

THE ARTS
COUNCIL



ARTS AND HUMANITIES COUNCIL OF TUSCALOOSA COUNTY, INC.

ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 1 - MAY 31

22

23

From the Director...

What a monumental year this has been! I know that the community shares my pride in the renovations to the historic Bama Theatre. This would not have been possible without the support of local citizens that value the arts. As with so many renovation projects, ours was not without hiccups along the way. Our ten weeks of planned closure became eighteen due to obstacles outside of our control.

The anxiety of the extended closure was soon replaced by the sheer joy of walking into the Bama Theatre with beautiful new seats and carpet. So many of you have shared your personal Bama Theatre story with me – I wish the walls could talk! From childhood memories and an air-conditioned space, to first jobs and first loves, what a story they could tell of the history of our community. I am enjoying the sound of school children filling the theatre again, and my hope is that they will have heartfelt stories of performing on the stage and as audience members under the starry night sky. I also thank the Tuscaloosa County Commission, the City of Tuscaloosa, and the family of Terria Wood Plott for their generous support of the Bama Seat Campaign.

The arts connect us as people by creating and preserving culture, and in turn, impacting our identities, beliefs, views, and values. The Arts Council was created to champion the universal truth that the arts are essential, not optional, in addressing the challenges facing our community today and in the future. Through the arts we believe that we can create a better Tuscaloosa. Our community may have changed over the years, but the impact of The Arts Council remains the same—strengthening community by supporting the arts. Thanks to our supporters and partners across the decades for joining us along the way. Our work is not possible without you.



Sandra Wolfe, Executive Director
The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa

History and 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. The Arts Council is a 501c3 non-profit organization.

Staff

Sandra Wolfe, *Executive Director* | Shannon McCue, *Education Director* | Kevin Ledgewood, *Publicity*
Benji Stockton, *Bama Theatre Manager* | Reagan Fryer, *Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center Manager*

Board of Directors

Daniel Bradshaw, *President* | Ann Bourne, *Vice-President* | Katherine Gould, *Secretary* | Brenda Randall, *Treasurer*
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www.tuscarts.org



www.firstfridaytuscaloosa.com



www.monstertakeover.com



Income and Expenses

- Income: \$659,640
- Expenses: \$601,635

Grants Awarded to the Community

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.

- Local artists and organizations have received more than \$150,000 since 1986.
- 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.

Organizations:

- Druid City Ballet (“Druid City Ballet presents Excerpts from The Nutcracker”)
- Tuscaloosa Children’s Theatre (“Theatre Accessibility Project”)
- Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra (“Give Me Space: TSO x TCS Collaboration”)
- West Alabama Multicultural Alliance (“WAMA Fest”)

Individual Artists:

- George Berry (Premiere of the Film “SeaQueens”)

Arts in Education:

- Northport Intermediate School/Amy Wyatt (“Art Display Boards”)

Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center

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, utilized 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.
- The University of Alabama rents a gallery space and The Arts Council also maintains a gallery within the DWCAC. The facility also houses offices for the Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra and the Alabama Blues Project.

Rental Income

- Rental: \$60,071
- Subsidy to Member Organizations: \$ 3,535 (as a result of discounted rental rates)



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. (JLG=Bama Theatre’s Junior League Gallery; All other exhibits took place in the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center.)

Left: Collaborations include The West Alabama Juried Show Chamber of Commerce Purchase Award – \$1,000

Charlotte Wegrzynowski for “Scatter” and
Bottom: The Tuscaloosa County Schools Fine Arts Showcase, both at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center

June/July 2022	Jason Guynes
Aug/Sept 2022	Carson Grubaugh
Oct 2022	Bryce Speed
Nov 2022	Karen Brummund, Holand Hopson, and Allison Davis
Dec 2022	Junior League/Holt Elementary (JLG)
Dec 22/Jan 23	West Alabama Juried Show
Feb 2023	Ala. Blues Project
March 2023	Tuscaloosa County Schools
Feb/March 2023	Visual Art Achievement Awards (JLG)
April/May 2023	Junior League Sustainers Show
May 2023	Westwood Elementary (JLG)



BAMA THEATRE & RENOVATIONS

Bama Theatre

All figures on this page reflect those from June 1, 2022-May 31, 2023

Established in 1938 through funds from the Public Works Administration (PWA), the historic Bama Theatre continues to captivate audiences with its twinkling lights and exciting year-round performance calendar.

