CULTURAL ALLIANCE

2020

OF YORK COUNTY
Dear Residents of York County,

As the convener of our cultural community, the Cultural Alliance has spent 2020 doing what we have always done; providing resources and training to allow our arts groups to take risks and grow. Never has our work been more critical. Whether it is building an outdoor performance stage for socially distanced arts events, or using dance breaks to keep our students active and engaged during online learning, our partners and teaching artists have been able to take on the opportunities presented by Covid-19 with confidence because of the generous support of our contributors. As you will see in the following pages, our creative community is pivoting to meet the needs of our community to offer healing, relief, and learning in a time of great uncertainty.

This year, as our arts and cultural community shut down, the Cultural Alliance became a lifeline and took immediate action to deploy $140,000 in resources raised for community arts organizations and artists in the first months of the pandemic. We collaborated with our Commissioners and community partners to secure $830,000 of York County CARES Act funding for York’s cultural institutions as they work to rebuild and reimagine their role in the community. As you will read in our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work in this report, the Cultural Alliance is strengthening arts and culture through transformational change to raise and distribute funds in a way that is inclusive and equitable for the community we serve.

We thank every donor who has believed in the Cultural Alliance to cultivate the growth of York County’s cultural institutions and artists. Through your generosity, we are investing in the future of York’s cultural soul. It’s more important now than ever for us to be a lifeline for the artists and arts organizations who have proven their resiliency and enriched the lives of York Countians for generations. This pandemic will end. Through your support, the Cultural Alliance will ensure our creative culture in York will continue.

William T. Yanavitch II, Board Chair
Mission
We are a Catalyst, fueling the creative energy and vibrancy of our community through Leadership, Collaboration, and Sustainability in order to enrich the quality of life of all of our citizens.

Vision
We envision a thriving York County where the arts are an integral component of economic growth and development, tourism, education and everyday life.

At the Cultural Alliance of York County, empowering our community means creating transformational change in the way we raise and distribute funds in York County in a way that is just and racially equitable.

Our Value of Equity
We recognize that our society is challenged to overcome a complex web of inequities. As a powerful connector in our community, we are responsible for operating with an awareness of legacies of privilege and power that have effects on opportunity, access and resources. This awareness informs a thorough review of our policies and practices from funding criteria, to program development, hiring and resident engagement.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training
The CAYC engaged York County racial educators in 2017 to begin workshops and training with staff and board members on the meaning and implementation of racial equity. These workshops focus on historical, institutional, and systemic racism while challenging deeply held assumptions and revealing the devastating impacts of racial inequity in our nation’s most marginalized populations.

Moving From Awareness to Action
With help from our DEI trainers, an Equity Action Plan has been created to help us put racial equity principles into action in our organization. This plan begins with an initial goal of building a fully-integrated equity lens into our newly enacted funding tiers, and continues then with building equity into the entirety of our organization.

By centering racial equity in our work, we steward our donors contributions in a way that reflects and serves the racial and cultural diversity of York County.

Follow our action plan at: www.culturalyork.org/equity-action-plan-and-history/
As 2020 began, the Cultural Alliance rolled out a brand new model of funding based on three years of research and prototyping; including, artist professional development grants, new operational partnerships, and the promise of our best YorVoice event ever.

Like the rest of the country, the Covid-19 Pandemic quickly shifted this view of the future. Due to the diligence of our solicitors in 2019, and the innovative thinking of our staff and board, we were able to adapt immediately to meet our communities urgent needs.

New Year, New Model, New Opportunities

Terri Yacovelli received one of the very first Artist Professional Development Grants, launched as a part of the Cultural Alliance’s new model in 2020. When her plans to use the funds for an in-person class were canceled, she quickly pivoted to an online experience which turned out to be a better opportunity than she could have ever imagined.

See our online Impact Report for the full story.

Stepping Up to Power Our Community

As theaters and arts organizations began to go dark, and creative employees were being laid off, the Cultural Alliance was able to jump into action. Thanks to the leadership of our board of directors and staff, we were able to help fill in these gaps in funding for both our partner organizations and working artists.

