



Berks Arts Council
Meggan Kerber, Executive Director
ED@berksarts.org
610.898.1930 ext. 28

For Immediate Release....

Imagine A Day Without The Arts???

Every day, children, adults, seniors, veterans, schools, non-profits, businesses and government utilize varying art forms for entertainment, inspiration, education, therapeutically and healing. Not a day goes by that each of our own personal lives are not impacted by the arts. From listening to the radio, watching a favorite movie, dancing, crafting, playing an instrument to painting and more... what would our day be without the arts???

The Arts Community has taken an active role in providing opportunities for individuals, families and communities to use art for healing, as a coping mechanism, as a tool for inspiration and to engage with social distancing. In addition, many artists (novice, amateur and professional) have turned to supporting our local health and human service organization with the creation of PPE equipment needed for their safety.

As our country begins to reopen, the reliance on arts, music, culture, entertainment and tourism will continue to see a high demand. With limited opportunities for artists and art organizations to seek financial support, many programs/services previously offered will no longer be available. A survey of Berks County arts organizations has shown that **80%** of programs in 2020 have been cancelled or rescheduled and the 2021 season will be significantly impacted by financial constraints. Sadly, many of our local arts organizations will go into “hibernation” to rebuild for 2021 and 2022 and lean more heavily on volunteers as staff will be reduced. The loss of community and economic funds to our local community based on arts programs is well over \$12 million for 2020.

To assist our local arts organizations and to keep the arts vibrant, Berks Arts has kicked off an Arts Relief Campaign to raise \$300,000 in support of our arts organizations and local artists. Jim Landrigan, Treasurer of Berks Arts Board of Directors, shared that “the Board has committed personally over \$100,000 to the campaign. It is imperative that as a community we keep the arts strong, vibrant, accessible and available during this unprecedented time and beyond.”

Keith Mooney, Berks Arts Board President, shared that the campaign has two focuses:

- To provide financial support to Berks Arts Council to continue offering education programs, collaborations and presentations to our local community. Programs/services offered could include, but not limited to, Fast Lane Art – Student Art Exhibition;

The official registration and financial information of the Berks Arts Council may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



Bandshell Concert Series – Free Summer Concert Series; Art of Jazz – Fine Art Exhibition; Jazz Fest; Blues Fest; Get JazzED summer camp and academic year programming for elementary, middle and high school students; and Public Art Initiatives with the City of Reading, West Reading, Greater Reading Chamber Alliance and other local partners.

- To provide grants to local artists and art organizations to provide education, virtual, plein aire and other arts programs supported by their missions. Funding would be allocated based on the amount of funds raised and number of applications received. Applications and grant process would be managed by Berks Arts.

Since 1971, Berks Arts has been promoting and supporting the arts in Berks County. Started as an advocacy organization by a local group of artists who felt Berks County needed an agency to promote and unite all of the arts. We believe the arts improve the quality of life and are an important part of revitalization and economic growth.

We invite those who love the arts and cultural scene to join Berks Arts in addressing the urgent needs of the artists, creatives and art organizations in our community and ensuring the longevity of the arts and culture sector of Berks County. Gifts and pledges can be made on-line at www.berksarts.org or by calling 610-898-1930 ext. 28 to learn more about the campaign.

###

The official registration and financial information of the Berks Arts Council may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.