

Philadelphia Foundation Exhibition Award Monies Press Release

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Chester County Art Association | 100 North Bradford Avenue | 610.696.5600

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE June 6, 2016

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The Chester County Art Association **Receives \$1861.91 grant** to award exhibiting artists for their excellence in art.

The Chester County Art Association, at 100 North Bradford Avenue, West Chester, PA, has received a \$1861.91 grant from the **Chester County Art Association Awards Fund** of the Philadelphia Foundation to support its **Exhibition Awards Program**. Announcement of the grant was made by Pedro A. Ramos, President and CEO of the foundation.

Angela Deal Meanix, of the Chester County Art Association, said the funds would be for excellence awards and other general program support. "With these funds, we can encourage our artists by recognizing excellence in their work and awarding them. It feels good to be able to offer incentives such as this as we have hundreds of new and seasoned artists alike showing in our galleries 9 months of the year. Without artists, there is no art center", said Meanix.

The Chester County Art Association was started in 1931 by N.C. Wyeth and Christian Brinton. Originally, a group of artists coming together to sketch and organize exhibitions, they quickly began to connect the local community (not just professional artists) to art by way of exhibitions and art instruction. Today, the organization continues to embrace the mission of inspiring the community through art and has incorporated art outreach programs by partnering with offsite exhibiting locations and community centers.

About The Philadelphia Foundation

One of America's oldest community foundations (founded in 1918), The Philadelphia Foundation (TPF) is committed to improving the quality of life in the Pennsylvania counties of Greater Philadelphia (Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia). A foundation and a public charity, TPF connects philanthropic resources to societal needs. TPF manages assets of approximately \$370 million and more than 900 charitable funds established by its fund holders. It distributes about \$25 million annually to nearly 1,000 nonprofits in service to community needs. To learn more, visit www.philafound.org.

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3/8/2016

Huston Gallery Renovation Narrative

Project: Huston Gallery

Attn: Karen Delaney

Proposal

- 1.) Ceiling demolition and protections: \$3900
- 2.) Framing, insulation, demo above hallway wall side, drywall and finishing, trimming of clerestory windows: \$13,600
- 3.) Painting: \$5500
- 4.) Floor refinishing: \$4800

Allowances:

Exclusions:

Thank you for this consideration

Rick Ameisen

The Chester County Art Association was founded in 1931 by Dr. Christian Brinton, N.C. Wyeth and other local artists and area residents. CCAA can proudly proclaim to have given Horace Pippin, a self-taught West Chester artist, his first solo exhibition. Over the years, generous donations from Albert M. Davis, Mary E. Page Allinson, and Stewart Huston have created the campus, studios, and galleries that exist today. The Huston Gallery, built in 1974 with funds from a bequest by Stewart Huston, has seen many exhibitions over the last forty years. The gallery space is used for CCAA's entire exhibition schedule which runs from September through May. In the summer months it doubles as classroom space for children's art classes.

Last year we began and completed the renovation of our Allinson Gallery, for which we received partial funding from the Longwood Foundation to replace the lighting. We now intend to update the Huston Gallery with improvements that will better showcase the masterful artwork we exhibit.

CCAA has already purchased state-of-the-art LED lighting for the gallery. Before we install the lighting, we would like to improve other aspects of the space. The gallery will better serve the artists and our patrons if its design were brought to the level of both its name and the art exhibited. In Fall 2016 and Winter 2017 we have several exciting Huston Gallery shows scheduled, including a juried all-media group show, a group photography show, and a number of solo shows featuring remarkable Chester County artists. Ultimately, we want to the space to reflect the quality of the work within.

In order to match that of the newly renovated Allinson Gallery, we want to remove the drop ceiling, insulate and frame the upper walls, create and trim the clerestory windows, paint the newly exposed upper space, and refinish the existing oak floors and baseboards. After these changes, electricians will install the LED lighting. The Chester County Art Association requests \$5000 to support a portion of the Huston Gallery renovation. These changes will positively impact the manner in which we bring the visual arts to Chester County.

PA Council on the Arts- Grant Narrative 2015

Mission

The mission of the Chester County Art Association is to be a source of inspiration, creativity, and community by connecting artists, students, patrons and the wider community to and through art.

