, the WAAEC held two programs in the Tuscaloosa County School System at Myrtlewood Elementary and Buhl Elementary. In the spring of 2020, the WAAEC held one program in the Tuscaloosa City Schools at The Alberta School of Performing Arts. It was scheduled to start a program at Englewood Elementary (Tuscaloosa County School System) in May of 2020, but due to COVID-19, it was postponed until 2020-2021. Altogether, the WAAEC programs in 2019-2020 reached approximately 250 students and 12 teachers, not including students and teachers from Englewood Elementary (estimated 120 and 8, respectively).

Program Goals

- Form partnerships with schools to offer innovative arts integration units
- Help classroom teachers gain confidence using the arts to teach state core curriculum standards
- Recruit and train teaching artists in the West Alabama region in arts integration curriculum design and execution
- Form relationships with community arts organizations in order to build varied and sustainable arts integration programs in schools

Goals at the Local Level

- 3 (4 with Englewood) school partnerships serving 4 grade levels**
- Myrtlewood Elementary School - Fosters, AL - 1st grade (Tuscaloosa County Schools)
 - Buhl Elementary School - Buhl, AL - 3rd and 4th grade (Tuscaloosa County Schools)
 - The Alberta School of Performing Arts - Kindergarten (Tuscaloosa City Schools)
- 3 units serving approximately 250 students in 2 different core curriculum areas:**
- Social Science
 - English Language Arts
 - Co-designed by 12 classroom teachers and 3 teaching artists
 - Approximately 120 hours and 25 weeks of arts integration units

Evaluation Parameters

- Changes in student engagement and participation levels**
- Improvement in students' familiarity with different art forms
 - Change in classroom teachers' skill level and interest in using arts in their lessons
 - Degree of meeting state standards in the arts and academic areas

Other Goals

- Training for teaching artists in all disciplines using arts integration
- Following up with classroom teachers at programs after units end to assess longevity of skills learned
- Training for community arts organizations in arts integration/recruitment of local teaching artists
- Training for principals on the benefits of becoming an arts integrated school

Summer and Virtual Plans

- Meeting monthly with state leaders of the Artistic Literacy Consortium to restructure the Collaboratives with more autonomy in local areas and make a 3-to-5 year strategic plan
- Meeting weekly with the other Collaboratives (Greater Birmingham and North Alabama) to collaborate on a large virtual PD for either classroom teachers or teaching artists to be held in late June or July
- Local teaching artists are making videos of virtual lessons to be shared with schools
- Reconnecting with TASPAs teachers to continue their learning that was cancelled in March
- Providing arts organizations with a list of resources

Year Two **Fall 2019** in Overview

Myrtlewood Elementary

- Curriculum planned by teaching artist Ruth O'Connor alongside classroom teachers with the goal of finding out where the arts could enhance their regular subject matter. By the end of the 9-week program, classroom teachers had learned the skills necessary to use visual art in the teaching of their social science standards.
- Served all students in first grade with visual arts program integrated with social science/language arts.
- Focused on local history and individuals in historical settings.
- Students had 1 hour of arts instruction once a week.



Buhl Elementary

- First residency program in collaboration with a state arts organization, partnering with the Alabama Writers' Forum (AWF) with the goal to help students on personal expression in writing.
- Students learned the basics of poetry (some students had never read or written a poem before), and were given opportunities to write their own poetry each week.
- Served all third and fourth grade students.
- The program ended with a "Poetry Cafe" poetry reading event in which students read their original work from a published anthology that they took home to their families.



Above, Photo from the Buhl Elementary School Poetry Cafe, the culmination of the WAAEC's Creative Writing Program at Buhl in partnership with the Alabama Writers' Forum. All 3rd and 4th graders from the school read their original poetry in front of their peers, families, and teachers in February 2020.

Spring 2020

Alberta School of Performing Arts

- Visual arts/English language arts program with teaching artist Ruth O'Connor. The program centered on looking at artwork and describing what they see.
- Served all Kindergarten students
- The last couple of weeks were cancelled due to COVID-19. We plan to reconnect with the Kindergarten teachers over the summer for virtual professional development, and hope to return to TASP in the fall to do the program again with their input.

Englewood Elementary

- Collaboration planned with the Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra at Englewood Elementary School. A 5-week performance-based residency was planned for all fourth grade students beginning in May. Due to COVID-19, it was postponed. We hope to bring the program to students - either in person or virtually - during the 2020-2021 school year.

Professional Development at Myrtlewood and Buhl

- In addition to arts integration residency programs, we also hosted school-wide professional development in arts integration for all classroom teachers at both Myrtlewood and Buhl Elementary Schools.
- Shannon McCue and Sandy Wolfe (alongside representatives from the other two state collaboratives and leaders at the state level) attended a conference on Collective Impact initiatives in Pittsburgh in October of 2019, where they learned more about how the Artistic Literacy Consortium can improve its collective impact model to serve the state's students more effectively.

Timeline

June 26, 1970:
The Arts Council received its articles of incorporation.

1974:
The Arts Council's first program, SUGAR (Schools Using Greater Arts Resources) was established.

1976:
Bama leased by Arts Council and became a Performing Arts Center.

1976:
501c3 status was granted by the IRS.

1978:
The first schools program director was hired.

1983:
Grand opening of the Junior League Gallery at the Bama Theatre.

1985:
The first Annual West AL Juried Art Show was held at the Junior League Gallery.

1985:
The first season of Bama Fanfare was presented.

1986:
Major Renovation of the Bama Theatre completed.

1988:
The Arts Council became Adopt-a-School partners with Westwood Elementary.

1989:
Druid Arts Awards was established as a recurring ceremony.

1999:
35mm projector purchased through Stars of the Silver Screen campaign.

2004:
The Double Exposure Statewide Photography Competition was established.

2009:
The first Poetry Out Loud competition was held at the Bama Theatre.

2013:
Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center Grand Opening. The center opened on August 13, 2013 on Dinah Washington's birthday.

2013:
Restoration of original murals in the Bama painted by Navino Nataloni (1937-1938) by artist Ruth O'Connor.

2014:
Proludio Digital Projection System installed. The system replaced the platter system installed in 1999 that utilized 35mm film.

2017:
Digital Marquee installed.

2018:
West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative established in cooperation with the Alabama State Council on the Arts.

Celebrating
50
in 2020

The programming represented in this report is made possible in part by funding from:

