



# ARTS SERVICES INC.

WHERE THE ARTS MEET BUSINESS



## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Promoting the Arts and Cultural Sector of WNY

ASI provides the tools and resources needed for a successful career in the arts through professional development, advocacy, and access.

[www.asiwny.org](http://www.asiwny.org)

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## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Jen Swan-Kilpatrick*

2020 – the year that challenged us, changed us, and brought us closer together even when we were so far apart.

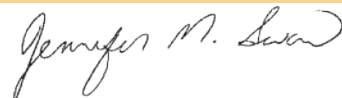
Resiliency - Dedication - PIVOT - Virtual - Community

Just some of the words we now correlate with the year, especially within the WNY arts field as it met unprecedented obstacles during the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020 the entire arts and cultural sector shut down completely. By summer of 2020 some artists and organizations adapted to provide online and virtual programs and services. Others remained completely dark, with no alternate options. It was a journey none of us could have ever predicted, however one that taught us so much about who and what we were, and who and what we could aspire to become against all odds.

What I am most proud of is realizing in our 9th year of operation (2020), we became the ultimate version of ASI to fully support the arts sector. Everything ASI has worked toward to support and assist artists and all organizations, was exacerbated in 2020. We **dedicated** the entire year to walking artists and organizations through a maze of confusion and opportunity. We **DOUBLED** the amount of funding we distribute to the field with the creation of a new COVID Emergency Fund, we created and added new support groups related to COVID issues to ensure our sector's **resiliency**, **pivoted** our programs to **virtual** including both professional development workshops and our annual Spark Awards, and provided countless other spaces and programs to make it “to the other side” of the effects of the pandemic and ensure the arts will continue to be there as a reliable **community** resource.

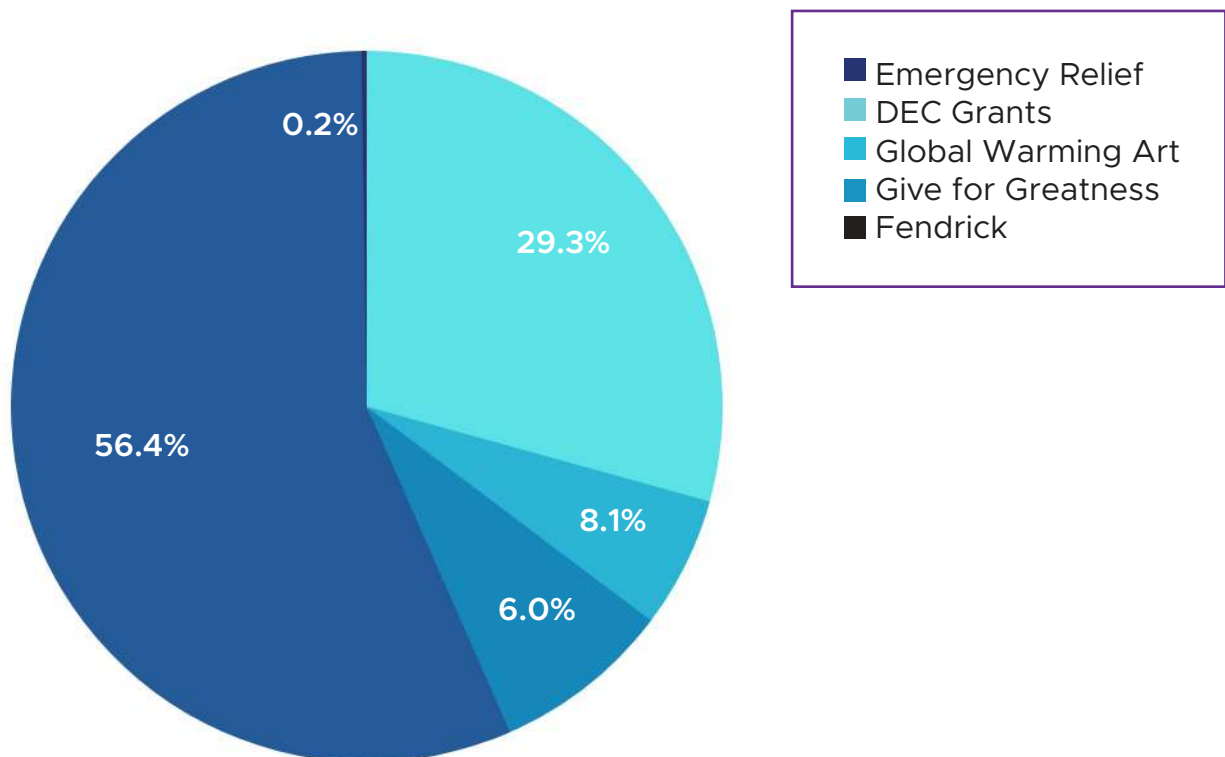
ASI and the WNY arts field will never be the same after this year. But I hope you remember this time and take the lessons you have learned and use them to excel into greatness and support everyone in the community. We know we have and hope you will do the same.