Quality and Quantity

The Chester County Art Association is a vibrant and vital place for art in the community. We provide enriching visual art experiences for the practicing artists, developing student artists, community members seeking fulfilling experiences in the arts and patrons searching for quality local art to view and purchase. Our three full time staff members proudly bring art to the public despite our limited resources and staffing. We are constantly evaluating our own performance, prioritizing our activities and working to fulfill our Mission and Strategic Plan, which was created in 2013 to guide us from 2014-2017. We intend to run a tight ship and make the most of our resources.

In 2015 we will offer 45 unique exhibition opportunities to showcase over 700 individual artists. Our programs will provide 2000 unique classroom experiences at our West Chester, Exton, Kennett and West Grove facilities. The combined creative efforts of our affiliated artists, artist-teachers, staff and volunteers will touch more than 23,000 people in our Chester County community.

Evaluation

EXHIBITIONS: Since our organization's onset with N.C. Wyeth in 1931, the Chester County Art Association has promoted local practicing artists. In 2015, eight of the 45 unique exhibition opportunities that will be provided for artists in the region are in our large gallery, and six are solo or duo shows in our small gallery. The remaining 31 exhibitions, 12 of which were initiated in 2014, will be staged in partnering businesses and organizations throughout Chester County. CCAA's Executive Director and loyal volunteers, will hang thousands of artworks for public display and appreciation throughout the community. Reaching out beyond our gallery walls supports our Mission to bring art to a Chester County, and it has been identified in our Strategic Plan as necessary to our growth as a public enterprise and value as a cultural resource.

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Staging these shows is a commitment and a pleasure, but we incur considerable costs.

To entice artists and recognize them for their talents, we offer three \$75 Excellence Awards at each of our eight large gallery group-shows. We create and mail beautiful promotional postcards featuring solo artists exhibiting in both our small gallery and our Exton Square Studio Gallery. These expenses plus opening reception costs, gallery maintenance expenses and allocated staff time are paid through our operating budget. Exhibitions are essential to who we are and what we offer to the public.

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Our exhibitions reach the public because they are accessible and because we use effective marketing and promotions tools. In 2014 we launched a new and improved web site, chestercountyarts.org. This site has received repeated compliments for its aesthetics and wealth of information. We send out a weekly Wednesday e-blast which keeps our 6000 strong e-community informed about the many art opportunities we offer. Our e-blast is engaging and efficient without overloading our audience and is replete with striking images and positive messages that reflect our core values.

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CLASSES: CCAA creates and distributes 3000 informative 25 page catalogs tri-annually to showcase the exciting array of classes available in our main center. Our community may select from 360 different offerings with topics which ranging from still life painting and perspective drawing to computer animation and Zentangle. CCAA offers three sessions of classes, Winter, Spring and Fall, and supports a robust Summer Art Camp that serves 700 students over ten weeks of classes. The F&S report reveals the important role our summer camp plays as part of our annual revenue. In 2014 CCAA began offering our regular fee-supported classes at two off-site facilities, one in Kennett Square and one in east West Chester.

AUDIENCE

CCAA's audience is eclectic including professionals, laborers, males, females, children, adults, seniors and everything in between. We attract participants from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We strive to make our classes, events and open gallery shows accessible, and actively engage all of our students and visitors. Spontaneous conversations about art are the norm at CCAA.

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Membership: Our membership is composed primarily of artists but also includes patrons, art enthusiasts, and those that like to maintain a connection to the visual arts. Of our artist-members range from professionals with impressive backgrounds and show records to emerging young artists and creative dabblers who turn to us for a new experience. We support this diverse group of artists and their varied aspirations by offering outlets at different levels; juror selected exhibitions, members (non-juried) exhibitions, and a range of classes geared to different skill and experience levels.

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Customers: Our students come to us for a many reasons. Some like the opportunity to repeat a class with the same teacher which enables them to progress in a familiar environment. Others like the variety of topics and enjoy sampling different mediums and interacting with new teachers. Offering a rich menu of topics and mediums keeps our class fresh and compelling but it can be challenging to meet enrollment goals when we find ourselves too far out in front of our customers. In 2015 we will take advantage of our on-line marketing and entice students to unfamiliar arenas using images, class descriptions, and teacher commentaries. With additional funding, we would increase mail-able promotions geared toward a targeted audience highlighting new and uncommon classes. We have adult students enrolled in our regular fee-supported classes who cannot afford tuition. We offer sliding-scale need based scholarships to cover partial to full tuition.

