

# The Intrinsic Value of Arlington's Arts Community

A REVIEW & ANALYSIS CONDUCTED BY THE  
ARLINGTON COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS

DECEMBER 2010

arlington  arts

This report was prepared by the  
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## SUMMARY

In addition to fueling economic growth, the Arlington, Virginia arts community brings inherent joy and inspiration to its patrons and community members. The arts enrich our lives by deepening citizens' cultural experience, bolstering their sense of social citizenship and contributing to Arlington's beauty, creativity and diversity. And these intrinsic – and often intangible – benefits significantly impact individuals and the community at large.

In 2010, the Arlington Commission for the Arts set out to support this claim by exploring and documenting the *quality of life* benefits fostered by the arts industry. By collecting anecdotes and reviewing and analyzing grant applications submitted by 33 County-supported arts groups, the Commission noted four categories through which arts groups deliver community benefits to Arlington and the surrounding region:

- 1) **Access to Art** – From free and discounted performances, to cultural and diversity programming, Arlington's arts groups are ensuring that people from all walks of life gain exposure to the arts.
- 2) **Arts Education** – Arlington's arts community offers a variety of workshops, classes, training programs and pre/post performance education – much of it free of charge. Thanks to our arts groups, community members are gaining skills and learning about arts and culture.
- 3) **Community Service** – Arlington's arts groups donate to charities and enrich the lives of community members – particularly young people and senior citizens – through unique and enriching programs.
- 4) **Community Health and Well-Being** – Arlington's arts organizations not only provide educational and entertainment value, they have a demonstrative, therapeutic effect on its citizens, young and old.

This report helps demonstrate the impact of the arts on Arlington's people and community. It illustrates how our diverse and vibrant arts scene provides personal enrichment for residents of all ages and walks of life.

## OVERVIEW

### THE ARTS INDUSTRY – GENERATING BILLIONS FOR OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

Over the past several years, Arlington County has paid notice to the impressive economic impact of Arlington’s arts community. For example, in 2007, Americans for the Arts produced the *Arts & Economic Prosperity III* report on the Greater Washington area. This report documented the key role that the nonprofit arts and culture industry played in strengthening the area economy, showing that the industry generates \$2.15 billion in local economic activity. Approximately \$85 million of that amount was attributed to arts and culture organizations in Arlington County with nearly \$7.5 million coming from direct audience expenditures on retail shopping and dining.

A 2009 follow-up study set out to determine the economic impact of theater audience expenditures on dining in two Arlington County communities, Crystal City and Shirlington. Conducted by the Crystal City Business Improvement District in conjunction with and on behalf of the Arlington Commission for the Arts, this study evaluated Arena Stage, then located in Crystal City, and Signature Theatre in Shirlington for their impact on the local economy. Examining audience expenditures at surrounding restaurant establishments prior to and after performances, the major findings were that more than 50 percent of theater patrons visit a restaurant prior to attending a show; on performance nights, area restaurants experience increased sales over non-performance nights of between 7 and 20 percent; each performance generates an average of \$8,000 in restaurant sales; and approximately \$4 million annually is generated in Arlington restaurant and retail sales.

What’s more, in a 2009 economic analysis of the Artisphere cultural center, Arlington Economic Development projected that the localized impact of spending and jobs related to Artisphere would total \$10.3 million annually by the third year of operations, and that new tax revenues accruing to Arlington County would total \$248,000 annually.

### IMPROVING ARLINGTON’S QUALITY OF LIFE

All of these reports showed that support for the arts is an investment in Arlington’s economic well-being, and that “*the arts mean business.*” But in addition to fueling economic growth, patrons within and outside of Arlington also know the inherent joy and inspiration brought by the arts community. The arts enrich our lives by deepening citizens’ cultural experience and contributing to Arlington’s beauty, creativity and diversity. And these intrinsic – and often intangible – benefits significantly impact individuals and the community at large.

In 2010, the Arlington Commission for the Arts set out to support this claim by exploring and documenting the *quality of life* benefits fostered by the local arts industry. While such factors can be challenging to capture and quantify, this report helps to demonstrate the personal and community impact of the arts – both within Arlington and outside its borders.

## THE ARTS & SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP

While conducting research for this report, the Arts Commission consulted several existing studies that explored the role that arts and culture play in communities. These papers looked at cultural engagement's effect on community life and social inclusion, among other issues. And several key findings in the reports helped inspire the Commission's review of Arlington's arts community.

- The Rockefeller Foundation funded a 2007 study entitled, "From Creative Economy to Creative Society," which appeared in *Creativity and Change*, a collaboration of the Social Impact of the Arts Project and The Reinvestment Fund. It cited the following:
  - "Virtually all social impact studies find a consistent set of positive neighborhood effects associated with community arts and culture. They bridge long-term barriers of class and ethnicity as well as age and gender. They foster social and institutional connections both within and between neighborhoods. They animate public spaces. They create value in the form of physical amenities and quality of the built environment.
  - Residents who participate in the arts and culture tend to engage as well in other types of community activities. Moreover, the presence of cultural organizations in a neighborhood stimulates local community participation overall.
  - SIAP [Social Impact of the Arts Project] has documented a connection between community culture and child welfare: low-income block groups with high cultural participation were more than twice as likely to have very low truancy and delinquency as other low-income neighborhoods.
  - Ethnographers in Chicago and the Silicon Valley have documented the community building potential of the informal arts. A recent study, for example, found that Mexican immigrants in Chicago 'use artistic and cultural practices to break down social isolation, create new social networking relationships, strengthen...bonds among group members, and...create local and transnational ties with [outside] institutions...'
  - Cultural engagement contributes to the quality of community life by reflecting and reinforcing social diversity. Ethnic, economic and/or household diverse urban neighborhoods are more likely than homogeneous communities to house cultural programs, cultural participants, and artists. Likewise, culturally active neighborhoods are more likely to maintain demographic diversity over time."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Stern, Mark J. and Seifert, Susan C. *From Creative Economy to Creative Society*. Progressive Planning, *The Magazine of Planners Network*, No. 170, Winter 2007. The Social Impact of the Arts and The Rockefeller Foundation.

- Further, a 2005 study by the European Commission’s Employment & Social Affairs entitled, “The Role of Culture in Preventing and Reducing Poverty and Social Exclusion” found that “ensuring effective access to and participation in cultural activities for all is an essential dimension of promoting an inclusive society.
  - “There are many different ways in which access to and participation in cultural activities can be very important in promoting greater social inclusion. These include:
    - *Building skills and self confidence*: Participation of young people in drama and theater workshops can enhance their confidence and develop team-working and interpersonal skills and other generic transferable skills.
    - *Enhancing self-esteem and identity*: Projects promoting involvement in cultural activities can lead to greater self-confidence and higher self-esteem, lead to increased participation in society and in the labor market and consolidate a positive sense of identity for many groups at risk of exclusion such as disadvantaged young people, disabled people and minority ethnic groups.
    - *Overcoming cultural diversity and discrimination*: The integration of immigrants can be promoted through language classes or the use of drama or dance in schools to celebrate different cultures.
    - *Promoting social integration*: Local history groups can provide opportunities for elderly people to meet to reduce their risk of social exclusion.”<sup>2</sup>
- And finally, the 2003 study “Leveraging Assets: How Small Budget Arts Activities Benefit Neighborhoods” demonstrated how arts activities “play a role in leveraging both local and non-local assets for neighborhood improvement.” Among the report’s findings were the following:
  - “Arts activities leverage assets to benefit local neighborhoods.
  - Arts activities play a unique role in building social networks in neighborhoods; they enable access to new resources and they build civic dialogue.
  - Arts activities provide unique opportunities to build and incubate social capital; social capital helps build local areas, and organizations within these areas mobilize resources to improve quality of life.