**Be kind. Be safe. And here's to a healthy, hopeful 2021. #WeAreWNYArts and we have reopened (and continue to reopen) together...**



# 2020: A YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2020, ASI distributed **\$418,140** in funding to individual artists and arts and cultural organizations of Western New York.



## Amount by Grant Type:

**\$235,640** in WNY Arts Emergency Relief Funds

**\$122,500** in NYSCA DEC Grants

**\$34,000** through the Global Warming Art Project

**\$25,000** through Give for Greatness

**\$1,000** through the Fendrick Theatre Fund

# ASI SOCIAL MEDIA SNAPSHOT



## FACEBOOK

4,480 Followers



## TWITTER

1,662 Followers



## INSTAGRAM

1,859 Followers



## LINKED IN

255 Followers

## THROUGH THE PANDEMIC



## FACEBOOK

↑ 576 Followers



## INSTAGRAM

↑ 501 Followers

## WNY Arts in the Time of Coronavirus

A Facebook group for arts administrators to share resources, questions, challenges, and more with regard to the impact of COVID-19 on our region's arts sector.

# 197 Members

FOLLOW US:

@asiwny

Facebook.com/asiwny

Youtube.com/user/ASlwny

LinkedIn.com/company/asiwny

## 2020 SPARK HONOREES

**JoAnn Falletta**

Artist of the Year

**Chris J. Handley**

Artist of the Year Finalist

**Edreys Wajed**

Artist of the Year Finalist

**1891 Fredonia Opera House**

Arts Organization of the Year

**O'Connell & Company**

Arts Organization of the Year Finalist

**Unique Theatre Company**

Arts Organization of the Year Finalist

**The Children's Guild Foundation  
Autism Spectrum Disorder Center at  
Oishei Children's Hospital**

Arts Integration

**Lewiston Council on the Arts'  
Iroquois Market**

DEC Program of the Year

**Vincent O'Neill,**

*Irish Classical Theatre Co.*  
Lifetime Achievement

**West Falls Center for the Arts**

Rising Star

**Joel Feroletto,**

*City of Buffalo Councilmember*  
Supporter of the Cultural Sector

**Michele Agosto,**

*Buffalo Public Schools*  
Trailblazer of the Arts

**Beth Pedersen,**

*Buffalo Society of Artists*  
Unsung Hero



Photo: Tessa Pszonak

## A VIRTUAL *Spark Awards*

The Spark Awards, presented by M&T Bank honor individuals and arts and cultural organizations for their outstanding contributions to the WNY community. We celebrated the 2020 Spark Awards on Monday, November 16.

In an effort to keep everyone safe and to comply with Erie County's guidelines for in-person gatherings, we streamed the 7th Annual Spark Awards through our YouTube page, making it free and accessible to everyone.

You can view the 2020 Spark Awards at: <https://tinyurl.com/3frp8jfp>



Photo: Tessa Pszonak

# Arts Access



*Arts Services Inc. envisions a region where anyone can engage with the arts.*

**1497** WNY residents served  
in 2020

**48** arts and cultural program  
partners in 2020

Arts Access is a program designed to break the economic barriers of inaccessibility to the WNY region's arts and cultural sector. We offer increased opportunities for card members to engage and participate in their arts community.

