

Executive Director's Report

Prepared for Sept 2019 Board meeting

Personnel Update: After nearly 7 years as our facilities specialists Mike Garcia resigned his position on August 9th. While we are searching for his replacement, the whole team has pitched in for our annual building overhaul. Led by new Finance and Facilities Manager, Sarah Dennis, the process was executed with a dedication and thoroughness clearly visible throughout the building. If you run across Sarah, please thank her for the wonderful job she did to marshal the forces all the while keeping up with the complexities of year end finances.

As fall is upon us, we have added a new night and weekend coordinator to the team. Celia (pronounced "Sell – E – Uh") Jailor started training with Marilyn Foehrenbach (Registrar) and Sidney Buckingham (N/W coordinator) last week to get up to speed in time for fall classes to start.

Finally, we have filled our Studio Manager position with recent PAFA grad Zack Simonson. Zack joined us just in time for the last (and busiest) three weeks of summer camp and has been learning the ropes of his new role during the transition to fall classes.

I am excited to have all these great folks on board and ready to start the new year. BTW, we all lunch together each day at 1pm, so if you want to get to know us better, grab your lunch and head over to the Center at 1pm M-F, we'd love to have any of you join us. There's sure to be a lively conversation with many laughs and great discussion of current events and happenings at the Center!

Strategic Planning Update: After a full discussion, we have finalized the unifying strategic direction statement (please remember this is not a mission statement): "Main Line Art Center brings people together, building individual creativity and strengthening community through visual arts education."

Since our last board meeting, the Strategic Planning Committee met on July 30, for a preliminary review and prioritization of the strategic priorities. After that meeting, staff met with Joe Kluger on August 29 to further refine those strategic priorities and to develop a student/member survey to include the community and gauge their thoughts about the priorities the Center should focus on. Those surveys will go out once Joe returns from Africa (in the third week of Septmeber) so that he can get the data and compile it.

Staff will then work with Joe in October, to finalize strategic priorities and develop corresponding goals, objectives (metrics), action plans and financial projections (i.e. a draft strategic plan). The Strategic Planning Committee will meet at the end of October to review the draft strategic plan, before it is presented to the Board for review and approval on November 12.

Communications Update: *Playing with Fire: The Life & Work of Etta Winograd*, has already received some great coverage including a front page feature in *City Suburban News*, a feature article in the *Jewish Exponent*, an editorial ad in the September issue of *Main Line Today*, and was featured online on *Montco Today* and *Main Line Neighbors*.

New this fall, we've started advertising on WHYY radio and our ads have been running (promoting PWF) for a few weeks now in several spots including prime spots during morning and evening commutes. I've heard it several times and I hope each of you have as well. (kudos to Lisa for making this happen!)

Our mobile friendly registration site is now live! We worked with Canvas to restyle the class registration pages so they are more responsive and end-user friendly for folks interested in registering for classes from their mobile devices.

We continue to build our social media presence and Julia, our Drexel co-op student, has done an excellent job with the fall class campaigns, featuring new classes each week on Facebook and Instagram. And, according to Google Analytics, our website had 22% more users in August than in the previous months, and 20% more sessions (a group of interactions one user takes on our website). This can be attributed to fall registration, but also contributing could be our radio ads, press for the exhibition, direct mail, and increased social media posts. Fall tuition income is already over \$120,000, a new record for deferred revenue from fall tuition!

Education Update: Summer camp and teen studios have wrapped up. We were able to see first-hand the results of a new more intensive training program for our teen counsellors. While we had better more responsible candidates this year there are still some concerns we have in working with such a large volume of campers, not just orderly conduct and safety issues, but also camper experience, our ability/capacity to react to situations on the fly and the comprehensive training that is necessary to get teen volunteer TAAs more equipped to handle and guide these campers. We are working with Shipley's character education and arts programs to create a mutually beneficial TAA program that will help us service camp and help their students meet Shipley's requirements for service hours. Ariel and I are discussing creative strategies for a more robust training program and better camp oversight.

- Teen studios have trended up in enrollment the past two years, this year bringing in a record 165 registrations versus last year's 119 registrations.
- Camp registration for ages 5-12 was slightly down with 932 registrations versus last year's 995 registrations.

Adult summer classes both onsite and offsite at Haverford have continued to trend downward, and we are rethinking the way we offer summer adult session, perhaps splitting it into 4 week sessions, or offering open studio credit in exchange for class hours missed to accommodate our client's summer travel schedules.

However, overall tuition income exceeded our annual goal by \$40,000 and was up over last year by \$44,000.

Fall 2019 registration is open and we are already ahead of last year's enrollment to date by 59 registrations and have brought in \$121,000 of a budget goal of \$158,429. This represents an increase of \$5000 over last year at this time. The schedule features a lot of new teaching artists (including our own David Winograd) and topics that are slightly outside of our normal media including floral design, felting, paper cutting, mobiles, and wire weaving.

