

# VALLEY ART CENTER'S ANNUAL MEETING

September 14th, 2016, 6:00PM  
ANNUAL REPORT



## **News:**

The Valley Art Center welcomes you to our 45th Annual Meeting! This is my third report as Executive Director, and I am delighted to share that it has been another productive and energizing year. I am grateful to be part of an organization that plays such a critical role in this arts-rich community. We are fortunate to enjoy the benefits of committed students and patrons faithful volunteers, engaged trustees, skilled staff, and dedicated and talented instructors. Together we are shaping a visual arts environment that is welcoming, challenging, inspiring and prominent in the Chagrin Valley.

We look back on another successful year. We celebrated the completion of our stunning mural with a joyful gathering that drew many community members, young and old alike complete with dancing, singing, ice cream and popcorn, and speeches by community leaders. We offered a robust selection of classes and workshops. Our 5 gallery exhibits drew artists from throughout the region and even across the country. Our gallery openings were well attended and many new visitors toured our shows. Our 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Art by the Falls saw sunny skies in June and drew over 10,000 patrons to revel in the work of 120 artists. With over 45 years of history, we continue to build on the solid foundation laid by staff, board, and the VAC community over the years. We continue to develop a strong and dedicated staff. Together we are perfecting our program offerings, increasing our prominence in the valley, and caring for our attractive and functional facility.

Again we successfully wrote and received several grants; one from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture and two from Ohio Arts Council. These two long standing sources of public funding for the arts provide vital support for our operating expenses and we are extremely grateful. Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and OAC have granted VAC \$328,003 over the past 14 years to Valley Art Center.

This year we revised and extended our current strategic plan with the input from skilled and insightful board members. We will continue to focus on development and marketing having completed our rebranding, updated website and social media. We have streamlined our online registration and looking forward to another successful program year. We have revised our mission statement to ensure that our work remains relevant and dynamic today. We are pleased to say that Valley Art Centers' mission is to engage the Chagrin Valley in meaningful visual art experiences though education, exhibits, events and partnerships.

## **Board of Trustees:**

We want to formally welcome our new Trustees:

- Brett Berkobein brings his business background in his work for Progressive Insurance as well as his non-profit leadership experience as Former Executive Director of Fairmount Fine Art Center. He is also a Member of Village of Chagrin Falls City Council.
- Tricia Kaman is a long time professional artist, renowned instructor and friend of VAC. She is the President/Owner of Kaman's Art Shoppes and the Artist/Proprietor of Tricia Kaman Studio/Gallery in Murray Hill.
- Pearce Leary will bring his background in legal matters in his profession as Pearce Leary, Attorney at Law
- Kim Zarney will contribute to our marketing and our gallery efforts with his professional expertise as Artist and President of Zarney Creative.

## **Staff:**

Our talented staff works hard all year long to accomplish our mission. Jeni Yonker is Assistant Director. Brian Jacobs is our Gallery and Communications Manager. Jen Rice is our Marketing and Communications Associate. Kate Bruner is our Registrar, Shop Manager and Volunteer Coordinator, Becky Frazier subs as our Office Assistant.

### **Gallery and Gift Shop:**

This year's gallery exhibits included an engaging schedule of themes drawing artists from around the corner to around the country with an average of 200 at our opening receptions. Our fall exhibit was entitled "Urban Culture" and artists were invited to respond in any medium to the definition of Urban Culture as "any of the behavioral patterns of the various types of cities and urban areas, both past and present." Deborah Pinter, photographer and print-maker, Mark Yasenack, ceramic artist and Tom Huck, UH Hospital Art Curator judged our prestigious 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Juried Show which enticed over 350 applicants and was stunning in breadth and quality. Kim Zarney won Best in Show. In January "It's Elemental: Earth & Air" was juried by Jen Craun, a printmaker in residence at Zygote Press. 99 artists submitted pieces responding to the first in our series focused on natural elements. Our spring exhibit showcased the paintings of Seth Chwast, an artist with Autism, and portraits of the artist by photographer Herbert Ascherman. We wrapped up with our "Student Faculty Exhibit", a stunning showcase of the talent of our staff and students-they are among our greatest assets. With input from our impressive gallery committee we designated "The Hall Gallery" to allow for additional flexible exhibit programming. Our initial display was "The Pour" featuring our own Michael Steinberg's photographic documentation of a bronze pour in which VAC Instructor David Shankland's students transformed their plaster molds into bronze sculptures at a local foundry.

Our "Valley Art Center Gift Shop" saw a steady increase in sales over the past year and new patrons visit the shop every week. It continually holds an abundant and refined selection of rotating inventory. Through a jurying process similar to one used for gallery exhibits, local and regional artists and current Valley Art Center Members can submit work four times a year in conjunction with our gallery shows. As an extension of our Valley Art Center Gift Shop we re-launched a rotating offsite display at The Village Martini Bar where VAC artists have a broader audience for their work that is for sale.