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<sup>2</sup> Community Action Programme on Social Exclusion. 2005. *The Role of Culture in Preventing and Reducing Poverty and Social Exclusion*. Brussels: European Communities.

<sup>3</sup> Grams, Diane and Michael Warr, 2003. *Leveraging assets: How small budget arts activities benefit neighborhoods*. Chicago: Richard H. Driehaus Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

- Broad areas that include people trained in tacit skills of art making, as well as people with connections to the social, political and financial networks of neighborhood environments, enable the ability of arts activities to exist.”<sup>3</sup>

All of these reports help “connect the dots” between the traditional concept of *culture* and its tangible impact on community and individuals. And like the locales analyzed in these three studies, the Arts Commission found that Arlington enjoys numerous *quality of life* benefits thanks, in large part, to its arts community.

## METHODOLOGY & KEY FINDINGS

To capture evidence of art’s intrinsic value in Arlington, the Arts Commission collected anecdotes from local arts groups and reviewed and analyzed recent grant applications submitted by 33 Arlington County-supported arts groups. These organizations included music, dance and live theatre performance groups; heritage troupes; and visual art centers. In their application essays, grant candidates were asked to demonstrate their organization’s involvement in the community. By reviewing their responses, the Commission was able to collect and analyze examples of each arts group impacting both individuals and the community at large.

The Commission noted four categories through which arts groups deliver community benefits to Arlington and the surrounding region:

- 1) **Access to Art** – From free and discounted performances, to cultural and diversity programming, Arlington’s arts groups are ensuring that people from all walks of life gain exposure to the arts.
- 2) **Arts Education** – Arlington’s arts community offers a variety of workshops, classes, training programs and pre/post performance education – much of it free of charge. Thanks to our arts groups, community members are gaining skills and learning about arts and culture.
- 3) **Community Service** – Arlington’s arts groups donate to charities and enrich the lives of community members – particularly young people and senior citizens – through unique and enriching programs.
- 4) **Community Health and Well-Being** – Arlington’s arts organizations not only provide educational and entertainment value to its audiences, they have a demonstrative, therapeutic affect on many of its citizens, young and old.

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<sup>3</sup>Grams, Diane and Warr, Michael. *Leveraging Assets: How Small Budget Arts Activities Benefit Neighborhoods*. A research report commissioned by The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation and funded by The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, March 2003.

This report helps to demonstrate the impact of the arts on Arlington’s people and community. It illustrates how our diverse and vibrant arts scene provides personal enrichment for residents of all ages and walks of life.

The following pages provide more detail on key findings, as well as profiles on the arts groups analyzed for this report.

## HIGHLIGHTS

From public art and exhibitions, to live theatre, dance and heritage festivals, people can enjoy art in Arlington 365 days a year at more than 2,000 performances annually. Our vibrant arts scene provides a rich mix of culture for our residents, and the caliber of our arts groups is something to brag about. Media from around the globe are recognizing our community as an artistic powerhouse.

There is little question that Arlington’s arts groups enrich the cultural and life experiences of their patrons, volunteers and staff. The arts groups supported by Arlington County for fiscal year 2011 reported that they engaged 3,200 volunteers in 2010, and employed more than 1,200 in-house and contract staff members. Of those, more than 1,700 people were Arlington workers, residents or both.

*The Washington Post called Arlington “one of the hippest local jurisdictions at attracting adventurous arts and artists” and “a hotbed of cultural abandon.”*

But in addition to impacting staff and patrons, an overwhelming majority of Arlington’s arts groups also make an effort to enhance the quality of life of non-patrons and serve the community at large.

In analyzing the community involvement of 33 County-supported arts groups, the Arlington Commission for the Arts pinpointed four distinct areas through which arts groups are making a difference – *access to art; arts education; community service; and community health and well-being.*

## Access to Art

**Free or Discounted Tickets & Facility Space.** Many of Arlington’s theater, dance and heritage groups (45 percent of those reviewed for this report) regularly offer free or discounted tickets to their performances. As a result, they are exposing new audiences to their art forms. Beneficiaries of these programs include young people and seniors, with blocks of free or discounted tickets often granted to schools and retirement communities. Some programs target underprivileged audiences.

For example, BalletNOVA Center for Dance has sponsored a Free Ticket Program that has provided 440 performance tickets to children and families from economically challenged communities; and Aurora (formerly Opera Theatre of Northern Virginia) offers free or subsidized tickets to community service groups and schools in low-income neighborhoods.

In addition, groups reported that they offer free or discounted use of their facilities to worthy organizations. For example, Arlington Arts Center offers deeply discounted use of its space to nonprofits hosting fundraising events, and free use of the space for community-related ceremonies and meetings. Further, Washington Shakespeare Company made its former facility, Clark Street Theatre, available as a gallery and storage space to county-affiliated artists and organizations.

**Free Performances & Exhibitions.** Not all arts offerings in Arlington require paid tickets for admission. Signature Theatre's free annual open house celebration attracts thousands of community residents for tours, performances, master classes and other family-friendly activities, culminating in a free outdoor concert on Signature's plaza in Shirlington.

Several visual arts groups sponsor exhibits that are always free of charge (e.g., Arlington Arts Center and the Arlington Artists Alliance). Each of the Arlington Philharmonic's concerts are free to the public. Other dance, theatre and heritage groups have performed gratis at community events such as Arlington Neighborhood Day and at County locations such as libraries and Lubber Run Amphitheatre.

When combined with the unique collection of public art that graces Arlington's streets, plazas and parks, it is easy for all of us to experience art in Arlington.

**Cultural Programming & Diversity Efforts.** So much of the art offered by Arlington's arts groups bring cultural programming and rich diversity experiences to the community. Roughly 40 percent of groups reviewed for this report offer a variety of cultural experiences through their regular programming. For instance, by their very missions, heritage groups such as Alma Boliviana, Dance Asia, El Tayrona, Fundacion Socio Cultural Boliviana, Hālau O 'Aulani, Los Quetzales Mexican Dance Ensemble, The Pro-Bolivian Committee, Requeibros Spanish Dance Academy, Teatro de la Luna and Washington Balalaika Society perform and educate audiences at folk festivals, churches, schools and other community events. As a result, they are exposing audiences to the traditions and values of a variety of cultures.

One example is Hālau O 'Aulani, which, in addition to performing Polynesian dances, maintains a library of more than 700 holdings in books, video tapes, CDs and DVDs related to Hawaiian history and culture, which are valuable resources for educational programs in Arlington.

## Did You Know?

*67 percent of groups reviewed for this report offer free programming of one kind or another, enabling members of the community to experience art free of charge in a variety of settings.*

Other supported arts groups offer impressive diversity programming, both in their educational efforts and in casting. For example, Encore Stage and Studio has sponsored a playwriting class titled, “In Your Own Voice,” which was developed for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students. Washington Shakespeare Company was recognized for its commitment to diversity in casting with a 2006 James B. Hunter Human Rights Award. And Ballet NOVA Center for Dance works to educate a diverse range of students in the art of dance. Its 2009 production of *The Nutcracker* featured Portuguese, Filipino, African-American and Hispanic dancers in both lead and ensemble roles.

## Arts Education

***Pre- and Post-Performance Readings/Chats.*** Many of Arlington’s supported arts groups offer unique programming designed to educate and enrich the arts experiences of patrons and non-patrons alike. Examples include The Arlington Players, Dominion Stage and The American Century Theater, which have offered “after-the-show chat sessions” with members of the production team; Charter Theater, which has hosted free readings of new plays; and Aurora, which has offered free, pre-performance opera talks at libraries and community centers. Signature Theatre has delivered free discussion programs at local libraries, including *Brown Bag Thursday* lunchtime interviews with artists, directors, writers and performers.