By partnering with local theaters, galleries, and other organizations, we are able to provide free or reduced-cost admission to low-income Western New York residents and their families. In addition, we also provide a complimentary transportation service to Erie and Niagara county residents to attend a program or event.

*Eligible members must currently receive income-based public assistance, such as SNAP, TANF, etc.*

In a year where the majority of in-person arts and cultural programs were cancelled, ASI is especially grateful to all organizations who continued to serve our Arts Access passholders.



# WNY ARTS EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND

**\$235,640** Awarded to **154** Artists & Arts & Cultural Organizations

The shutdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted WNY's creative industry. With the cancellation of performances, workshops, gigs, and more, artists and arts and cultural organizations who rely on event-based income lost revenue that is essential to continue their operations.

With support from Fund for the Arts, ASI created the WNY Arts Emergency Relief Fund to ensure that WNY's rich and diverse arts sector withstood this crisis.

“The anchors you offer may very well prevent many ships from capsizing in this storm. Your investment in our future and the future of the arts in WNY is needed now more than ever, and it is never taken for granted.”

- Emily Yancey;  
Theatre Artist & Grant Recipient



Stitch Buffalo Testimonial

The arts are a source of healing for communities; they bring us together and allow us to share our experiences and stories in unique and powerful ways. This fund was created so that we would still be able to celebrate the incredible work by our local artists and arts and cultural organizations when we reopen together.

**Thank you to Fund for the Arts and all of the individual donors who contributed to the WNY Arts Emergency Relief Fund!**

# REOPENING TOGETHER

A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES FOR WNY'S  
ARTS & CULTURAL COMMUNITY

ASI began hosting the “Reopening Together” PD series to engage and support local arts administrators as we navigated the reopening process following the shutdown. Since live performances and in-person events were either cancelled or postponed throughout the year, administrators were often left with questions but no answers.

Over 200 people from various arts and cultural organizations from across WNY participated in the Reopening Together sessions. Some of the topics included Conflict Resolution, Arts vs. Covid-19, and Moving Forward Together. Participants were able to share their concerns and brainstorm together with other organizations to plan and process ideas for the arts world post-covid. These sessions also allowed different administrators to express the type of support that they still needed from the field in order to successfully navigate this process.

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## COFFEE CHATS

“Coffee Chats” was implemented to provide an outlet for anyone who worked in the arts to virtually share thoughts, concerns, plans, etc. and support one another at the start of the shutdown. These virtual meetings were intended to boost morale and provide emotional support in a time when the industry was not given much of it.

Most patrons do not realize the additional costs and work entailed with producing virtual events, especially for organizations that did not offer those options prior. Having these meetings gave attendees the opportunity to share ideas, vent, and request advice from others facing similar struggles.



Arts Services presents:

# CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS EXCHANGE 2020



Creative Professionals Exchange (CPX) is a two-day, professional development mini-conference for arts administrators, cultural leaders, community activists, and artists of all disciplines. This year, the COVID-19 health crisis severely impacted the industry and revealed many of the systemic issues that our community faces, including lack of access and inclusion in the arts sector.

The theme of the 2020 CPX was **“Reimagining the Creative Industry”**. It focused on how the arts can remain sustainable during the pandemic by supporting communities that were devastated by the COVID-19 crisis, and by ensuring that all art is accessible to and representative of the entire community we live in. The virtual conference took place on Nov. 6 & 7, 2020.

## PRESENTATIONS & PRESENTERS:

Furthering Equitable Representation in the Arts  
How to Stay Connected and Advocate for Your Work  
Inclusive Programming for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities  
Intersectional Environmentalism, Art as Activism, and Fast Fashion  
Panel Discussion: Reimagining Creativity in Response to Crisis  
Theatre-Based Body Language Training for Police Officers

Emerging Arts Professionals Panel  
Adapting Programming for Individuals of All Abilities  
Brainstorming as a Team Using Improv  
Building a Sustainable Infrastructure  
Creative Placemaking for Rural and Prison Communities  
Creating Access in Arts Education Through Collaborations  
Using Animation to Support Veterans and Other Trauma Survivors  
Yoga and Mindfulness

We intend to offer a hybrid model for CPX for 2021 that will include in-person programming as well as virtual accessibility.



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