### **Partnerships**

We are busy year-round with increased and expanded partnerships with local business and non-profit organizations. Last fall we will hosted several Chagrin Documentary Film Festival screenings including one entitled "The Mural" and Nancy Martt, the featured artist and a founding VAC member, joined us for comments and questions. In January we initiated a new program entitled "Senior to Senior Art" in which talented VAC master senior instructors delivered classes to residents in 2 senior living facilities, Hamlet Village and Arden Courts. This highly successful pilot program was partially funded by a "Creative Aging" project grant from the Ohio Arts Council as well as 2 donors. As members of the Village Arts Commission, we endeavor to raise awareness in the region of Chagrin Falls as an arts-rich community. As part of this effort, last spring we collaborated with local for-profit and non-profit businesses in the first ever chamber-sponsored "Arts Hop", which brought a significant increase in traffic to the arts establishments in the village, including our own shop and gallery. This summer we held off site classes at Chagrin Schools and once again several special education students enjoyed our classes, supported by the school. For the third year our instructors taught art sessions at Chagrin Falls Park Community Center's Summer Camp, and a high school student from Chagrin Falls Park completed her second paid internship with us through their J&FS Summer Youth Employment Program. We joined Chagrin Arts in their Third Annual Music Crawl during Art by the Falls in June.

### **Education**

Classes remain the "bread and butter" of our organization. We continue to offer programming for students ages 3-93 from beginners to masters under the guidance of committed and talented instructors. With direction from our talented and dedicated marketing committee and marketing consultants we initiated an aggressive Facebook campaign targeted to increase enrollment, and we are currently experiencing the apparent benefits of that push. Our printed schedules continue to be widely distributed through the Chagrin Valley Times and both Chagrin and Kenston schools. The staff continued to strategically promote classes and workshops in the newsletter, website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest. We continue to gain insight garnered through surveys and the feedback of our education and program board committee.

## **Facilities**

Our building renovation is now 7 years old. Our attractive and highly functional facility continues to be cared for enhanced all through the year. Looking ahead, we foresee a need for necessary upgrades and repairs including HVAC improvements, significant drainage work in the basement, repaving the parking lot and sidewalk, and putting a new roof in place in the next 5-10 years. We are making plans to address these costs with our “Art of Preservation” and “Legacy” campaigns along with new sources for grants.

## **Fundraising:**

The Art of Preservation launched at our Mural Celebration yielded just under \$20,000 including merchandise sales, meeting our initial target goal. The estimated total funds needed to address ongoing building needs within the next 5-10 years amounts to \$200,000.

October’s “Third Annual Clambake” fundraiser yielded \$3,500, raising funds for our programming. Our fourth Annual Clambake is planned for Saturday, October. 15<sup>th</sup> 6-8pm at VAC. This year promises to be another success with a complete bake prepared by Café Michael and craft beer provided by Great Lakes Brewery. Please plan to attend, support our program and enjoy a delicious meal with a tour of our facility, a 50-50 raffle and music by The Fretters!

“Hot Chocolate” on February 6 at Town Hall was a successful winter fundraiser. Laurie Dean and Linda Blackwell were excellent co-chairs. Jan Jones & Shelly Artz and Darlene & Bob Jackson were toasted as our honorary co-chairs. Trifles catered and Chuck’s supplied the alcohol. The Tom Lempner Jazz Duo accompanied dancers from the Fred Astaire Dance Studio. Rob Crombie, Jan Mettee, Lynne Lofton and Herb Ascherman donated significant works of art for the auction. There was a raffle for center pieces and the “Paint Brush Game”. Arte De Fiori donated the decorations. 112 were in attendance. Our net profit was \$15,850. Save the date for this year’s Hot chocolate, February 4<sup>th</sup> at the Chagrin Valley Athletic Club.

Last year’s Annual Appeal income was just over \$15,000, which is a little less than 10% over last year but we have engaged approximately 50% more donors.

## **Art by the Falls**

Art by the Falls marked its 33<sup>rd</sup> year in June. Artists, patrons and volunteers continued to offer praise for a professional and high caliber festival made possible by the Art by the Falls team. Congratulations to the entire Art by the Falls committee with special recognition to the skill and experience of long-time volunteer Ally Dean, Onsite Coordinator. At the front of the park we included our own VAC teacher demo tent that featured a pottery “throw down” as well as demonstrations of plein air painting and illustration. Once again stilt walkers from Parade the Circle entertained the crowd and we cross marketed our event with Chagrin Arts for their third Annual Music Crawl Saturday evening. The event netted close to \$35,000 and was by all accounts a huge success.

Respectfully submitted,



Bruce Downie,  
President, Board of Trustees



Dana Davis,  
Past President, Board of Trustees



Mary Ann Breisch,  
Executive Director