Community partners are thriving and we are in discussions with The Village, Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, and Elwyn to increase the work we are doing with them as a result of the success of our prior engagement. Current community program partners include:

- St Johns Children's school (fee for service, increasing to a school year program)
- The Village, (split fee for service and contributed funds, investigating a public art project)
- Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (contributed income)
- Overbrook School for the Blind (split fee for service and contributed income)
- Catharine School, (contributed income)
- Elwyn (fee for service, increasing to year round workshops)
- Artz Philly (contributed income)
- Carelink (fee for service, increasing to year round workshops)

In addition to these partners, we are working with Artz Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania Hospital's Memory Care Center to create a proof of concept research partnership. This partnership will investigate the potential positive health effect of arts programming on patients living with Dementia and Alzheimers. This idea has been in our

minds for the last year, as we worked to identify program partners and funding. A proposal is near completion that will give us a solid basis for applying to some of the bigger foundations in Philadelphia. In addition a contribution we received this year with the help of Mort Branzburg, will provide \$25,000 of support for this project. We are excited to get this off the ground as the results may provide the basis for funding deeper engagement with this underserved population.

One less than positive change, but a testament to how effective our community programs are in moving the needle, is that Yeshiva Lab School, to whom we have provided art programming for three years and had budgeted to continue a \$20,000 program with this year, informed us in early August they had decided to further increase their arts programming to such an extent that it made more sense for them to hire a fulltime art instructor and thus would no longer be contracting with us.

Finally, we have been in talks with Uncommon Individual Foundation, whose mentoring and technology learning programs serve more than 50 local and regional schools about becoming their arts delivery partner. This would involve the Center providing arts programming to underserved elementary and middle school students already partnering with UIF, giving us the ability to exponentially increase our service to Philadelphia and other local schools with underserved populations.

Development Update: Development has been working hard to round out the fiscal year and identify new opportunities and funding sources for the upcoming year. Our year-end campaign was not as successful as last year's, raising \$55,000 less. \$37,000 of that difference was from individual givers. And while we will end the 2019 fiscal year with a near balanced budget, this will obviously need to be a focus of our efforts in the coming year.

We got a lot of positive feedback about our annual appeal, but that feedback was not matched with contributions. So we will be looking at more effective ways to cultivate and reach donors in the coming weeks and months ahead, to create unique donor experiences and cultivation events to build our donor base.

Exhibition Update: Paige and I spent August focused on preparing for Playing with Fire. The show is on view through October 20 with an opening reception Saturday, September 14th from 6-9pm. We are also working with Ariel and Zack to put together school and community group tours during the run of the exhibition. We are holding workshop inspired by Etta's technique on September 21st.

The 16th Betsy Meyer Memorial Exhibition will take place from November 9 – December 15 this year, to accommodate the changing schedule of the Meyer family. Jurying took place in August and winners were notified last week. This year's winners are: Megan Biddle, a glass artist from Philadelphia, Jedediah Morfit, a sculptor from Collingswood NJ, and McKinley Wallace, a painter from Baltimore. We are thrilled with the diversity in medium and content this show provides.

Professional Artist Membership has been redesigned to yield a smaller, more accomplished and exclusive cohort for which we are designing more intimate experiences and opportunities for deeper connections among these peers. Jurors for program entry are: Jeff Schaller, muralist, painter and director of County Studio Tours, Sharon Ewing, Director/Owner of Gross McCleaf Gallery, and Bob Abiel, owner of Moderne Gallery. We working to build a more diverse Artistic Advisory Board, with a view to creating a more involved group of Center advocates.

Members Exhibition application is open through the end of October.

Finance and Facilities Update: The drainage project is finished and I am happier than you can imagine to report that for the last month, despite some very heavy rainstorms, we have had no flooding in the building. The raku pit is rebuilt and

the final step will be to identify a cement company to fill the sinkhole under the HVAC pad and replace the concrete removed to dig the ditches and install the new 6" drains.

The building is looking great (see above) and the team has been working hard to make repairs, thoroughly clean, resurface floors and repaint the building to create a safe and welcoming environment for new and returning students. We made some electrical repairs and as will all repairs to lighting going forward we are moving the building toward 100% LED lighting which should continue to help our bottom line utility costs.

Books have been put into the library. We are looking for help to organize the library so that we can have a grand opening/ribbon cutting ceremony sometime this fall. However, the library will be open and ready for use by students and visitors when our first fall classes begin.

Our neighbors, and now annual corporate support partners, Brandywine Living at Haverford Estates, have repaved the road leading to our parking lot. The surface sealing will be completed by mid-September and we have scheduled it so that it will not interrupt the flow of parking to the Center.

One capital project that is still outstanding is repairs to the porch and shutters on the front of the building. Once the audit process is over, we will be looking to identify a contractor to undertake this restoration work.

On the finance side, I am pleased to report that it looks like we will end fiscal year 2019 with a very small operating deficit of approximately \$7000. This is a significant improvement over the past several years and keeps us on track to our goal of balanced budget finances. Unfortunately, investment losses in the month of August (cir. \$25,000), means that the center will have an overall accrual basis loss of about \$40,000. However, we will once again be cash positive for the year and are continuing to cover a good portion of our depreciation costs which continues to build the funds in our investment accounts.