- Managed by The Arts Council and occupied almost 300 days per year.
- Rental location for productions presented by non-profit member organizations and community groups as well as concerts/performances presented by outside promoters.
- Programming presented by The Arts Council includes the Bama Art House Film Series, educational programs, and local and statewide art exhibits.

Rental Income

- Rental: \$139,358
- Restoration Fund: \$28,189
- Subsidy to Member Organizations: \$56,000 (as a result of discounted rental rates)

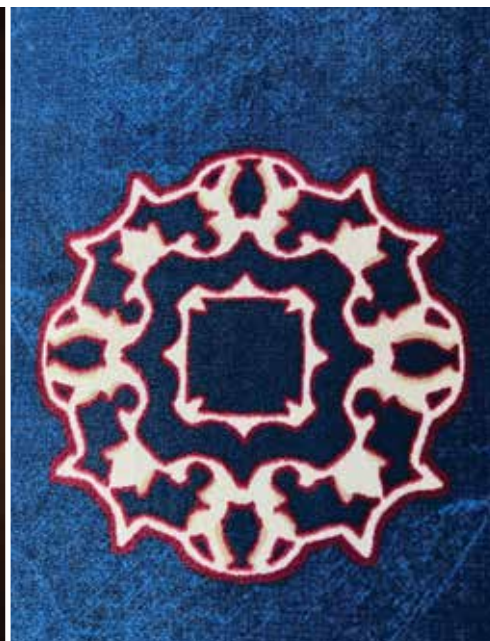
2022-23 Seat/Carpets Campaign

- Total Funds Raised: \$516,043 (\$156,043 in contributions / City of Tuscaloosa: \$150,000 / Tuscaloosa County Commission: \$210,000)
- Total Costs: \$566,481

Restoration Process and Project Images



(Left) New wiring installed in the existing concrete for seat lighting then repaired, stained, and polished



All photos courtesy Don Naman and the City of Tuscaloosa

(Left) Custom designed carpet by Milliken based on the decorative stencils above the lighting under the balcony

(Right and bottom) New seating was installed in the house and balcony; New carpeting in the house, balcony, lobby, and Greensboro Room; New carpeting installed on the walls of the Junior League Gallery



(Right) Prior seating and the removal in the balcony



EDUCATION

The Arts Council, through the West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative as part of the statewide Amp Up Arts initiative, provides arts education opportunities to students at the Bama Theatre, Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center, and on site at schools throughout West Alabama. Students are exposed to a wide range of activities conducive to academic and social-emotional development through the disciplines of theatre, music, dance, visual art, and literary art. Fanfare Caravans and the Spectra Partners in the Arts guide serve Pre-K through High School students and teachers throughout West Alabama by bringing high-quality arts education programs into the schools.

Poetry Out Loud



In January 2023, the Arts Council hosted a poetry workshop led by The Flourish Alabama, a Birmingham-based spoken word nonprofit



In March 2023, 2 students from District 3 placed in the state finals for Poetry Out Loud, held at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Montgomery

The West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative serves as the regional coordinator for Districts 3-4 of Poetry Out Loud, which is sponsored by the Alabama State Council on the Arts in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation.

- Poetry Out Loud encourages youth to learn about poetry through memorization, original composition, and recitation and also helps student master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage.
- The Arts Council hosts the District 3-4 Regional Competition and student workshops.

Visual Art Achievement Awards

As district coordinator for the Alabama State Council on the Arts' Visual Arts Achievement Program, the West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative provides gallery space for local students who are accepted to the competition at the regional level.

- The Arts Council displayed 95 out of the 115 works entered into the competition in an exhibit in the Junior League Gallery.
- 15 winners from the district advanced to the statewide competition, where they were featured in an exhibit at the Alabama State Council on the Arts in Montgomery.

Perri Payne, a student at Paul W. Bryant High School in Tuscaloosa, won both Best in Show at the regional competition, and First Place in the Senior Drawing Division for her piece, "Honeysuckle."



Adopt-A-School



Five winners of a job shadowing essay contest took a trip to the Arts Council to work with the Education Director for a half day.

The West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative serves the students of Westwood Elementary in Coker through the Chamber of Commerce's 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 Spectrafest, Art Month at the Bama Theatre, and Job Shadowing.
- All students at Westwood participated in Spectrafest in November of 2022. Spectrafest is a daylong arts education immersion festival held at the school and led by local artists and arts organizations. Students participated in activities with local arts groups and arts integration activities with teaching artists.
- The work of 40 Westwood students was on display in the Bama Theatre's Junior League Gallery in early May, and the student vocal ensembles performed "Songs from Around the World" as part of Westwood Art Month at the Bama.



