2016

ANNUAL REPORT

ARTS SERVICES INITIATIVE
OF WESTERN NEW YORK INC

PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING THE WESTERN NEW YORK CULTURAL SECTOR
Arts Services Initiative of Western New York (ASI) promotes the cultural sector’s vital role in economic development and the community through capacity building, collaboration, and advocacy in Erie, Niagara, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and Allegany Counties.

A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 2011, Arts Services Initiative of WNY was created with a mission to provide capacity building, collaboration, and advocacy services to cultural organizations and artists. We knew we would be the decentralization (DEC) grant site for Erie and Niagara Counties, and that in some way we’d offer professional development and other “arts council” type services. Five years later, ASI has manifested and evolved that mission to quickly become a key resource for groups of all sizes and artists in every phase of their careers; a leader in telling the story of the impact of the region’s cultural sector at a local, state, and national level; and an innovator of programs that increase access to the arts for the general public.

We’re incredibly proud of our work over the past five years and especially in 2016, and we hope that after reading some of our highlights in the following pages you will too.

2016 ASI STAFF

Mr. Tod A. Kniazuk, Executive Director
Ms. Jennifer Swan, Associate Director
Ms. Natalie Brown, Associate
Mrs. Parrish Gibbons Herzog, Associate
Ms. Ally Spongri, Associate
Ms. Julie Ricchiazi, Bookkeeper
Ms. Stephanie Cole Adams, Pro Bono Legal Counsel

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Celebrating five years!

ASI celebrated its five year anniversary by bringing Americans for the Arts (AFTA) President & CEO Bob Lynch (pictured at right) to WNY for an event in August entitled “Transforming America’s Communities Through the Arts”. Lynch discussed the arts’ impact on the economy, healthcare, veterans services, tourism, community building, education and more to over 75 local leaders, artists and cultural organizations. Since its creation in August 2011, ASI has excelled in the areas of capacity building, advocacy, and collaboration for cultural organizations and artists, as well as its work to increase access to the arts for the general public.
Through ASI’s grant giving programs Give for Greatness, Decentralization (DEC), and Fendrick Fund over $200,000 was allocated towards more than 100 small arts and cultural organizations and artists in 2016.

2016 Grantees

710 Main Theatre
African American Center for Cultural Development
Amor & Heritage
Ani Hoover
Annette Daniels Taylor
Artpark & Company
Association for a Buffalo Presidential Center
Belinda McGuire
Bethany Ides
Blasdell Recreation Department
Blues Society of Western New York
Brazen-Faced Varlets
Buffalo Game Space
Buffalo Gay Men’s Chorus
Buffalo Infringement Festival
Buffalo Jazz Collective
Buffalo Music Hall of Fame
Buffalo Niagara Choruses
Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy/ Friends of the Japanese Garden
Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus
Buffalo Religious Arts Center
Buffalo Silver Band
Buffalo String Works
Carnegie Art Center
Cattaraugus County Arts Council
Chuck Tingley
Chestnut Ridge Conservancy
Claire Ellen Schneider
Cuba Circulating Library
Dance Days of Buffalo
Dave Ruch
Dreamland Arts
El Museo Francisco Oller y Diego Rivera
Fotini Galanes Renzoni
Fountain Arts Center
Friends of the Burchfield Nature and Art Center
Friends of Vienna
German American Musicians Association
Group Ministries
Harmonia Chamber Singers
Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York
Holland Community Choir
Impact Artists Gallery
Joy Scime
Juneteenth Festival
Kyle Marler
Lancaster Opera House
Lewiston Council on the Arts
Lock City Glee Club
Lockport Chorale
Matthew LaChiusa
Michelle Marcotte
Moving Miracles
Neto Hatinakwe Onkwehowe
Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society
Niagara Falls Little Theatre / The Niagara Regional Theatre Guild
North Shore Arts Alliance
Northwest Buffalo Community Center
O’Connell & Company Productions
Old First Ward Community Association
Olean Theatre Workshop
Opportunities Unlimited of Niagara
Orchard Park Chorale
PDdance (National Parkinson Foundation WNY)
People Inc.
Polish Arts Club of Buffalo
Red Blazer Men’s Chorus
Red Thread Theatre
Sanborn Area Historical Society
Southern Tier Symphony, Inc.
Springville Youth Inc.
Starlight Studio and Art Gallery
Subversive Theatre Collective
Sugar City
The Belle Center
The Foundry
Tina Dillman
Town of Boston
Town of Brant
Town of Elma
United Cerebral Palsy Association of Niagara County (EMPOWER)
University District Community Development Association
West Buffalo Charter School
Western Door Playhouse
Wooden Cities
University District Community Development Association in collaboration with Nicholas Conrad Miller for “Bailey Fights Blight” Mural Program. This program was the DEC Program of the Year at 4th Annual Spark Awards.

**Bailey Fights Blight** is a community-based project that seeks to board up and secure blighted and vacant storefronts along Bailey Avenue, while incorporating public art as a way to beautify the neighborhood, re-imagine vacant or underutilized properties and help redevelop the commercial corridor. As Bailey Fights Blight has evolved into a more comprehensive place making initiative, volunteers, residents, and businesses have been engaged in regular cleanups, painting days, and guerilla gardening to help transform Bailey Avenue into a truly great place.