***Workshops and Training Programs.*** Nearly a quarter of arts groups analyzed offer training programs and workshops in the arts. As a result, members of the community are learning skills, channeling their talents and gaining valuable arts knowledge.

For example, Bowen McCauley Dance offers *Residency* and *After-School* dance programs for students throughout the D.C. region. Los Quetzales Mexican Dance Ensemble sponsors community dance workshops (most of them free) that provide Arlington children and adults a place to engage in a meaningful extracurricular activity. A variety of musical theatre training programs are offered by Signature Theatre to up-and-coming performers and students, while Teatro de la Luna hosts Spanish language training and bilingual theatre workshops. And the Arlington Arts Center offers a wide variety of art workshops with significant tuition assistance offered to low-income families.

### Arts Group Spotlight

*The American Century Theater (TACT) provides arts education through a variety of innovative media. Its audience guides and educational discussions, which give context to its performances, have been delivered via teleconference calls, podcasts, blog postings and more. Some programs have reached more than 250 people, including groups from senior and assisted living centers.*

## Community Service

**Fundraising.** Many arts groups host or participate in fundraisers for various nonprofit organizations – both in Arlington and beyond.

For example, Teatro de la Luna and Ballet NOVA have donated performance tickets to school auctions and other fundraising events; while Arlington Artists Alliance members have donated original works of art for auctions – especially those raising funds for Arlington County activities such as Arlington County Public Schools events and Outdoor Lab fundraisers.

Aurora has distributed free tickets to the Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless Shelter House and other social service agencies. The Indian Dance Educators Association engaged its young members in a fundraising effort for a local animal shelter; and Starving Artist Theatre has partnered with other area theatres to raise money for children’s charities.

Arlington arts groups also have made a difference in other communities in the U.S. and abroad. Groups such as The IBIS Chamber Music Society staged a benefit concert to aid a community effort in Wellfleet, Massachusetts; while Alma Boliviana participated in multiple fundraisers in 2006 to benefit flood victims in Beni-Bolivia as well as victims of the recent earthquakes in Chile and Haiti.

**Youth Programming.** Sixty percent of the arts groups analyzed offer enriching youth programming designed to inspire and educate future generations through arts and culture. Examples include Signature Theatre’s *Signature in the Schools* program, which has brought arts education to more than 10,000 Arlington County high school students from ethnically diverse backgrounds. The program focuses on integrating in-depth, high-quality instruction and interaction into classroom lesson plans, after-school workshops, apprenticeships and the production of an all-student play.

The American Century Theater has partnered with the *Teens and Theater* group to conduct a summer day camp for kids aged eight to eighteen. Starving Artist Theater manages the *Little Artist* playwriting and directing camp for youth, while Dominion Stage sponsors theatrical production-skills mentoring to area high school students.

Arlington Arts Center offers numerous classroom opportunities for youth, while Synetic Theater hosts a conservatory-style studio program in dramatic and visual arts that draws more than 200 area children each year.

### Arts Group Spotlight

*Potomac Harmony Chorus has made philanthropy a central tenet of its member activities. The group has spearheaded a variety of philanthropic efforts, donating gift cards, candy, blankets, mittens, scarves and toiletry items to organizations such as Treats for Troops, the Arlington Street People’s Assistance Network, the Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless and the Arlington Department of Human Services Secret Santa Program. It also has collected donations at its holiday performances for Arlington’s Doorways for Women and Children.*

The Educational Theatre Company makes it its mission to provide a variety of unique school and community-based theater programs for young people; Jane Franklin Dance offers after school dance classes and a Young Dancers performance program; and Teatro de la Luna manages the *Experience Theatre Program*, which provides free or low-cost theatre appreciation workshops to school-aged audiences. So across Arlington, young people are learning and benefiting from unique artistic experiences.

## Youth Program Spotlights

*The various youth programs managed by Arlington’s arts community serve to educate young people and teach valuable skills through experiential learning. But one should not overlook the impact of these programs in keeping local youth engaged in valuable extracurricular activities. For instance, a gentleman whose grandson attended one of the public workshops hosted by **Hālau O ‘Aulani** recently expressed intense gratitude to the organizers. “Thank you so much for your school,” he said. “Thank you, in particular, for keeping my grandson off the streets and for having a program in which we both can participate as a family.”*

*Similarly, Los Quetzales Mexican Dance ensemble has made a significant impact on the young people it serves. Take 6-year-old Josue, who was enrolled in special education classes due to his lack of focus and concentration. Since joining Quetzales, he no longer requires special education. He is able to focus, follow directions and perform well with other young children. In addition, young Arlingtonians like Fernando (age 9), Jazmin (age 13) and Karina (age 8), just to name a few children, have built a network of friends and supporters through Quetzales which has boosted their self esteem. Further, Quetzales inspired Ellie Heisey, a Wakefield High School senior, to take the initiative to begin teaching Mexican dance classes at Key Elementary School.*

## Community Health & Well-Being

Many arts groups are expanding boundaries, as well as their audiences, by leveraging arts-related programs to help people of all ages in Arlington maintain or improve their health and well-being.

In addition to providing children's programming throughout the County, there are several Arlington arts organizations that have reached out to people with special needs, teens, adults and the elderly to bring the therapeutic power of the arts to Arlington's citizenry.

***Disability Community Programming.*** Several Arlington arts groups have made it part of their mission to focus on helping people with disabilities. Bowen McCauley Dance, for example, offers a *Children with Special Needs* program, which provides dance classes to children with Down Syndrome.

The Indian Dance Educators Association offers free tickets to people with disabilities, while Encore Stage and Studio promotes signed performances for the hearing impaired. Further, Educational Theatre Company partners with the ArtStream organization to provide arts education to adults with special needs, and Arlington Arts Center is partnering with VSA Arts to teach art to children with disabilities. Such programs help ensure that people with disabilities get to experience and enjoy art in Arlington.

### Program Spotlight

*Bowen McCauley Dance Company (BMD) offers a unique program designed to help people in the Greater Washington area who have Parkinson's Disease, a degenerative and progressive condition marked by tremors, loss of balance and slowed movement. BMD's Dance for PD program provides free weekly dance classes, many co-sponsored by the Parkinson Foundation of the National Capital Area, for people with PD and their care-partners. The program is intended to help those affected "dance away their symptoms." Participants report that dancing helps decrease their PD symptoms while providing psychological and emotional benefits. One participant simply stated, "I lose my symptoms when I'm there."*

**Senior Programming.** Above and beyond donating free performance tickets to senior centers, more than 20 percent of the arts groups reviewed for this analysis provide valuable programs and services for senior citizens. Examples include Educational Theatre Company's *Creative Age* courses, which have been offered at the Jefferson Retirement Community.

Jane Franklin Dance has offered free dance classes through the *Successfully Aging* program – an initiative that brings workshops to facilities such as the Multi-Purpose Senior Center at Walter Reed, the Langston Brown Multi-Purpose Senior Center, Arlington Mill Senior Center and the Fairlington Senior Program. Aurora provides two semester-long opera classes for the Arlington Living in Retirement Institute. And groups such as the Metropolitan Chorus and the Arlingtones Barbershop Chorus often perform at a wide variety of retirement living centers. Such programs bring culture, joy and knowledge to our region's senior citizens – some of whom are unable to venture out to experience art on their own.

## Testimonial

*"On the days that [the **Jane Franklin Dance**] troupe was at our Center, fifteen to twenty seniors could be seen on their feet, moving and dancing with the members of the dance company. It is a tribute to the young dancers that they were able to inspire people who sometimes have difficulty walking to get out of their chairs and move their bodies in harmony with both the music and the trained dancers who accompanied them."*

**-Nelly Urbach**

Director of Seniors Activities  
Walter Reed Senior Center

## ARTS GROUP PROFILES

Below are synopses of the community outreach activities performed by 33 Arlington County-supported arts groups.

