

We Are Grateful

Wow, what a year it's been! Despite the many delays we've encountered around building the new art center, from supply chain issues to rising costs to permitting, we never lost sight of our goal. Ground breaking in September was only one of the milestones we reached but what a wonderful and important marker in our progress. We were thrilled to see so many donors and members of the press in attendance, spreading the news to our community and making the event even more special.

Before we could begin construction in earnest, we had to deal with some preconstruction items, like bringing in temporary propane tanks for the gas kiln, demolishing the kiln room for access to our entrance (which meant moving everything including two electric kilns and running electricity to the raku area) and laying a sidewalk so our customers would have a smooth flat route to our entrance from the River Dance parking garage. We thank Bob Hatfield of Hatfield Development for access to the first two floors of the garage and we're very thankful it's so convenient.

Now, we're moving full steam ahead. The construction fence is up, and the site has been cleared and leveled. It won't be long before NDC starts laying the foundation. We've been fortunate to work with professional and efficient teams at NDC, the builder, and Wannemacher Jensen, the architect. They've not only been great at their jobs but also incredibly kind and always willing to go the extra mile to answer our questions and resolve any issues. We're very thankful for that.

During the groundbreaking ceremony, the Bishop Parker Foundation announced a \$500,000 Challenge Grant, which means they will match donations to our capital campaign dollar for dollar. We're excited about this opportunity and incredibly grateful for such a generous incentive to giving. So far, our capital campaign has raised \$9 million, but we still need to raise another \$5 million to reach our goal.

On the programing side, we've received grants from 3 foundations for general support, sponsorships from 16 groups and donations from many of our members and friends. All this helps offset the cost of exhibits, classes and events, and allows us to offer scholarships to children in need, keep our opening receptions free and open to the public, and offer the Arts & Healing program free to all participants. Our KidsArt Camps and After School programs drew over 600 young artists this year and we were able to award about 50 scholarships.

Another highlight of the year was the Art & Animals event which was part of the Remake Learning Days. On a Saturday in April we welcomed over 300 children and their families free of charge to the ArtCenter, along with camels, goats, birds, and reptiles. We had a lot of fun making cartoon avatars and getting faces painted, as well as working on craft projects.

We welcomed the International Society of Scratchboard Arts to our galleries as well as the International Watercolor Society Florida Chapter, Florida Suncoast Watercolor Society and the Manatee County School District for a total of 19 exhibits, nine of them open juried shows that drew artists from our very talented local artist community.

We recently completed a flipbook to market some of the incredible handmade work in the LiveArtfully artisan market, we made staff avatars to promote selected product in weekly e-blasts and we updated the website for all you pajama shoppers out there.

It's been a year filled with hard work, but also with much promise and fulfillment. None of this would have been possible without your support. As we approach the end of the year, we humbly ask for your help once again. Would you consider making a year-end donation to support the ArtCenter and the visual arts in our community? You can choose to designate your funds for general support, which will help sustain our programming, or you can designate them for the Capital Campaign and receive a dollar-for-dollar match from the Bishop Parker Foundation.

Donating is easy! You can call us at 941-746-2862 to use a credit card, visit our website and complete the online donation form (click on the "Donate" button below), or simply mail a check payable to ArtCenter Manatee at 209 9th St W, Bradenton, FL 34205.

And don't forget, if you're 72 years old (or 73 if you reach/ed age 72 after Dec. 31, 2022), you can make a gift directly to ArtCenter Manatee from your IRA required minimum distribution amount while obtaining a considerable tax benefit for yourself.

We hope to see you soon, and we wish you a joyful, creative, and healthy season. Thank you for being a part of our journey.

With Gratitude and Best Wishes,
From all of us at ArtCenter Manatee