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Patrons: Chester County celebrates art and the rich artistic history of the Brandywine Valley. Local patrons have developed a discerning eye, and their sophistication helps create an atmosphere of appreciation for the arts and an expectation of quality. Howard Pyle (1853-1911) conducted his art classes just south of our art center. His student, the legendary, N.C. Wyeth, founded our beloved Art Association in league with William Palmer Lear and Christian Brinton. N.C.'s son Andrew grew up ten minutes from CCAA and spent much of his artistic life painting scenes of the area. The legacy continues into the next generation with Jamie Wyeth's artwork. Many in Chester County have an appetite for viewing art, and, on happy occasion, a desire to purchase art. CCAA is committed to addressing the needs of our patrons with the same enthusiasm as we show new guests to CCAA.

Access

Exhibitions and classes are the heart of, but we strive to bring varied art enrichment experiences to our community including; artist discussions, special lectures, life-drawing events, plein air events, public chalk drawing contests, excursions to other art venues, creative fund raising events, our Pumpkin Art Carve event and a Holiday Artisan Market. The Chester County Art Association continues to be Chester County's premiere intersect between citizens and the visual arts.

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We revamped our web site, improved our weekly e-communication, and continue to create and print striking postcards, pamphlets and posters. We have extended our reach into the community through partnerships and exhibition opportunities with Chester County businesses and organizations. We have successfully increased the community's engagement with CCAA, but we plan to continue our efforts. We have targeted constituents that will benefit from specific new initiatives.

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In 2015 we will better serve our students and artist-teachers by recording videos of teacher lectures and demonstrations introducing new topics. Potential students will be able to observe a video before enrolling in class. This may encourage the hesitant to try sgraffito, silk-screening, Shibori silk scarf dying or other unfamiliar art mediums. These videos will be available through our weekly e-blast, web site, and even YouTube.

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In 2015 we will better serve our more than 900 artists by offering to create an individual artist profile on our web site that provides their name, an image of their work, and a link to their web address. For artist-members without a web site, we will offer the option of a "gallery page;" a link will go directly to a page highlighting a photographed selection of their work. The "gallery page" service will be fee-based and become a revenue source for CCAA as well as a benefit to our members.

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In 2015 we hope to better serve our ceramics students and teachers by implementing changes in accordance with feedback garnered from student and teacher surveys. Previously, clay teachers bought their own clay and glazes using materials fees collected from students resulting in a congested and uncoordinated accumulation of materials in the studios. Teachers were responsible for coordinating kiln firings but this system was inefficient and problematic. We intend to employ a clay technician by April 2015 who will organize and maintain the ceramic facility, conduct kiln firings, and purchase all ceramic materials to distribute to teachers. The technician will sell additional materials to students with a modest profit margin accruing to CCAA. The Clay Technician will schedule and monitor open studio times that will allow students to work outside of class time and permit revenue generating use-fees by others in the community desiring studio and kiln access. These changes will result in increased participation in our ceramics department and contribute to the vibrant buzz throughout the center that happens when studios are filled with artists engaged in their passion. This plan hinges on the successful first quarter of the ceramics department growth.

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This system proved to be inefficient, timely and, likely, less safe. The new system involves a Clay Technician whose job it is to organize and clean the ceramics facility as well as conduct kiln firings and keep a tight and efficient schedule. Another important change to our ceramics department system is that CCAA now purchases all clay materials which are then distributed to the teachers by the Clay Technician. The Technician can also sell additional materials to students when needed. We recognize that previously the teachers often made a small profit on the fees that they charged their students for materials. Now CCAA will benefit from any material sale profits. Having a clay technician will also allow for safe, monitored open-studio times that ultimately allow students and others in the community to work independently and outside of class time. We expect

that within time this new system will inspire increased participation in our ceramics department as well as a new creative vibrancy in our organization.

OUTREACH: CCAA has a history of successful outreach programs enabling us to serve students without the resources to afford regular tuition rates for classes. At the Garage Youth Centers in Kennett Square and West Grove we offer free drop-in art classes all year round; twice on Saturdays during the school year and every weekday for seven weeks of the summer. These classes target under-served populations and bring fulfilling art experiences to children who otherwise might not have that opportunity. These classes are underwritten in part by a local donor.

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CCAA offers free weekly classes in the summer through the Chester County Intermediate unit in West Grove for grades K-7. Art enriches the school program and gives these children of migrant families another means of expression as they develop English language fluency.

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CCAA conducts a free English as a Second Language (ESL) art class offered once a week for eight weeks in the spring at Hillsdale Elementary, West Chester. In the future we will develop metrics to demonstrate the significant impact teachers observe in students enrolled in this program. We hope to offer the class to other elementary schools in the county in coming years.

