

Arts Central Receives \$17,000 Grant, More Funding Needed

by K_Guice

The Oregon Arts Commission has announced \$655,500 in grants to 102 Oregon arts organizations awarded through its Arts Services and Arts Learning Grant programs. Among the recipients was Arts Central in Bend. The non-profit organization received \$17,000.

Arts Central is the regional arts and culture council of Central Oregon. The organization works to build an appreciation of the arts through education and advocacy. Arts Central oversees four primary programs: The Art Station, Arts in Education, Mirror Pond Gallery and serves as the Oregon Arts Commission designated regional arts council for Central Oregon.

Macy Brundage, age 5 Ella Hopp, age 6 Alice Holtzelaw, age 6 Cate O'Hagan, executive director for Arts Central, "It's a lot. That is why any funding we get is much appreciated."

Every service the organization provides cost twice as much as they charge. "When you are a non-profit you try to offer your services at an affordable rate," she said. "That is why grants and donations are so important to these programs."

"The arts are integral to Oregon's quality of life, community development and overall climate for growth," said Christine D'Arcy, executive director of the Oregon Arts Commission.

"Oregon communities use the arts to strengthen community ties and capacity. We are pleased to provide a small investment in some of our region's strongest and most innovative arts groups," she said.

Arts Central received the \$8,000 grant to support artist in residence programs in K-12 schools throughout Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook, Lake and Klamath Counties. It also helps fund art classes at the Art Station.

"We serve 22,330 square miles and 8,000 kids," O'Hagan said. "Since the schools don't offer much in the way of art programs it is more important than ever."

"The \$8,000 helps offset huge costs, like paying our teachers, the cost of supplies and overhead," she said. Expenses are also kept down thanks, in part, to sponsors like William Smith Properties and The Shops at the Old Mill District. "Their generosity allows us to be virtually rent free, but we have other bills like electricity, water, etc., to cover as well."

The Oregon Arts Commission also granted Arts Central \$9,000 to support regional arts services to Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes counties. Arts Central strives to build an appreciation of the arts through education and advocacy and encourages the inclusion of the arts in all aspects of community life.

“The regional arts services grant goes to my department at Arts Central,” O’Hagen said. It helps fund outreach efforts in other communities in the three select counties. Arts Central helps other organizations set up their own arts programs. “I help local arts programs with strategic planning, grant writing advice and creating resources,” she said.

Cynthia Addams of Keizer, chair of the Arts Commission says, “The organizations supported with these funds demonstrate the strength and breadth of the arts in Oregon. The Commission is pleased to be a partner in funding so many arts activities that benefit Oregon and its people.”

While the funds are appreciated, O’Hagen says it is half as much as what was once provided. “The state support for the arts of Oregon is near the very bottom of the list,” she said. “Other states that we think we’re superior to, we are actually behind them.”

She says many Oregonians perceive that other states aren’t as supportive as their home state, when in fact Oregon is one of the worst. “So, we are left scrambling to make up the difference,” she said.

One way people can help is to become an annual member of Arts Central. “Without annual contributions of about \$50 apiece we wouldn’t be able to cover our overhead,” O’Hagen said.

Art supply donations and volunteers are also encouraged. “They can work at the desk, help customers and answer questions,” she said. “We can also use volunteer teaching assistants to help kids with their projects.”

Volunteers tend to find they are the ones who actually benefit. “If you are assisting a class you are probably learning something too,” O’Hagen said. For those who choose to help in the gallery it is a great way to socialize, work with talented people and interact with the artists.

The current American culture is so used to being fed information from somebody else, when people turn it around and start doing it themselves they discover how powerful the experience really is. “When you tap into creativity, you are tapping into something that can give you solutions and give you great joy,” she said.

There are food and shelter needs and then there are needs for the mind and heart. “Ultimately, art provides an avenue for self expression that builds confidence, self esteem and it is very effective for working with children and adults,” O’Hagen said.

“It is a way of expression that opens people up to their feelings,” she added. “The arts are absolutely essential to that.”

Bend Weekly Newslink: www.ArtsCentralOregon.org

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