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Warkenda Williams-Casey has had a vision for the future of dance in Susquehanna Valley of Pennsylvania. In 2019 her dream became actualized as she founded the Black Swan Ballet, to encourage ballet dancers of color in their dance training and experience as well as changing the face and body of the ballet world for the better.

To learn more about Black Swan Ballet Company, see our online Impact Report.

$90,000 ADVANCE IN GRANTS TO MISSION PARTNERS IN MARCH AND APRIL

$30,000 TO NEW IMPACT PARTNERS

$20,000 IN ARTIST RELIEF GRANTS

$90,000 IN ARTIST RELIEF GRANTS
Securing the Future of York’s Cultural Institutions

President Commissioner Julie Wheeler pictured above.

As federal and state relief funds were distributed into the community, it was clear that the arts were at risk of being left behind. Many working artists (60% of those we surveyed) were ineligible or unaware that sources of relief funding were available for them. With our advocacy, and in collaboration with York County Commissioners, Federal CARES Act funding was directly distributed to our partners.

RESILIENCY SPOTLIGHT

The Spotted-Elk Collective Dance Company consists of Champion Native American Plains Style of Dancers and Singers. The Spotted Elk Dance Company dances to honor their family, past, present and future and are striving to keep their traditions and culture alive.

Spotted Elk Collective joined the Cultural Alliance Arts in Education teaching roster in 2020. Learn more about them at our online Impact Report.

Impact Partners

In 2020 we began the search for new organizations to extend the reach of our operational funding and bolster our connections to the many arts organizations in York County doing great work. It became clear when the state shut down that we needed to speed up our vetting process to help keep our organizations alive and thriving through the worst of the pandemic. Funds were quickly distributed to five new Cultural Alliance Impact Partners:

- The Susquehanna Folk Music Society
- Hanover Area Arts Guild
- The Eichelburger Performing Arts Center
- Dreamwrights Center for Community Arts

INNOVATION SPOTLIGHT

Dreamwrights Center for Community Arts has been a home for all types of art since its founding in 1997. As the pandemic hit in March of 2020 however, the stewards of the theatre, namely, Ann Davis the Executive Director, had to find new ways to serve the community they had worked so hard to build. To see a video about Dreamwrights innovation during Covid-19, visit our online Impact Report.

$600,000
Campaign Funds distributed to our partners.

$830,000
Federal CARES Act funds Advocated for and allocated directly to 16 York County Cultural Organizations (including our 13 partners).

$20,000
CAYC Relief Grants to 50 York County Artists.

$1.5M
Total Funds the Cultural Alliance secured for artists and organizations in 2020.
Strengthening Ties with Working Artists

Artist Professional Development Grants
Funded in partnership with the Loucks-Bose and Langione Funds of the York County Community Foundation, the Cultural Alliance awarded $10,000 in grant funds to seven working York County artists to take significant steps forward in their career.

Artist Innovator Award
In October, we awarded musician Ambitious Caban as the first-ever Arts Innovator Award winner with a cash prize of $10,000. This annual award is intended to recognize and reward the artistic excellence which exists and is sometimes hidden within the York County community.

Arts in Education
Using the arts as the medium for learning, our roster of teaching artists found themselves in a unique position to both adapt personally and create positive influences for students as schools shifted to online learning in 2020. Veteran teaching artist Jason Reed is putting his skills to work to help kids not only survive, but thrive using virtual platforms.

Read the full story about how we are continuing to connect to artists in our online impact report.

Planning for the Post-Covid World
While we don’t know what the future is going to bring to our world, 2020 was proof that the foundation we have been laying for the past 20 years has put us on the right track towards serving our mission and our community even in the light of a crisis. It is with the continued support from our donors and sponsors that we will be able to continue to power the arts and cultural experiences we have come to know as synonymous with York County.

Our Team
Special thanks to those whose work and wisdom have guided the Cultural Alliance to where it is today:

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