



It has been my great pleasure to lead and enhance this amazing organization for the past 4+ years. Hundreds of thousands of former students have happy memories of summer art camps and fabled dance classes. Highlights include revered art exhibitions, celebrity visitors and the launch of famous art careers.

Yet after 89 years of service to the community, we are struggling to survive. All programming will be suspended at the end of this month, and we will 'hibernate for the winter' from November through March.

When our facilities closed on March 15th, we never expected that 7 months in, we'd be out of funds and suspending programming. Having undertaken a major renovation in 2014-2016, our reserves were unexpectedly depleted. After many business and procedural improvements plus new programming, we were thrilled to be 'in the black' at the start of the year. We were properly staffed to further expand educational programming and had established numerous collaborations to reach new audiences. We had also completed an exciting plan to develop our outdoor spaces—including an outdoor amphitheater, sculpture gardens and community walking trails—to be announced in celebration of our 90th anniversary in 2021.

Then the pandemic hit, and we had no reserves to fall back on. Thankfully COVID-19 grants helped us to stay afloat and find new ways to engage with the community. Sadly, online and plein air class registrations were low, and individual donations have been relatively few and far between.

The board and I are now looking at new paths for sustainability so we can survive and thrive for another 90 years. These paths include partnerships and mergers as well as exploring our real estate options.

Having lived near Merion Station, I saw first-hand that The Barnes Foundation was not appreciated by its neighbors until its move to Philadelphia's Parkway was announced. Although there are many differences, there are also similarities. My hope is that our community can rally behind our amazing art center before there are irreversible changes tied to our survival.

Our world is very different from 1931 when a group of art leaders including N.C. Wyeth founded CCAA. Although bitter-sweet, change is inevitable. I am encouraged by the strength that CCAA's staff and our board have shown during this pandemic. And as we embark on the next phase of our journey to continue to champion the arts and support the community, I am excited about the new possibilities and opportunities the future holds for us.

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