

Arts Services Initiative of Western New York 2013 Annual Report

Our Mission:

Arts Services Initiative of Western New York promotes the cultural sector's vital role in economic development and the community through advocacy, capacity building, and collaboration.

About ASI:

Arts Services Initiative of the Western New York, Inc. was created in 2011 to foster capacity building, collaboration, and advocacy efforts for the region's cultural sector, an integral part of the fabric of our community.

ASI works closely with the Greater Buffalo Cultural Alliance, and brings together several networks including Arts Partners for Learning, the Cultural Alliance of Niagara, the Greater Buffalo Cultural Alliance, and the five county Cultural Summit.

ASI is a non-profit 501c3 organization governed by an independent board of directors comprising leaders in the area's cultural, community, and business sectors. ASI has the support of the New York Council on the Arts and the Fund for the Arts, both of which participated in its development and provided initial operational funding.

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ASI Board of Directors:

Mr. Randall Kramer – President

Artistic/Executive Director, MusicalFare Theatre

Co-Chair, Greater Buffalo Cultural Alliance

Ms. Stephanie Cole - Vice President

General Counsel, Niagara University

Ms. Kate Koperski – Secretary

Director, Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University

President, Cultural Alliance of Niagara

Ms. Kathleen Godwin - Treasurer

Owner, Accounting Repair & Maintenance

Mr. E. Frits Abell

Managing Director, Northside Advisors

Founder, Buffalo Expat Network

Mr. James Allen

Executive Director, Amherst Industrial Development Agency

Ms. Anne Conroy-Baiter

Executive Director, Cattaraugus County Arts Council

Ms. Paulette Harris

Artistic Director, Paul Robeson Theatre

Mr. Tod A. Kniazuk (ad hoc)

Executive Director, Arts Services Initiative of WNY

Ms. Sarah JM Kolberg

Consultant / Adjunct Faculty, Department of Media Study, University at Buffalo

Mr. Mark McGovern

Project Manager, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus

Mr. Gerald Mead

Adjunct Professor, Design Department, Buffalo State College

Ms. Theresa Quinn, Esq.

Associate, Magavern Magavern Grimm LLP

Dr. Irene Rykaszewski, PhD

Executive Director, Lewiston Council on the Arts

Secretary, Cultural Alliance of Niagara

Ms. JoAnne Schwartz

Group Vice President, Community Reinvestment, M&T Bank

Ms. Laurie Dean Torrell

Executive Director, Just Buffalo Literary Center

Co-Chair, Greater Buffalo Cultural Alliance

ASI Staff:

Mr. Tod A. Kniazuk – Executive Director

Ms. Jennifer Swan - Associate Director

Ms. Elizabeth Borngraber – Office Coordinator

2013 Accomplishments

ASI communicated job opportunities, calls for work, grant deadlines, an online resource guide and other important information through our website, Constant Contact, Facebook, and Twitter to over 3,000 organizations and individuals and held ongoing training sessions for organizations and individual artists on:

- Cultural Data Project,
- Cash Flow Forecasts,
- Strategic Planning,
- Board Development,
- Affordable Care Act (with Theatre Alliance of Buffalo and Actors Equity),
- Advocacy Using Cultural Data Project,
- Basic First Aid Topics for Arts Organizations,
- Fiscal Sponsorships and Crowdfunding,
- Art Collecting,
- Taking Your Career as a Fine Artist to the Next Level, and
- Concluding the new, first time executive directors series.





We also completed our second year administering the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation Buffalo River Assisted Programming Grants (resulting in close to 100 programs along the Buffalo River), continued managing the New York State Path Through History Western Region Work Group (also co-chair), and administered an artist in residence exchange between New York State and the Province of Quebec.



We continued our administration of five New York State Council on the Arts Regrant programs that resulted in 40 community and arts education programs (25 in Erie County, 12 in Niagara County, 3 Individual Artists commissions).



We continued advocacy at the county level including serving on the Erie County Arts Funding Advisory Board, and at the City of Buffalo where our efforts resulted in cultural funding being included in a mayor's draft budget for the first time in a decade. Additionally, a candidate survey was created for those who ran for City of Buffalo Mayor, Niagara Falls City Council, and Erie County Legislature and Comptroller that identified candidates' views on cultural funding and policy, as well as the place of arts and culture in the community, economic development,



tourism, and education, and was published in Artvoice and circulated throughout the cultural community prior to the Primary Election – making it one of the most widely available surveys in its first year. We also held a joint press conference with United States Congressman Brian Higgins to oppose proposed

cuts to the National Endowment for the Arts.

ASI also represents the cultural sector on the One Region Forward Housing & Neighborhoods Work Group, Western New York Regional Economic Development Tourism Committee (co-chair) and "Buffalo Billion" Asset Development Committee, New York State Council on the Arts State & Local Partnerships, Presenting, and Consolidated Funding Application Panels, CharitySTRONG Buffalo Steering Committee, Leadership Buffalo Class Experience, and Americans for the Arts National Convention Marketing Committee and National Arts Advocacy Day.

The Arts Access program was launched in September 2013, in collaboration with the Mobile Safety-Net Team, the Theatre Alliance of Buffalo, Arts Partners for Learning, Fund for the Arts, The John R. Oishei Foundation, M&T Bank, and Crowley Webb. The Arts Access Program provides free tickets and transportation to cultural events to low income individuals receiving Supplemental Nutritional



Assistance Program benefits through an Access Pass, as well as centralized information about free cultural organizations and events, pay what you can previews, rush tickets, and other ways to enjoy local cultural programming at low or no cost.

A Cultural Cards program was started to act as a fundraiser for ASI as well as a marketing and awareness effort for the 50 participating cultural organizations in Erie, Niagara, and Chautauqua Counties by producing and selling a deck of cards (like the dining and cocktail cards) that have special offers from the participants.



In addition to the above, ASI continued its service to the sector through the following:

- Hosting a "culture as economic development" roundtable with New York
 State Council on the Arts Executive Director Lisa Robb and the Western New
 York Regional Economic Development Council;
- Connecting the cultural sector to economic development, business, tourism, transportation, the community, and federal, state, county and local governments through advocacy, collaboration, and awareness;
- Offering health insurance through the Amherst Chamber of Commerce; and
- Providing services to regional networks including:
 - Greater Buffalo Cultural Alliance (Steering Committee, Advocacy Committee Co-Chair, Membership Committee member, administration),
 - Arts Partners for Learning (Leadership Team),
 - Cultural Alliance of Niagara (administrative support),
 - Cultural Summits (participation, administrative support, hiring facilitator).