### **Alma Boliviana**

Alma Boliviana works to cultivate and expose the diverse and rich number of folkloric Bolivian dances to its members and the general population. It has served the community by:

- Performing at community and cultural events including the Arlington County Fair, Arlington Neighborhood Day and Central Library.
- Staging performances at Arlington schools including Marymount University, Thomas Jefferson Middle School, Barrett Elementary School, Kenmore Middle School and Wakefield High School.
- Participating in fundraisers to benefit the 2006 flooding in Beni-Bolivia as well as victims of the recent earthquakes in Chile and Haiti.

### **Arlington Artists Alliance**

The Arlington Artists Alliance works to educate, explore, promote and broaden interest and appreciation for the visual arts. The Alliance and its individual member artists have served the community by:

- Volunteering as *Artist for a Day* at Carlin Springs Elementary School, in art classrooms in the Arlington Public Schools, and by donating their art work for fundraising activities to approximately 17 nonprofit community organizations and schools. In 2008, these included Arlington Traditional, Swanson, McKinley, Carlin Springs and Barrett elementary schools; the Arlington Free Clinic; the Arthritis Foundation; Outdoor Lab; and The American Association for University Women.
- Participating in a fundraising day in conjunction with Whole Foods Market in Clarendon. Proceeds are helping to fund art projects that will bring local artists to various Arlington Public Schools to demonstrate and teach a variety of specialized art techniques.
- Displaying art in nontraditional venues throughout Arlington, including restaurants, realty offices and County buildings.
- Sponsoring a co-operative art gallery in Arlington that is open to the public.
- Donated original works of art for fundraising auctions.
- Maintaining a booth at the Arlington County Fair and participating in Clarendon Day.

## **Arlington Arts Center**

Arlington Arts Center (AAC) is a private, non-profit visual arts center dedicated to supporting and presenting new work by contemporary artists in the region. Through exhibitions, educational programs and a studio residency, the AAC serves as a bridge between artists and the public. The organization has served the community by:

- Presenting art exhibitions that are always free of charge, both at AAC and in the community. (Local venues include Whole Foods Market and other locations sponsored by the Ballston-Virginia Square Partnership and the Rosslyn BID.)
- Offering free art workshops:
  - The ArtVentures series of on-site and off-site classes for seniors.
  - Workshops for children and teens including those in partnership with Savannah College of Art and Design, Utecht, VSA Arts (for students with disabilities) and the U.S. Geological Survey.
  - Workshops by studio artists and teachers in various community venues including Walter Reed Community Center, Barnes & Noble and Kenmore Middle School.
- Providing unique arts education for the community. Ninety percent of participants are Arlington residents, including Arlington Public Schools students and home-schooled children.
  - Significant tuition assistance is offered to low-income families who wish to take classes.
  - AAC offers bilingual classes and workshops whenever possible, including a popular *Día de los Muertos* celebration.
  - Partnership exhibitions include projects with Barrett Elementary, Congressman Moran's High School Art Program, and *This is My City/Esta es mi Ciudad*, an exchange exhibition for Arlington teens.
  - Free use of classroom space is provided to the Arlington Public Schools Gifted Artists Program.
  - International programs for Arlington youth have included workshops by German artist Eugenie Bongs-Beers (from Arlington's sister city) and British filmmaker Anna Lucas.
  - A partnership with VSA Arts will train AAC instructors to teach children with disabilities.
  - ACC studio artist, Evan Reed, coordinated a public art project with students at Glebe Elementary School.
- Offering deeply discounted use of the AAC facility for local non-profit fundraisers, and free use of the space for community-related ceremonies and meetings. Users have included the Arlington Community Foundation, Creative Arlington and civic associations.

### **Arlingtones Barbershop Chorus**

As a chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society, the Arlingtones present a variety of a cappella four-part harmony singing performances. The group has served the community by:

- Offering reduced rates and complimentary tickets to major shows for students and seniors, and blocks of complimentary tickets for retirement homes.
- Presenting quartet performances at the Arlington County Fair and participating in Neighborhood Day.
- Delivering a Christmas program at the Walter Reed Community Center, Carlin Senior Home, Brighton Gardens, The Jefferson and Sunrise Assisted Living.
- Offering free performances for local civic and service organizations, including the Northern Virginia Hospital Center.
- Delivering free performances at Lubber Run Park.

### **Arlington Philharmonic Association**

The Arlington Philharmonic Association aims to build a first-class symphony in Arlington that will make classical music accessible to every citizen, promote the value of classical music within education and civic life, and build strong, creative partnerships with schools, local government, businesses and other organizations. The organization has served the community by:

- Offering all performances free of charge.
- Presenting a series of children's concerts in collaboration with Arlington Public Schools. Each concert highlighted a different section of the orchestra (woodwind, string and brass) and integrated the music with a part of the school curriculum.
- Participating in the Arlington County Fair.
- Collaborating with and performing at the Arlington Central Library, which has enabled the Philharmonic to reach new audiences with live classical music.

### **Aurora (Formerly Opera Theatre of Northern Virginia)**

Aurora aims to produce operas of artistic distinction and to broaden the public's appreciation of opera. It has served the community by:

- Offering free and/or subsidized tickets to community service groups, faith-based organizations, schools in low-income neighborhoods, scout troops, senior citizens, and youth and college students.
- Distributing free tickets to the Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless, Shelter House in Arlington and similar social service agencies.
- Presenting Spanish operatic productions in efforts to engage Hispanic audiences in the operatic genre.
- Offering free, pre-performance opera talks at libraries and senior/community centers.
- Providing two semester-long opera classes for the Arlington Living in Retirement Institute, as well as several presentations each year to neighborhood groups.
- Donating tickets in support of local fundraisers and auctions at schools and churches.

### **Ballet NOVA Center for Dance**

Ballet NOVA Center for Dance provides creative opportunities for professional choreographers, teachers and dancers and inspires public appreciation of dance through performance, education and outreach. The organization has served the community by:

- Offering reasonably priced tickets and discounted seats for seniors and students.
- Sponsoring a Free Ticket Program that provided 440 free performance tickets to children and families from economically challenged communities.
- Offering pre-performance education programs geared toward Girl Scouts who earn badges. Youth get to observe rehearsals; see and touch costumes, props and pointe shoes; learn about dance history; and try out basic dance movements.
- Providing free tickets as auction prizes for local school and community fundraisers.
- Delivering free, mini-performances throughout the community at events such as Clarendon Day, FitArlington, FitGunston, Changing the World at Bethel United Church of Christ and Family Magazine Enrichment Day.
- Educating a diverse range of students and performers to the art form of dance. The 2009 production of *The Nutcracker* boasted multi-cultural casting – including Portugese, Filipino, African-American and Hispanic dancers in both lead and ensemble roles.

### **Bowen McCauley Dance**

Bowen McCauley Dance (BMD) aims to expand the boundaries of contemporary dance through professional collaborations with a wide spectrum of artists and to engage a broad audience, including underserved and/or socio-economically diverse communities. It has served the community by:

- Managing the *Dance for PD* program, which provides free weekly dance classes to persons with Parkinson's Disease.
- Offering *Residency* and *After-School* dance programs for students throughout the D.C. region. Programs are offered at Kenmore Middle School (Arlington), Bullis School (Potomac), Georgetown Visitation (DC), Fort Hunt Elementary (Alexandria), Arcola Elementary (Wheaton) and Hearst Elementary (DC).
- Managing the *Pre-K Fun* program, which delivers interactive mini-performances throughout Arlington to stimulate toddlers.
- Spearheading the *Children with Special Needs* program, which offers dance classes for children with Down Syndrome; an arts-integration eight-week residency for traditional 4<sup>th</sup> grade Glebe Elementary School students in Arlington; and a five-week session for students with disabilities at Sligo Middle School in Silver Spring.
- Offering the *Movement for Seniors* program, which delivers age- and skill-appropriate dance classes to seniors at various locations, including the affordable housing facility, Hunter Park, in Arlington.
- Inaugurating a family arts festival, *Move Me! Arts Experience*, which provides the diverse Kenmore Middle School community and all Arlingtonians with access to a wide range of cultural activities.