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Our Outreach Program at our site in the Exton Square Mall provides the community with \$1 drop-in art classes seven times per week. These classes are very popular and we are happy that we are able to provide for the families living further north in Chester County.

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In addition to these programs targeted towards underserved children and teens, we offer full and partial scholarships for any child or youth that wishes to attend our regular tuition-supported art classes held at our main site in West Chester. Those who cannot afford to pay our classes during the school year or our ten weeks of full day summer camps (eight sessions, 112 class themes) are given the opportunity to participate with free or partial charge. In 2013 alone CCAA granted over \$14,000 in scholarships for children and youths to attend classes

Pre-K through 12 Grade

Approximately 900 different classes for children and youths at age 3 through 18 at six different sites. This includes 200 classes offered at regular tuition rates in our West Chester center and over 700 classes through our outreach efforts. We have partner sites geared towards the children of low income families offering classes for free or at the minimal charge of \$1. The remaining 700 classes are Outreach. They are at other partner sites in Chester County and geared towards the children of financially less privileged families. The costs for teachers, supplies, marketing, and staff allocation are considerable. Partial support for our Outreach comes from EITC funding and other small grants. We rely on other income sources including donations, art sales, fundraisers and sponsorships. Sustaining free and low cost classes and scholarships is a challenge, particularly so in the past eight years. We remain committed to our outreach programs for children and youth knowing the positive impact and lasting impression art can bring to the young people in our community. Our Outreach programs are our mission in action.

Outcomes of Efforts to Provide Classes

Our classes, programs and exhibitions are successful in both our main center as well as our partnering facilities. The challenges we face providing these classes are outlined in other areas of this narrative, but this is a great opportunity to emphasize our primary ongoing hurdles which include: the need for more efficient systems within the organization, reasonable workloads for each staff member, and revenue to support our programming. In response to these needs, we are actively restructuring our systems at CCAA which will have a direct positive impact on staff work load and generate more time for productivity. We are pursuing new revenue generating possibilities through more fee-based programming and sponsorship initiatives.

Structure

Organizational Structure

Board: CCAA hosts a governing Board of directors with 15 members (2015), an Executive Director supervises two full time and three part time staff members. The Educational Program Director oversees a group of private contractors (our artist-teachers). CCAA's board leadership is comprised of a President, Co-Vice Presidents (one responsible for the Strategic Plan and the other responsible for Fund Raising), a Treasurer, a Secretary, and 11 sitting members. CCAA's Mission and Strategic Plan (created in 2013 for years 2014-2017) is used for guidance, ensures the board of effective planning, monitors CCAA's programs, ensures adequate financial resources, protects the organization's financial and physical assets, builds a strong and active board membership, ensures legal and ethical integrity and reaches out to the community.

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Executive Director

The Executive Director manages the staff; develops or approves programs and events; ensures program quality; extends CCAA's reach into Chester County community by creating new programming; approves the annual schedule of art classes, oversees outreach programs/classes; creates the yearly calendar of art exhibitions (three galleries and five off-site exhibition spaces), ensures that each of these art exhibitions are installed in a quality manner; establishes partnerships with community organizations and businesses, supervises a retail art store in the Exton Square Mall, approves all publicity and marketing, secures funding from all potential sources, and provides leadership for annual fund raising events and the annual campaign.

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Educational Program Director

CCAA's Educational Program Director is the liaison for 25+ private contractor (teachers) with fine arts degrees. She schedules class time; records class descriptions and materials lists for publication; addresses teacher's individual needs; processes student registrations; communicates with teachers and students, composes and distributes teacher contracts, gathers teacher and student required documents including health, safety accountability, certification and the Internal Revenue Service forms; uploads all text to the catalog template three times per year; and produces wall labels for our main galleries. She also assists in all other areas when needed.

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Marketing and Communications Director

The Marketing and Communications Director developed and maintains the web site. She creates electronic and print ads, flyers postcards, gallery signage and posters; makes publicity and marketing decisions, forms relationships with the press, publishers and vendors; oversees the interface between our data base and the site, writes and designs a weekly informative e-blast; and maintains CCAA's Facebook and Twitter account. She also communicates with exhibiting artists; enters their submissions into the database; processes entry fees; and processes sales. She also assists in all other areas when needed.

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Grant Writer

The part-time grant writer is responsible for researching and identifying grant opportunities which match CCAA's priorities; generates grant proposals and applications; submits proposals according to the grant guidelines; meets grant reporting requirements, creates a grants calendar including current and prospective sources; creates a database of grant related materials; and serves as liaison with the program staff when needed.