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**Testimonials**

“The work I did in our Buffalo Community helped me to secure two paying residencies in other states (PA and MD). It was quite a productive year!”

- Ani Hoover, DEC Grantee for South Park High School visits, Professional Development with Art Teachers and Family Art Day with the Buffalo Public Schools.

“This grant will help us with acquisitions for the Center, but mostly it will enable us to put on more of the wonderful programs we need to do in order to tell the history of local and global African American and local history and to showcase the wealth of talent we have in our area and beyond. This will bring more people into our Center to share our culture.”

- African American Center for Cultural Development, Olean NY, Give for Greatness Grantee
Advocating for the Cultural Sector

At ASI, advocacy for the cultural sector is an important part of what we do in service of the area’s 300-plus not for profit cultural organizations, their thousands of employees, and the hundreds of thousands who invest in the cultural sector through their attendance, service, and donations.

Carl Calabrese, of Masiello, Martucci, Calabrese and Associates, speaks at ASI and GBCA’s Advocacy at a State Level workshop to discuss the New York State budget process and how to interact with NYS to represent their interests.
Advocacy Spotlight

ASI served as New York State Captain at the 29th Annual Arts Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill.

ASI staff and advocates from across NYS met with over 20 Congressional leaders and both Senate offices to discuss arts-related policy and appropriations issues, including National Endowment for the Arts, Assistance for Arts Education program within the U.S. Department of Education and charitable giving tax legislation.

Partners in Advocacy

ASI works closely with regional networks fostering and promoting advocacy efforts for the arts and cultural organizations in Western New York including,

Greater Buffalo Cultural Alliance,
Cultural Alliance of Niagara,
Arts Partners for Learning,
the Five County Cultural Summit and
National State Arts Action Network.
Increasing opportunities through Professional Development

ASI provided over 25 professional development workshops and trainings in 2016 ranging in topics from marketing, website development, event accessibility and workplace safety. All professional development sessions are free and open to the public.

Professional Development Spotlight

ASI hosted the first Artist as Entrepreneur Boot Camp in WNY with New York Foundation of the Arts which provided 44 artists with five days of entrepreneurship training in order to further their careers.

“Our overall experience was SO awesome for me, meeting so many great people, learning so much and being so inspired all at once was really motivating to me. It helped me to clarify my short and long term goals and to craft a realistic plan of attack for my business.”

- Janna Willoughby-Lohr, Artist

“This was a unique experience for me and one that I found most valuable. Artists are a unique breed and often work alone. The seminar not only addressed the questions and concerns I had, but let me know that I wasn’t alone in needing this kind of information”.

- Ms. Ilona Middleton, Artist

Did you know? ASI provides one-on-one support to artists and organizations year-round at no charge. More information can be found online at www.asiwny.org.
Public programming expands and grows

Arts Access, a program providing low income residents free access to the arts with the Arts Access pass, and promoting already existing discounts offered by area organizations, increased membership by 33% in 2016. The increase is due to an expansion of outreach at WNY living facilities, colleges, health and wellness fairs, veterans events and public schools.

The Big Easy in Buffalo celebrates 10 years! The Big Easy in Buffalo, a program of ASI, brings the best New Orleans and Louisiana bands to Buffalo for live performances and celebrates all things NOLA. Local professional and student musicians receive mentoring and education from these world touring musicians.

Public Programming Spotlight

ASI launched Make Music Day WNY, a free worldwide celebration of music on June 21st, in Buffalo and Niagara Falls!

Make Music Day follows the belief that the arts are for everyone by hosting a free day long festival where everyone can participate, no matter their skill level, age or location. Make Music Day allows ASI to strengthen existing partnerships in the WNY community and pushes ASI to create new partnerships with music based organizations and individual musicians. This program had an audience of approximately 5,000 people in 2016.
2016: A year in pictures

Buffalo Brass Machine plays at Cultural Connections at Canalside

Rick Smith performs at Sportsmens Tavern for ASI fundraiser

Carl Klingenschmitt & Sue Fay Allen receive Unsung Hero Award at 3rd Annual Spark Awards

ASI serves on the charitySTRONG’s WNY advisory board

The public participates in Make Music Day’s Harmonica Play Along at Niagara Falls State Park

Artist of the Year Finalists Zuri Elise Appleby, Chuck Tingley & Adam Zygis at 3rd Annual Spark Awards

Attendees sign in at the Accessible Events Training, a part of the ASI Professional Development Series

Tina Satter, Quebec Artist Residency grantee

A group from the Belle Center show off their work, a 2016 DEC grantee

A group from Opportunities Unlimited, a 2016 DEC grantee

Winners from a variety of categories gather at the Battle of the Corporate Bands, a fundraiser for Give for Greatness and Music Is Art

ASI staff at the 3rd Annual Spark Awards
2016 Donors and Funders

Innovators ($50,000+)

Premier Partners ($20,000+)

Star Partners ($10,000+)

Supporting Partners ($5,000+)

Community Partners ($1,000+)

Patrons ($500+)

Friends of ASI ($1+)


Community Partners ($1,000+)

Premier Partners ($20,000+)

Star Partners ($10,000+)

Supporting Partners ($5,000+)

Community Partners ($1,000+)

Patrons ($500+)

Friends of ASI ($1+)

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Photo credit: Ally Spongri, Nancy J. Parisi, Paula Court, Jackie Shi, Natalie Brown & Americans for the Arts