### **Charter Theater Company**

Charter Theater Company builds new audiences for new plays by developing and producing new works for the American stage. It has served the community by:

- Hosting readings of new plays. All readings are free public events that include audience feedback and discussions moderated by the Charter artistic staff.
- Actively searching for play submissions that represent the diversity of experience of Arlington's population.
- Offering a significant number of discounted tickets for every show produced.

### **Dance Asia**

Dance Asia showcases the diversity of Asia through the art of movement and works to raise public awareness of the intricacies of Asian dance forms. It has served the community by:

- Enlisting dancers who come from various age groups, ethnicities and backgrounds.
- Exposing Arlingtonians to a wide range of Asian heritage activities, which they may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience.

### **Dominion Stage**

As Arlington's oldest community theatre organization, Dominion Stage works to enrich the local arts community by expressing – through live theatrical productions – contemporary, traditional and unique dramatic subject matter. It has served the community by:

- Presenting material that addresses relationship conflicts and that questions societal stereotypes (such as lesbian/gay issues).
- Offering discounted tickets for seniors and students at all times, and a special \$15 ticket rate to celebrate Dominion's 60<sup>th</sup> season.
- Providing group ticket promotions to local churches, gay/lesbian interest groups, high schools, community colleges and senior organizations.
- Offering "after-the-show chat sessions" with members of the production team.
- Sponsoring *The Apprenticeship Program*, which provides theatrical production mentoring and coaching to area high school students. The effort engages students in set design and construction and performance technical support.
- Fostering partnerships with groups such as Community Forklift and Arlington Independent Media (AIM), which have helped Dominion source reusable set construction items and aided in multimedia marketing. Dominion is working with AIM to develop a co-op program that will expand *The Apprenticeship Program*. Dominion will provide workshops on set building and dressing for AIM students, and in turn, the students will be able to leverage Dominion's productions, casts and crews in the development of class projects.

### **Educational Theatre Company**

The Educational Theatre Company (ETC) is a group of professional theater artists who seek to unlock the creative and collaborative potential of children. It has served the community by:

- Providing school and community based theater programs throughout the Washington area. ETC has served more than 969 students of all ages and has used 103 teaching artists in Arlington.
- Offering programs for special populations, which account for over 10% of ETC's 2009 population served.
- Serving senior citizens through its "Creative Age" courses at the Jefferson Retirement Community.
- Reaching at-risk youth through the Bard "Unbound Shakespeare" program at the Waxter Children's Center.
- Partnering with ArtStream to provide arts education to adults with special needs. ArtStream's Arlington Adult Inclusive Company performs at Gunston Theater.
- Offering need-based scholarships to all after-school classes, subsidizing 50% of the class cost for students with demonstrable need. Scholarships are one way ETC makes arts accessible across socioeconomic lines in Arlington County.

### **El Tayrona**

El Tayrona is a Colombian folklore and musical group that showcases important elements of Colombian culture through music and dance. It has served the community by:

- Performing at various community and cultural events, including Colombian National Day events and Hispanic Heritage Month festivities.
- Helping Colombians and other Latin American immigrants to preserve the beauty and tradition of their respective homelands.
- Educating Arlington residents on the cultures and traditions of Colombia and surrounding countries.

### **Encore Stage and Studio**

Encore Stage and Studio is theater for kids by kids of all ages. Its mission is to build life-long appreciation for live theater by involving young people in all aspects of theatre arts onstage, backstage, in the classroom and in the audience. It has served the community by:

- Bringing theater to local families with children aged 3-18. Encore's theatrical and educational programs are broadly accessible to families throughout Arlington and are priced affordably.
- Offering and promoting signed performances for the hearing-impaired and special needs community.
- Sponsoring a playwriting class titled "In Your Own Voice," which was developed for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students and aimed at improving students' facility with English. Encore is also sponsoring a bilingual Spanish acting and playwriting class, an improvisational class, and a "create a story" class.
- Using zip code surveys to track progress towards inclusion in the arts throughout Arlington County.
- Maintaining an Encore alumni Web page to highlight the accomplishments of participants and alumni and to promote a sense of community.

### **Fundacion Socio Cultural Boliviana**

Fundacion Socio Cultural Boliviana works to preserve, promote and bring awareness of Bolivian culture through folkloric dance. It has served the community by:

- Performing at a variety of community events, parades and cultural festivals.
- Sponsoring a youth talent show to showcase the talents of young people in Arlington, Fairfax and Maryland. The event targeted low income, troubled youth and underserved communities and distributed nearly 300 toys to a local community (Falls Church/Culmore).
- Engaging young dancers and audience members so that younger generations don't lose their heritage and cultural identities.
- Sponsoring fundraisers that integrate social themes including voter registration, Census participation, breast cancer awareness and Escuela Bolivia programs for youth.

### **Hālau O 'Aulani**

Hālau O 'Aulani teaches and perpetuates the cultures, traditions and values of the people of Hawai'i through dance, language, art, music, histories and customs. It has served the community by:

- Performing at a variety of community and cultural events.
- Conducting public Polynesian dance workshops in Arlington for children and adults.
- Teaching students the values of humility, respect and *'ohana* (family).
- Sponsoring an annual *Hō'ike* (festival) where *haumana* (students) perform for the public.
- Sharing the unique Hawaiian culture at local schools, libraries and senior care facilities.

### **Jane Franklin Dance**

Jane Franklin Dance celebrates movement and makes dance accessible to a wide range of audiences through public performance, community engagement projects, dance education and collaboration with artists from other disciplines. It has served the community by:

- Offering free dance classes through the Successfully Aging program. This initiative brings dance workshops to senior centers such as the Multi-Purpose Senior Center at Walter Reed, Langston Brown Multi-Purpose Senior Center, Arlington Mill and Fairlington Senior Program.
- Managing the Forty+ program, a performing dance group of older adults committed to the joys of movement past the age of 40.
- Offering free performances and open rehearsals at locations such as Powhatan Springs Skate Park, Walter Reed and Langston Brown Multi-Purpose Senior Center.
- Engaging youth through after school dance classes and free workshops at Affordable Housing Corporation and Drew Model School, and through the Young Dancers Project, where young people ages 7 -11 perform alongside adult cast members.
- Providing family ticket pricing and discounts for youth.

**IBIS: A Chamber Music Society**

IBIS produces free concerts in intimate settings around Arlington and Greater Washington. It promotes chamber music and nurtures an audience of music lovers, neophytes and kids. It has served the community by:

- Offering numerous free concerts in community venues across Arlington in order to present chamber music in a manner that is accessible and appealing to as wide an audience as possible.
- Producing an annual concert for children (which in 2009 was repeated for an economically and culturally diverse audience at Long Branch Elementary School).
- Staging a benefit concert to aid Preservation Hall, a community effort to transform a church in Wellfleet, MA on Cape Cod (where IBIS's founders own a home).

**Indian Dance Educators Association (IDEA)**

The Indian Dance Educators Association promotes Indian dance in the United States through a variety of programs and performances. Working to raise awareness of the unique artistic gifts brought by dancers from India, it has served the Arlington community by:

- Offering special group rates for students and seniors.
- Providing free tickets to people with disabilities and special needs.
- Planning daytime dance programs for students in Arlington Public Schools, aged 8 to 18.
- Working with library groups and conducting lecture demonstrations about Indian dance and dance storytelling.
- Engaging youth members of IDEA in fundraising for a local animal shelter.

