

# Arts Services Initiative of Western New York

## 2014 ANNUAL REPORT



## ASI's 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 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, and the five county Cultural Summit Group.

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 State 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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## TEAM ASI

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Mr. Randall Kramer – President  
Artistic/Executive Director, MusicalFare Theatre  
Co-Chair, Greater Buffalo Cultural Alliance
- Ms. Kate Koperski – Vice President  
Director, Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University  
President, Cultural Alliance of Niagara
- Ms. Paulette D. Harris – Secretary  
Artistic Director, Paul Robeson Theatre
- Ms. Kathleen Godwin – Treasurer  
Owner, Accounting Repair & Maintenance
- Mr. E. Frits Abell  
Managing Director, Northside Advisors  
Founder, Buffalo Expat Network
- Mr. Kenneth Africano  
Partner, Harter Secrest & Emery LLP
- Mr. James Allen  
Executive Director, Amherst Industrial Development Agency
- Ms. Jax Deluca  
Executive Director, Squeaky Wheel Film & Media Arts Center
- Ms. Journey Gunderson  
Executive Director, Lucy Desi Center for Comedy /Lucille Ball Desi Arnaz Museum
- Ms. Tina Hastings  
Executive Director, Cattaraugus County Arts Council
- Mr. Tod A. Kniazuk – ex officio  
Executive Director, Arts Services Initiative of WNY
- Ms. Sarah JM Kolberg  
Independent Consultant  
Adjunct Faculty, University at Buffalo Dept. of Media Study
- Mr. Mark McGovern  
Project Manager, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus
- Mr. Gerald Mead  
Adjunct Professor, SUNY Buffalo State Design
- Mr. Daniel Montante  
President, Montante Solar
- Mr. John A. Mueller  
Senior Associate Attorney, Harter Secrest & Emery LLP
- Mr. Hal D. Payne  
Vice President for Student Affairs, SUNY Buffalo State  
Council Member, New York State Council on the Arts
- 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. Michelle Watorek  
Director, Corporate Controller, Finance, HealthNow New York Inc.



### STAFF

- Mr. Tod A. Kniazuk – Executive Director  
Ms. Jennifer Swan – Associate Director  
Ms. Denise Ambrusko-Maida – Development Director  
Ms. Elizabeth Borngraber – Arts Access Program Coordinator  
Ms. Lauren Rojek – Program Coordinator  
Ms. Kristin Rose – Bookkeeper

ASI reached over 1,500 "Likes" on our Facebook page, approached 1,000 followers on our ASI Twitter, and saw close to 19,000 visits to the ASI website, which allowed us to communicate job opportunities, calls for work, grant deadlines, and serve as an online resource guide for other important information.



## 2014 Accomplishments

ASI PROVIDED

**FREE**

TRAININGS ON:

Data + Stories = Advocacy,  
Nonprofit Revitalization Act,  
Overview of Fundraising  
Types,  
Board Governance,  
New York State Council on  
the Arts funding and process  
overview with NYSCA  
Executive Director Lisa  
Robb,  
Taking your career as an  
artist to the next level,  
Using economic impact data  
for advocacy,  
Albright-Knox/Erie  
County/Buffalo Public Art  
Initiative,  
Rochester Fringe Festival  
opportunities, and  
Art collecting 101 and 102  
with echo Art Fair.





# 2014 Accomplishments



Erie Canal Harbor  
Development  
Corporation



Council on  
the Arts



Conseil des arts  
et des lettres

Québec



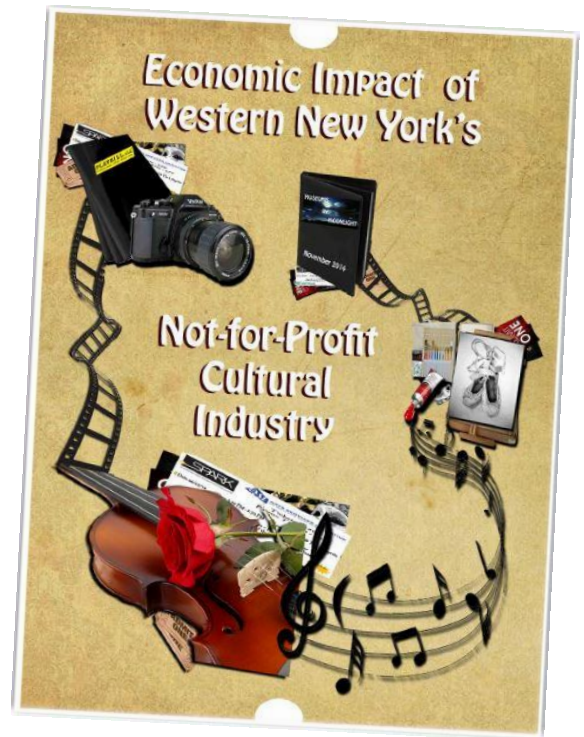
ASI completed its third year administering the **Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) Buffalo River Assisted Programming Grants**, conducted five **New York State Council on the Arts Regrant programs** in Erie and Niagara Counties, co-chaired the **New York State Path Through History Western Region Work Group**, and carried out an **artist in residence exchange between New York State and the Province of Quebec**, which was renewed for an additional three years.

## ASI ALSO...

...Released the **Economic Impact of Western New York's Not-for-Profit Cultural Industry Report**.