Spectrafest

Images from Spectrafest at Westwood Elementary in Coker, Ala.: L-R Alabama Blues Project and Kentuck Clay Artist

Teaching Artist Programs with the West AL Arts Ed Collaborative

In 2022-2023, the West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative continued to work with schools to bring high-quality teaching artist and artist-in-residence programs to local schools.

- Two of these programs were an Art & Cursive Writing Program for second graders at Flatwoods Elementary School led by teaching artist Ruth Jatib O'Connor, and a collaborative artist-in-residence program with visual artist Karen Brummund and the school counselor at Faucett-Vestavia Elementary School.
- In 2022-2023, the Arts Council/West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative took over the administration of the City of Northport's Rose Arts Education Initiative funding, which oversees the arts education programming at six elementary schools in Northport city limits.
- In September of 2022, Education Director Shannon McCue, teaching artist Ruth Jatib O'Connor, and former Principal of The Alberta School of Performing Arts, Amy Tilford, traveled to Baltimore to present at the Arts Education Partnership's Annual Convening on their innovative teacher training program in arts integration.



Art and Cursive Writing at Flatwoods Elementary

The pARTners Project



The pARTners Project Regional Design Team at a recent workshop at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center

In February of 2021, the Arts Council/West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative, along with the Greater Birmingham Arts Education Collaborative was awarded a \$100,000 Arts Education Collective Impact 2-year grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

- The grant project, which ran through April of 2023, is a multi-phase initiative to create a plan to increase access to arts education in Hale, Jefferson, and Tuscaloosa Counties.
- The project brings together a diverse cross-section of the community to share ideas and determine the best way forward for students in our region.
- In 2022-2023, the team completed the research, wrote the plan, and are now working to implement the plan locally. The pARTners Project team collaborated with consultants from Quire, Eclipse Outreach, and Mindpop on research and facilitation.



Ten Reasons to Support the Arts in 2023

The arts are fundamental to our humanity. They ennoble and inspire us—fostering creativity, empathy, and beauty. The following 10 reasons show why an investment in artists, creative workers, and arts organizations is vital to the nation’s post-pandemic healing and recovery.

- **Arts unify communities.** 72% of Americans believe “the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity” and 73% agree that the arts “helps me understand other cultures better”—a perspective observed across all demographic and economic categories.
- **Arts improve individual well-being.** 81% of the population says the arts are a “positive experience in a troubled world,” 69% of the population believe the arts “lift me up beyond everyday experiences,” and 73% feel the arts give them “pure pleasure to experience and participate in.”
- **Arts strengthen the economy.** The nation’s arts and culture sector—nonprofit, commercial, education—is an \$876.7 billion industry that supports 4.6 million jobs (2020). That is 4.2% of the nation’s economy—a larger share of GDP than powerhouse sectors such as agriculture, transportation, and utilities. The arts boast a \$33 billion international trade surplus (2019). The arts accelerate economic recovery: a growth in arts employment has a positive and causal effect on overall employment.
- **Arts drive tourism and revenue to local businesses.** The nonprofit arts industry alone generates \$166.3 billion in economic activity annually—spending by organizations and their audiences—which supports 4.6 million jobs and generates \$27.5 billion in government revenue.
- **Arts improve academic performance.** Students engaged in arts learning have higher GPAs, standardized test scores, and college-going rates as well as lower drop-out rates.
- **Arts spark creativity and innovation.** Creativity is among the top five applied skills sought by business leaders—per the Conference Board’s Ready to Innovate report—with 72% saying creativity is of “high importance” when hiring.
- **Arts have social impact.** University of Pennsylvania researchers have demonstrated that a high concentration of the arts in a city leads to higher civic engagement, more social cohesion, higher child welfare, and lower poverty rates.
- **Arts improve healthcare.** Nearly one-half of the nation’s healthcare institutions provide arts programming for patients, families, and even staff.
- **Arts for the health and well-being of our military.** The arts heal the mental, physical, and moral injuries of war for military service members and Veterans, who rank the creative arts therapies in the top four (out of 40) interventions and treatments.
- **Arts strengthen mental health.** The arts are an effective resource in reducing depression and anxiety and increasing life satisfaction. Just 30 minutes of active arts activities daily can combat the ill effects of isolation and loneliness associated with COVID-19.