**Los Quetzales Mexican Dance Ensemble**

Los Quetzales Mexican Dance Ensemble works to preserve, promote and present Mexican folkloric traditions and culture through art, music and dance. It has served the community by:

- Sponsoring community dance workshops (most of them free) that provide Arlington children and adults a place to engage in meaningful extracurricular activity.
- Promoting physical activity and appreciation for the arts while providing a safe place for children to be after school.

### **The Metropolitan Chorus**

The Metropolitan Chorus provides a program of musical education, enrichment and enjoyment through performances of choral literature, symphonic pieces and chamber music. It has served the community by:

- Producing, for the past 22 years, a free annual *Messiah* sing-along at the First Presbyterian Church of Arlington.
- Singing in the annual Light-Up Rosslyn event for the holidays.
- Offering reduced ticket prices for senior citizens and students.
- Performing at local retirement facilities, The Virginian, Greenspring, Goodwin House East and Spring House.
- Offering free performances at Lubber Run Amphitheatre.
- Representing Arlington elsewhere in Virginia and in Washington D.C. through orchestra collaborations at Schlesinger Concert Hall and The Kennedy Center.

### **National Chamber Ensemble**

The National Chamber Ensemble provides quality entertainment and education to the general public, youth and adults about the specific genre of music known as chamber music. It has served the community by:

- Hosting a free instructional concert for Arlington County music students.
- Performing in a free outdoor community concert at Lubber Run Park.
- Offering free and discounted blocks of tickets to senior living centers and students.
- Including a young local musician in its Mozart birthday celebration concert, thus providing the youth with a valuable opportunity to work in a professional music setting.

### **Potomac Harmony Chorus**

Potomac Harmony Chorus aims to teach the American art form of four-part harmony to women; to encourage continual improvement in the craft through education and competition; and to share its appreciation for barbershop harmony with the general public. It has served the community by:

- Performing in various community tribute programs including the commemoration of the Korean War Armistice, 9/11 remembrance events and the DC Cultural Tourism program, "America Celebrates the Greatest Generation."
- Donating gift cards to the Arlington Department of Human Services Secret Santa Program.
- Collecting and donating candy for the Treats for Troops program.
- Donating blankets, mittens, scarves and toiletry items to the Arlington Street People's Assistance Network and the Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless.
- Collecting over \$1,100 in donations at its Holiday Sing Along for Arlington's Doorways for Women and Children.

### **The Pro-Bolivian Committee**

The Pro-Bolivian Committee is a cultural non-profit organization that engages the Bolivian immigrant community and its youth in dance, art and Bolivian culture. It has served the community by:

- Engaging young people in culturally enriching performances and festivals, such as the Nusta Festival and the Bolivian Festival. Such events occupy area youth in constructive, educational, drug-free activities.
- Providing mentorship opportunities for youth.
- Sponsoring two college scholarships for students of Bolivian descent.
- Participating in community events such as Arlington Neighborhood Day.

### **Requiebro Spanish Dance Academy**

Requiebro Spanish Dance Academy presents the richness and variety of the music and dance of Spain. It has served the community by:

- Enlisting dancers and audience members who hail from various ages, ethnicities, socio-economic background and native languages.
- Offering grants to beginner dancers who are in need of financial support.
- Performing at community events throughout the year.

### **Signature Theatre**

Signature Theatre, the 2009 recipient of the Regional Theatre Tony Award, produces plays and musical theatre works drawing a large and diverse audience of more than 70,000 patrons each year from the greater Washington area. Signature has served young people, emerging artists, adult learners and the public through a number of community outreach programs by:

- Offering its *Signature in the Schools* program, reaching more than 1,000 Arlington County high school students annually from ethnically diverse backgrounds at Wakefield High School, along with Yorktown and Washington and Lee students. This program focuses on integrating in-depth, high-quality instruction and interaction into classroom lesson plans, after-school workshops, apprenticeships and the production of an all-student play, encouraging students to communicate with each other and adults while learning history, language arts, literature and elements of the theatre.
- Making its *Overtures* musical theatre training program available to 20 talented performers (ages 19-24) each year in a two-week schedule of master classes led by Broadway and regional artists. Signature makes *Overtures* accessible to emerging artists from underrepresented communities by offering fellowships to qualified students.
- Providing musical theatre training to students (ages 14-18) through *Stage One Workshops*, offering a meaningful opportunity for the area's talented teens to receive musical theatre training outside the traditional school setting.
- Offering free discussion programs based on Signature's productions at the Shirlington branch of the Arlington Public Library. These include *From Page to Stage*, a program open to the public free of charge, moderated by experts who focus on conversations about issues addressed in Signature

shows and the once-a-month *Brown Bag Thursdays*, which are lunchtime interviews with artists, directors, writers and performers.

- Hosting an annual free open house that attracts thousands of community residents for tours, performances, master classes and other family-friendly activities, culminating in a free outdoor concert on Signature's plaza.

### **Starving Artist Theatre**

The Starving Artist Theatre is a catalyst for local artists to take the leap into professional theatre. It works to impact the metropolitan area with new, unpublished plays and local talent. Starving Artist Theatre has served the community by:

- Managing the *Little Artist* playwriting and directing camp, which teaches students how to write and direct their own plays.
- Sponsoring an individual artist grant program, *Feed the Artist*, to benefit local undiscovered artists.
- Partnering with other area theatres to raise money for children's charities.

### **Synetic Theater**

Synetic Theater is the Washington metropolitan area's award-winning physical theatre company, fusing drama, mime, movement and dance in four to five main stage productions each year. The organization has served Arlington's diverse community by:

- Offering a conservatory-style studio program in dramatic and visual arts taught by professional artists for children (ages 4 to 15), drawing more than 200 area children each year.
- Making its free *LITarts* educational residency program available to 30 students from the Arlington public school Hoffman-Boston, a majority of whom are eligible for free or reduced lunches based on their low-income status. In this program, dramatic and visual arts are used to assist underprivileged students who are either struggling with literacy skills or unable to read due to limited language proficiency or unique auditory, kinesthetic or visual learning styles.
- Keeping ticket prices at a minimum to make theatre accessible to individuals and families of all economic backgrounds, as well as students and senior citizens.
- Partnering with NASA to produce a show about astronomy, provided free to underserved children in local public schools.

### **Teatro de la Luna**

Teatro de la Luna is a professional theatre company serving the community by providing access to theater from a Latin-American perspective, as well as a wide range of bicultural workshops and special events, enhancing cross-cultural understanding. The organization has served Arlington's diverse community by:

- Producing its annual *International Festival of Hispanic Theater*, bringing actors and actresses from throughout the Hispanic world to Arlington, and featuring one or two low-cost performances for children and families.
- Offering the *Experience Theater Program*, providing free or low-cost bilingual classroom theatre performances and theater appreciation workshops to school-aged audiences, including partnerships with Arlington's dual-language schools, Key and Claremont.
- Establishing ongoing relationships with Gunston Middle School, as well as Ashlawn, Carlin Springs, Barcroft, Campbell, Randolph, Patrick Henry, Barrett and Abingdon elementary schools.
- Conducting performances at both Aurora Hills Branch Library and Central Library to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.
- Offering child care during Saturday matinee performances.
- Offering discounted tickets for Thursday night and Saturday matinee performances of main stage productions, allowing Arlington residents on fixed incomes to attend live theater.
- Offering free admission to the company's *La Pluma y la Palabra* poetry marathon.
- Providing Spanish-language training for adults as well as bilingual theater workshops for children on weekends, during school hours and in the summer.
- Donating pairs of tickets to various Arlington County schools for their fundraising events.
- Responding in a variety of ways to the needs of Arlington County's Latino community, many of whom are living in poverty and some of whom are linguistically isolated.

