



## Fiscal Year 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

### ***Grants to Arts Organizations, Communities, Schools, and Individuals***

**Total: 92 awards and grants totaling \$523,021 were awarded to area organizations and artists through twelve grant programs, including:**

- **\$123,529 for 21 grants through our Art Projects Grant Program, \$78,116 for 4 Art Project Legacy Grants, and \$2,500 for 1 Art Legacy Project Planning Grant**
- **12 Operating Support Grants totaling \$97,401**
- **\$7,500 for 3 Arts Organization Development Grants**, awarded for organizations to increase their long-term stability and capacity through organizational development and management projects
- **\$87,683 for 9 Equipment/Facilities Improvement Grants**, awarded for the purchase of equipment items and facilities improvement that will aid in the organization's capacity to serve the community through the arts
- **\$27,670 to 8 area schools for artist residencies and arts related field trips through our Arts in the Schools Grant Program**
- **3 grants** were awarded to students through the **Art Study Opportunity for Youth Grant Program** for a total of **\$1,500**
- **19 individual artists** were granted a total of **\$85,355** for projects to further their careers as artists through the **Individual Artist Programs for Emerging Artists, Established Career Artists, and Artist Equity Grants**
- **11 Going Virtual: Equipment, Technology & Training grants** (created as a response to the pandemic from a new funding source) totaling **\$10,767** and enabling organizations from our region to upgrade technologies and find new ways of reaching audiences and serving the region

### ***Awards***

**SMAC awarded the Prairie Disciple Award for \$1,000 in 2021 to Rosemary Glesener of Bird Island.** This award is to recognize a person who has been instrumental in promoting the arts in the 18-county area of southwestern Minnesota. Rosemary was nominated and had letters of support from many community members! Mark Glesener, the instigator of the nomination, said that Rosemary, a Minnesota native, has resided in Renville County for forty years. During this time, she has organized art shows in various venues, ranging from a National Guard Armory to an abandoned convent and more. These shows were three-day events where local artists as well as regional and metropolitan artists participated. As a Cum Laude graduate of the University of Wisconsin – Superior, she designed her own major entitled *Integrative Community Wellness* which encompassed her belief that art, psychology and health are interconnected. She has been instrumental in the management of the Bird Island Cultural Centre since its inception in November 2016. She began as a founding member and Board President and then stepped down to assume the role of Director in December 2018. Mark said, "as an artist, writer, and entrepreneur, she thrives on the creative process." Rosemary will be publicly honored at the SMAC Annual Celebration of Southwest Minnesota Arts & Artists in the fall, held in Jackson county this year.

## Technical Assistance

- **Due to the Pandemic, SMAC wasn't able to host their traditional annual Artist Retreat, Arts Organization Summit or Artist Gathering for 2021.** However, we started having monthly virtual conversations for organizations & artists of our region. These conversations provided a casual environment for our communities to share, network, and generate ideas and inspirations together. SMAC held **2** virtual workshops dealing with basic copyright materials for artists and arts organizations in our region. Instead of the Artist Retreat, SMAC hosted **9** small sized arts classes **taught by artists in our region, for artists in our region.** Fern Cloud of Yellow Medicine County taught Native Art: Beaded Medicine Bags in Milan, New London, and Pipestone. Saara Myrene Raappana of Lyon County taught Poetry in Marshall, Pipestone, and Willmar. John Sterner of Lyon County taught outdoor oil painting, 2 classes in Lynd and 1 in Currie.
- **15** Online Grantwriting Webinars and Q&A sessions were conducted with 103 people logging on. Videos of the webinars are recorded and provided online for viewing after the live event.
- **SMAC's Annual Arts Celebration** was a virtual event for the first time! With the help of our grantees, SMAC put together 18 videos showcasing grant recipients and projects from every region. These videos are still available online. A short live (virtual) celebration was held to honor and celebrate SMAC's 2020 Prairie Star and Prairie Disciple recipients, Tom Wirt and Julie Iverson.
- The **SMAC Art Gallery** provided **5** regional artists (all SMAC grantees) the opportunity to have a solo exhibit, **2** artists to share a dual exhibit, and **3** Dakota artists to have a group exhibit. **2** in-person receptions and **5** virtual receptions took place. Each exhibit included a virtual exhibit option, which are still available to view on our YouTube channel, Facebook and website. Exhibits in FY 2021 included: Craig & Lynn Edwards of New London, Jessica Bak of Windom, Olga Krasovska of Granite Falls, John Kellen of Willmar, Nicole Zempel of Granite Falls, and the 3 Dakota City-Artists-in-Residence: Talon Cavender-Wilson of Sacred Heart, Fern Cloud of Granite Falls, and Lisa Nez of Redwood Falls. Additionally, **4** regional artist grantees were also showcased on SMAC's Third Thursday Virtual Artist Talks, including Lee Kanten of Ortonville, Marjorie Nilssen of New London, Dan Wahl of Walnut Grove and Sima Wewetzer of Marshall.
- Staff holds monthly **Grant Support Open Office Hours** on the second Tuesday of every month; for much of 2021 these were virtual, but they are back to being in-office from 10 am to 2 pm now. Applicants and grantees can use this time with staff to talk through project ideas or get help with finding the right grant program, filling out a grant application, preparing work samples or budgets, or completing a final report for a grant received.
- SMAC created an **Equity Taskforce** which meets multiple times a year to assist SMAC Staff and board members in identifying and breaking down barriers for diversity, equity and inclusion. In 2021 we hired multiple accessibility consultants to help us move towards our services and events being more accessible to everyone; this will be an on-going process.
- We have also **opened up our meeting room** for artists and/or organizations that need the space for teaching classes and holding meetings or receptions.
- The **VOICES** newsletter is published online monthly and includes upcoming SMAC events, grant information, arts opportunities, news items and more!
- **SMAC website** [www.swmnarts.org](http://www.swmnarts.org) continues to provide up-to-date information on resources related to the pandemic and virtual opportunities, available grants, news and arts opportunities, on-line grant forms, recorded webinars, calendar of arts events (including virtual), links to arts resources & access resources, a regional arts organization & artist registry and more!



*Funding for the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council's programs and services is provided by memberships and donations from individuals, businesses, organizations, schools, cities and counties, the McKnight Foundation, an allocation from the Minnesota State Legislature and by the voters of Minnesota thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.*