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Cashiers

CCAA employs two part-time cashiers at Exton Square Mall (available through our partnership with Preit) where we offer outreach classes as well as operate a retail art store. These two part-time employees cover the total 20 hours per week that the site is open.

Organizational Challenges

Challenges: CCAA is accomplished at bringing the visual arts to the public, yet the Board and ED felt it was not sufficiently progressing due certain limitations. The limitations were within three realms of the organization; systems and procedures; limited staffing time; and cash flow within operations.

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At the end of 2013, CCAA's systems and procedures were well established but not fully effective and efficient. A customized database has been in use for nine years, though only small portion of its capabilities were employed. Through the course of 2014 more features of the data base were activated and currently 3/4 of it features are in use. CCAA hired a new bookkeeper who automated our accounting system and saved considerable staff time. CCAA's three full time staff members have implemented many improvements including: scheduled brainstorming meetings; the "touch it once rule;" and a shared office wall calendar. We have streamlined teacher payments; simplified student payments of drop-in classes; fully computerizing our artwork submission process (previously on paper and very labor intensive). Improvements are ongoing and our systems and procedures are far less time consuming.

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Limited staff is a primary reason for CCAA's continued use of inefficient and dated systems. Heavy workloads occur when few employees are responsible for many tasks leaving less opportunity for overall improvements to the organization. The CCAA staff has now invested the additional time needed to improve our systems and procedures resulting in lighter workloads and extra time to devote to new initiatives.

Finances

Financially CCAA is sound and is looking to put its savings (in part a result of a Building Campaign) toward the needed repair and improvement of our 1950's building. Operationally our budget is very lean and often restricting. Cutting expenses is not a possible tactic given they are reduced to essentials. Supplies and services from paper towels to snow plowing have been researched and bid out to the lowest source. Teacher earnings are at a level we wish we could raise, and staff salaries are low considering their responsibility level. CCAA must remedy low cash flow problems by securing more income through class registrations, membership fees, art show entry fees, art sales, fundrais-

ers and sponsorships. The staff and Board of CCAA works to do all of these things daily. We are optimistic that limiting conditions will decrease this year with our system adjustments and new initiatives.

Cash Flow

Sources of income at CCAA are class tuitions, summer camp tuitions, art show entry fees, art sales, memberships, donations, sponsorships, fundraisers and grants. Throughout the year, our stream of income ebbs and flows due to the cycle of your activities. With a new ED taking the lead after in November of 2013, comments can only be made on the management steps taken in in 2014. CCAA's class tuitions were raised a small percentage in 2014, but our rates remain the lowest of all of the neighboring arts organizations from Phoenixville to Delaware and east to Philadelphia. We aggressively promote our classes and Summer Art Camp online and through magazine listings and camp fairs. New art exhibition themes have inspired greater artist participation, and the promotion of these shows to the public has been increased via the internet and post-card production which has resulted in greater viewership and art sales. Membership has not increased significantly in 2014, but new member services through our web site in 2015 are expected to impact numbers. A Building Campaign in the past few years has replaced the Annual Campaign which supports operations. In 2015 CCAA will again conduct an Annual Campaign. A new and handsomely designed and printed sponsorship package expands on some of the successful sponsorship initiatives of 2014. These include Summer Art Camp Sponsorships and the PLACE exhibition and event in the fall.

Current Situation and Plans

The ED and the Board have recognized the paramount need to find new sources of revenue to support operations. As early as last summer new fundraising initiatives began. Taking advantage of our far reaching e-contact list, we approached local smaller businesses, such as dentists and office supply companies, with an opportunity to support CCAA's children and youth Summer Art Camp program. For \$500, the companies could sponsor a session of Summer Art Camp in return for a public thank you on our e-blast, a presence on our home web page and their logo and slogan at the top of all documents distributed to families that session. With just a short time to implement this opportunity, four businesses participated which resulted in \$2000 additional income last summer. With more time to promote in 2015, we will be likely able to recruit sponsors for all eight sessions of summer camp, bringing in an additional \$4000. We created a well designed sponsorship package that includes a variety opportunities to support CCAA. These are currently being distributed to Chester County businesses. All totaled, the reasonably valued sponsorship opportunities could bring in \$60,000. If companies respond to just half of these opportunities, cash flow limitations at CCAA would be eliminated.



Chester County Art Association
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