### **The American Century Theater (TACT)**

The American Century Theatre's mission is to present 20<sup>th</sup> century American plays and musicals worthy of being remembered and revived; reconstruct lost works; and produce stage presentations of classic scripts from other media. TACT has served the community by:

- Offering free tickets to children under 18 years of age if they are accompanied by a paying adult.
- Producing audience guides and educational discussions about TACT performances to give context to works presented. These are delivered via teleconference calls, podcasts, blog postings and more. Some calls have reached at least 250 people, including groups from senior and assisted living centers.
- Providing Arlington Public Schools and home-schooled students hands-on theatrical training in such areas as costumes, props, etc.
- Partnering with the *Teens and Theater* group to conduct a summer day camp for children 8-18 years old.
- Working on a weekly basis with high school student interns from the Yorktown High School Special Education program. The interns gain experience in both an office and theater environment.
- Offering free readings of plays and concert versions of musicals.

### **The Arlington Players**

The Arlington Players is a nonprofit volunteer organization that produces artistically and technically challenging theater in a grand style. It has enriched the Arlington community by:

- Providing live theater to a broad, diverse audience of over 4700 patrons per season, 45% of whom are Arlington residents, at an affordable price.
- Sponsoring a Charitable Partnership Program that provides ticket vouchers to Arlington service organizations.
- Presenting post-performance educational sessions (after the first Sunday matinee for each production).
- Offering workshops to provide a vehicle for further community participation and involvement in the performing arts.
- Developing local talents who have gone on to enjoy success in professional theater and film.

### **Washington Balalaika Society (WBS)**

As the largest organization of its kind in America, the Washington Balalaika Society performs the traditional music of Russia and Eastern Europe. It is a community resource for the study, preservation and performance of this musical genre. WBS has served the community by:

- Offering free admission to children 12 and under.
- Presenting free performances at Lubber Run Park, Aurora Hills Senior Center and the Barrett Elementary School International Festival. Ensembles also perform at other schools, churches, retirement homes, folk festivals, parks and benefits.
- Sponsoring a Children's Music Academy to teach Russian folk instruments.

### **Washington Shakespeare Company**

Washington Shakespeare Company is a classically oriented theatre company that works to engage a diverse audience, emphasizing a provocative, bold approach with its productions. The organization has served Arlington's community by:

- Making available more than 32 "pay-what-you can" performances each year, allowing all Arlington residents the opportunity to enjoy theater, regardless of their economic circumstances.
- Presenting two free staged readings at the Kennedy Center's Page to Stage program, with another two free readings at the playhouse.
- Hosting the free *Artistic Directors Forum* of area artistic directors discussing theatre issues with the community.
- Making its facilities available as gallery and storage space to county-affiliated artists and organizations, as well as lending sets, costumes and prop pieces.
- Donating theatre tickets to the Theatre Lab, Yorktown High School, etc..
- Committing to diversity in casting. In 2006, it was recognized for its commitment to its diversity in casting in 2006 with the James B. Hunter Human Rights Award.
- Being recognized for its community outreach work with the Elizabeth Campbell Award by the American Association of University Women.

## TESTIMONIALS & ANECDOTES

Beyond those featured in the spotlights throughout this report, several arts groups shared the following testimonials and anecdotes related to their groups' *quality of life* impact on people and community.

- *"I've been doing [**Educational Theatre Company**] camps since I was eleven years old. When I began doing the camps, I was incredibly shy and quiet. Over the years, I've left my bubble and learned how to interact with others and express myself. Over the years, I've gotten to work with some amazing people and made friends that I will keep for life. Educational Theatre Company always manages to be fun, friendly and challenging. I come back to ETC year after year because I always feel welcomed and appreciated. ETC has become like a family to me."*

-Ana Cackley  
Teen, Assistant Director of Teen Shakespeare

- *"Exercise, for me, has never been fun. With Parkinson's, it became increasingly a necessity, just as it became ever more a chore. Even the few physical activities I'd once enjoyed, cycling and dancing, looked no longer possible. I was wrong. Lucy McCauley [of **Bowen McCauley Dance's** Dance for PD program] showed me—and much of my PD support group—that we could still move to the music. More significantly, we could be moved by the music. No matter how clumsy we were as we came through the door, every one of us left our inhibitions back with our shoes and canes, and for one magical hour a week became a dance troupe. We learned ballet moves, we forgot how stiff we were, we applauded our fellow dancers' hesitant first steps, we saw how our own strength and flexibility improved even though we were having fun. Middle-aged and seniors, men and women, newly diagnosed and nearly immobilized, we all left feeling that there was life in these uncooperative muscles yet."*

-Phyllis Richman  
Former Washington Post Food Critic

- *"Chorister Dick Pellerin is the captain of a carpool of singers, and he cites his **Metropolitan Chorus** car mates as his support group for nearly twenty years. "*

-Tonya Robles  
Managing Director, The Metropolitan Chorus

- *“The ‘Kids Fitting In Fund’ was founded in 2006 by [Arlington Artists Alliance member], Sandi Parker, to help lower income students at her children’s neighborhood middle school, Swanson Middle School. Sandi donates a portion of proceeds from her artwork to the fund, which provides gift cards to area stores, purchases, or cash for students with needs identified by the school counselors, social workers, teachers and the principal. TKFIF has provided funds for, among other things: winter coats, chorus uniforms, food baskets, field trips, talent show costumes, clothing, yearbooks, band trips, school play costumes and 8<sup>th</sup> grade dance and graduation ceremony dresses.”*

-Bryan Jernigan  
President, Arlington Artists Alliance

- *“In 2009, **Alma Boliviana** was fortunate to register a special eight year old little girl named Janelly Ramirez. Janelly is about as special as they come. This young lady dances both Caporales and Tinkus. She knows every step and body movement of these two dances. Janelly has a condition that affects her bone structure, from her ribs to her legs. Her legs are developed in a manner that one can tell she has a disability. Janelly walks with a limp. In her first parade participation, the Apple Blossom Festival in Winchester, VA, she danced 18 of the 24 blocks of the parade route. She was in too much pain to finish the parade. In June of this year, she is scheduled to have hip replacement surgery. This surgery will incapacitate Janelly’s ability to physically dance for the rest of the year. Because of her impending surgery, her parents did not want Janelly to over-exert her body, but Alma and her doctor begged to differ. Janelly’s doctor assured her parents that dancing would be a form of therapy for her mental well-being and body.”*

-Lucio Villazon  
President, Alma Boliviana

- *“I have been a proud member of Carmen de Vicente's Spanish Dance Academy [**Requiebros Spanish Dance Academy**] for the past 17 years. I cannot overemphasize the impact that this Dance Academy has had in Northern Virginia and in the Washington Metropolitan Area. In my opinion, the main intrinsic value of her art is her ability to offer such a vast cultural experience to county residents who, without leaving their home town, have the possibility of immersing themselves in a foreign culture at their door step. A value added to the above is the physical well-being that all of us feel with such an incredible type of exercise. It keeps us in excellent shape, it allows us to fight against obesity, and it stimulates our minds and feelings. Besides, all of us have a high sense of accomplishment when, regardless of age, we dress in our Sunday best for our yearly performances. These are all positive contributions to society.”*

-Martha S. Daza  
Springfield, Virginia

- *“[The Arlington Players] give doctors, lawyers, engineers, homemakers, government employees and others with stressful lives and careers a chance to play act, play with power tools, and hone their craft, some with a goal of turning their experience into careers in professional theater. Several of our volunteers have gone on to professional careers, including controllers and CFOs at several local professional theaters, actors who have appeared on Broadway or in commercials, as well as a Tony-award winning director.”*