...Provided **One-on-One Cultural Data Project (CDP)** sessions to assist organizations in completing their CDP reports, which enabled them to apply for or remain in compliance with the Erie County cultural funding grants and/or NYSCA Decentralization grants.

...Administered **One-on-One** training sessions with individual organizations on topics such as board training and strategic planning.



CULTURAL DATA  
PROJECT

THE NEW YORK  
COMMUNITY TRUST



ASI began the process of transitioning Give for Greatness (G4G) to become a program of ASI.

G4G, through ASI's administration, gave out a total of

**15 grants**

to organizations with budgets ranging from \$8,000 to \$220,000 in Erie and Niagara Counties.

## 2014 Accomplishments



One of G4G's fundraisers, the Lawyers for the Arts Event 2015



Canalside Music and Dance Series



F-Bites Culinary Class



Canalside Ice Rinks Grand Opening 2014

## //// CANALSIDE

ASI became a subcontractor of Global Spectrum to work on **developing** and **ensuring cultural programming, community involvement,** and **diversity** at the sites at Canalside, and produced the event that opened the Ice @ Canalside.

# ADVOCACY

## 2014 Accomplishments

### BUFFALO

Working with the Mayor and Common Council, ASI helped secure a multi-year commitment for operating funding for cultural organizations. We worked with the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation to inform developers on the benefits of including non-profit culturals into their plans. ASI also teamed with the City and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery to apply for the multi-year Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge.

### ERIE COUNTY

ASI continued to take elected officials of all parties on site visits of cultural organizations, served on the county's cultural funding review board, and worked to preserve and expand operating grants. ASI also offered trainings and individual organization consultation on topics the county identified as in need of improvement by the culturals who apply for county funding.

### NIAGARA COUNTY

ASI supported the Cultural Alliance of Niagara as they determined their advocacy strategies moving forward.

### WESTERN NEW YORK

Through the Cultural Summits, ASI discussed issues on county, regional, and statewide levels where the Summits could combine future efforts. ASI urged the WNY Regional Economic Development Council to strengthen language about the cultural sector in their plan and add a cultural representative to their group.

### NEW YORK STATE

ASI served on the steering committee of NYS Arts with the main goal of encouraging Governor Cuomo to increase NYSCA cultural funding grants by \$5 million, which he included in his proposed budget.



# 2014 Accomplishments

ASI serviced regional networks including Greater Buffalo Cultural Alliance, Arts Partners for Learning, Cultural Alliance of Niagara, and WNY Cultural Summits.

In collaboration with the City of Buffalo, ASI developed the Smithsonian National Museum Day in WNY with 15 participating venues in Erie, Niagara, and Chautauqua Counties. Over 2,500 visitors attended, which significantly increased attendance at the participating venues.



## ARTS SERVICES INITIATIVE

represented the WNY cultural sector at the following:

*Americans for the Arts National Convention*

*One Region Forward Housing & Neighborhoods Works Group*

*New York State Council on the Arts State & Local Partnerships and DEC State Panels*

*CharitySTRONG Western New York Steering Committee*

*Americans for the Arts National Arts Advocacy Day*

*New York State Tourism Summit*

*Open Buffalo Arts Integration Committee*

*New York State Path Through History Day*

*WNY Grantmakers Association*



## SEASON TWO

*Over 400 Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients signed up for the Arts Access pass, which provides free tickets and transportation to cultural events.*

*In 2014, the Arts Access website ([www.arts-access.org](http://www.arts-access.org)) listed 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 that are available to all.*

### ASI re-launched the former arts awards as the **Spark Cultural Awards Party.**

**It is a mission driven fundraiser for ASI that honors those in the cultural sector and those who support it. In 2014 – its first year – the event sold out with 300+ attendees. The event integrated live art and the winners and finalists came from throughout WNY. ASI transformed the event from a sit down lunch to an interactive party and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.**

## 2014 Accomplishments







## 2014 Accomplishments

ASI teamed up with Block Club, producers of dining cards and beverage cards in Buffalo, to establish **Cultural Cards** for the sector for the second year.

2014-2015 decks offered discounts to area arts and cultural organizations.



### *The Big Easy in Buffalo*

*became a program of ASI beginning with the 7th Annual Mardi Gras Jam. Strong partnerships with Sportsmen's Tavern and Dick & Jenny's Restaurant kept costs down while being able to bring in New Orleans artists for public performances and connect them to local artists. A committee was formed to work on developing the series and integrating it into ASI's long-term mission.*



## Candidate Surveys

Year two of candidate surveys were conducted for those who ran for **New York State Governor, New York State Senate and Assembly**, as well as vacancies in the **City of Buffalo Common Council** and **Erie County Legislature**.

The surveys help identified candidates' views on cultural funding and policy, as well as the place of arts and culture in the community, economic development, and tourism.

Results were published in Artvoice and circulated throughout the cultural community prior to the Primary Election.



## Cultural Sector

A large circular diagram composed of two thick, light green arrows. The top arrow curves from the left towards the right, and the bottom arrow curves from the right towards the left, creating a continuous loop. The text 'Cultural Sector' is centered in the upper part of the loop, and a list of six categories is centered in the lower part.

Economic development  
Business  
Tourism  
Transportation  
Community  
Governments

Arts Services Initiative of Western New York  
would like to thank the following...