-Nikki Hoffpauir  
President, The Arlington Players

- *“The **Arlingtones** believe the power of song is one of the strongest and most enduring comforts. Every year, around Christmas, we put on free holiday performances at area nursing homes, and we can see some of the holiday cheer we hope to bring reflected in the residents' faces. Some sing along with us, and we encourage it! This is the best sign that our song has brought some joy to someone who may feel lonely and restricted. The Arlingtones have also seen many of our own members, friends and community members in hospitals in dark times, and while they may have difficulty speaking, or confusion at their own situation, we find that singing the old songs with them always brings them some special memories, clarity and happiness. Even when they can't sing along, the effect is still seen. The Arlingtones are humbled to bring this familiar comfort of song to anyone who asks.”*

-John Cummings  
The Arlingtones

- *“A military family, Shirlene and Mark Ostrov and their twin daughters, Noelani and Leilani (10), recently relocated to the D.C. area from Hawai'i and now live in Arlington. One Saturday, their daughters were playing in a soccer match just below the Fairlington Community Center, where we were having classes with another one of our master instructors from Hawai'i. Shirlene 'heard' the singing and music and wondered where it was all coming from! She ran up to the Community Center, and when she learned of **Hālau O 'Aulani's** cultural school, she was so excited! She said she never would have guessed that there was a Hawaiian studies program in Arlington! She soon enrolled herself and her daughters. Relocation was very difficult for this family – they knew no one and really missed everyone back in Hawai'i. Now they've found a 'new' family in Arlington, and Shirlene and Mark are so grateful that every Sunday, just a few blocks from home, their twins can learn the dances, customs and values of their own heritage.”*

-Ku'ulei Stockman  
Co-Founder, Principal and Board Member  
Hālau O 'Aulani

- *“The [Bowen McCauley Dance Exemplary Project] project involved integrating the 17 students in our Functional Life Skills (FLS) classes with three classes of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. We wanted to produce an original adaptation of the classic tale ‘The Little Engine That Could’, illustrating the narrative with creative movement and visual art. One fourth grade class would create a set, another fourth grade class would design and make the costumes, and the third class would be partnered with the FLS students to create the actual performance. BMD worked with us to bring out the best in all these students. Alison Crosby (BMD Outreach Coordinator) helped us choreograph a performance that worked in seven students in wheel chairs, a group of hard to direct physically and mentally challenged students, and a group of very able fourth graders. No Small Task. She also adapted the story to work as a 20-minute movement based presentation and came up with a wonderful musical score to anchor the dance pieces. Everyone worked very hard to make this production, and maybe more importantly, the journey to the final performance, meaningful and successful, and the final outcome was a big hit. The parents of our FLS students, who often never have the opportunity to see their children part of a stage production, especially appreciated the whole process.”*

*-Lynn Westergren  
Exemplary Project Coordinator, Glebe Elementary School*

- *“I thought the show [Bowen McCauley Dance’s ‘The Unicorn, the Gorgon and the Manticore’] was great. My kids were able to retell the story as a class upon our return so the acting was perfect for the basic understanding. I also love ballet and think it is important for my students to be exposed to different forms of art. Several of the children remembered the ballet...it made an impression on them!”*

*-Lara Heubush  
Carlin Springs Elementary School*

- *“A friend invited Mary Dempsey to her first **Teatro de la Luna** performance three years ago. Now she rarely misses a show. ‘Teatro de la Luna is a tremendous community resource,’ Dempsey said. ‘These are contemporary Latin American plays that I would have no way to see otherwise,’ she added. ‘I’ve never been to one that didn’t stretch my brain a bit – and that includes the annual International Festival of Hispanic Theater, the Latin America Harp Festival and the interactive Poetry Marathon.’*

*For seven-year-old Alejandra Gamez, meanwhile, it’s being on stage that is the draw. Teatro de la Luna’s theater workshops for children have boosted her reading and writing skills in English and Spanish. While Gamez is a regular at formal workshops, the nonprofit theater group also does special presentations in public schools. Last year, more than 11,000 children took part in those free programs.”*

-Nucky Walder  
Producer, Teatro de Luna

- *“Through their theatre experiences, **Encore Stage and Studio** kids develop or enhance key skills: for example, teamwork, responsibility and leadership. One young actor, David (10), was hyper-energetic, inventing his own lines, and had difficulty learning to hit his marks and be still when it was required. But the Encore staff knew his energy would come through on stage if it could only be channeled, and kept working with him. By the time the play opened, he shone in his small part, and he and his family were thrilled that he could experience success, when he had encountered so little of it in other group activities. A big part of his success was learning that he was a vital part of a team, and that his performance could really lift his cast mates and enhance the play.*

*One young actress, Sam (16) recalled, ‘I began acting with Encore when I was ten, and loved being in plays with older kids who made me feel welcome and valued. When I became one of the older ones in the cast, at first I was annoyed that the younger cast members seemed to know so little about how to conduct themselves in rehearsal and onstage: and then I remembered that I had been mentored by older kids who must have been irritated by my inexperience. I learned a lot from the older kids about acting, projecting and not being afraid to do something that felt silly. Now I realize how important it is to pass that knowledge along to kids just starting out in theater, because as a beginner, knowing that someone with a lot more experience than you has confidence in your abilities is pretty priceless. And it makes the show that much better when everyone is confident in themselves.’ Sam now works during the summer with the youngest actors at Encore’s It’s Elementary.”*

-Pat Kobor and Betsy Lohman  
Co-Presidents, Encore Stage & Studio

- *“When I was in the 5th and 6th grade, I was fortunate enough to have a once-in-a-lifetime teacher. Carolyn Zolbe inspired our class by using music and drama to teach us everything from science to history. She also encouraged me— forced me is actually how I remember it—to participate in a community theater affectionately called at the time ACT, Arlington Children’s Theater.*

*Now more than forty years later the kids’ refer to it as TCT, **The Children’s Theater** [part of Encore Stage and Studio]. In my mind, that is just what it is: THE children’s theater. Through The Children’s Theater, I gained self-confidence, poise and a willingness to speak publicly without abject, unbridled fear. But I also gained lifelong friendships and an undying respect for performers and those who pour their heart and soul into producing and directing shows. The integrity of the arts is a value I learned at a young age as an initially reluctant, but ultimately enthusiastic, children’s theater actor. When my children began to audition, and ultimately perform, in The Children’s Theater productions, I took tremendous pride that this organization was still teaching important lessons to its participants and entertaining hundreds of local kids in the process. I hope to see my grandchildren donning a grey beard and being magically transformed into a wizard some day. I will smile knowing that they are indeed being transformed by this invaluable experience and will do what I can to ensure that the tradition continues.”*

-Peter Leibold  
CEO/EVP, American Health Lawyers Association

- *Sections of **The American Theater Company’s** production of a “A Piece of My Heart,” a compelling drama about women’s roles in the Vietnam war, were produced on the National Mall. It prompted this note of thanks:*

*“You were fabulous at bringing the stories to life and in helping people who lived those experiences be transported back to a time in life that was both courageous and profoundly confusing.”*

-Vietnam Women’s Memorial Foundation

## CONCLUSION

### THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF THE ARTS TO ARLINGTON COUNTY

As stated previously, research has demonstrated that community residents who participate in arts and culture tend to engage in other types of community activities. Research also indicates that the presence of cultural organizations in a community stimulates local community participation overall.

A vital way for Arlington County to engender civic participation is through its support of the arts –*an industry that stimulates our economy, brings tourism and other business to the County, improves our health and well-being, and makes the community a better place with a superior quality of life.* These factors embody the intrinsic value of the arts and present a case for continued support of the arts industry by Arlington County and its citizens.

\* \* \*