

# THE ARLINGTON COMMISSION FOR ARTS & CULTURE (ACAC) 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

## Mission

The mission of the new Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture (ACAC) is to promote and develop programs that integrate arts and culture into daily life, expand creative opportunities, and foster a vibrant, sustainable arts scene to engage a diverse range of artists, residents, businesses and visitors.

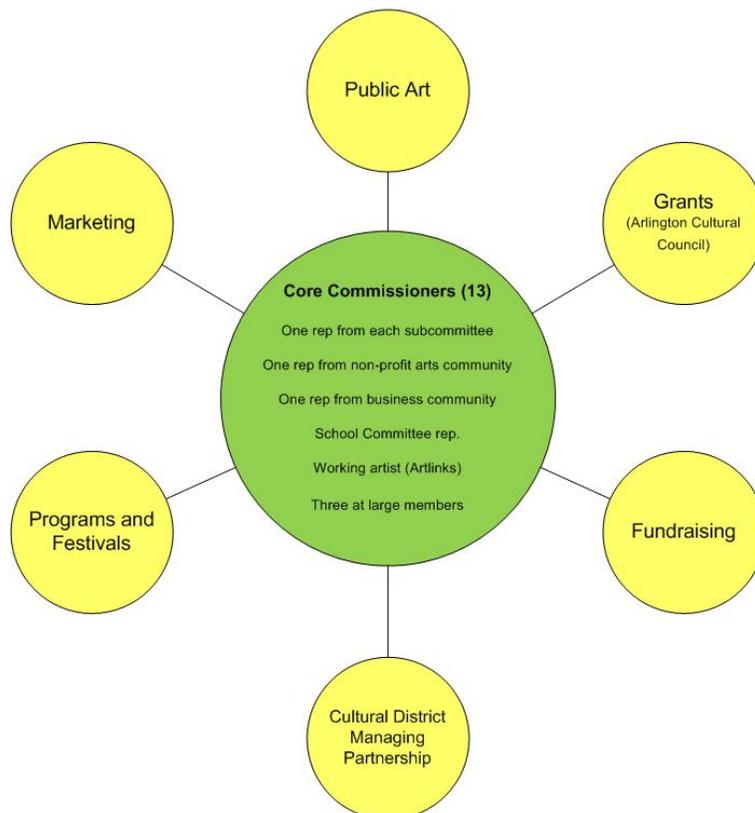
## Overview of the newly expanded Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture

This has been a significant transitional year for the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture (formerly, Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture).

In accordance with the Arts and Culture Action Plan, completed in August 2017, ACAC worked with Town Counsel to create a new bylaw, passed by Town Meeting in May of 2018, that positions ACAC as an umbrella organization including: the Arlington Cultural Council (ACC), Arlington Public Art (APA), and the Cultural District Managing Partnership (CDMP) as well as representation from other important stakeholders including non-profit arts organizations, the business community, and working artists. The new ACAC follows the organizational structure recommended in the 2017 Arts and Culture Action Plan.

There is a Core Committee and five Action Committees: Programs and Festivals, Grants and Fundraising (separated into two committees), Public Art, and Marketing and Evaluation. The Cultural District Managing Partnership is a “more substantial sub-committee” with a formal organizational structure. (See diagram below and Cultural District section.)

### Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture



While the bylaw was being reviewed by the State Attorney General's office, applications to join the new ACAC poured in! ACAC is excited to welcome many new members to the Commission and to our Action Committees. The expanded Commission launched in September of 2018. The following is the roster as of December 2018:

CORE COMMITTEE/COMMISSIONERS:

Adria Arch (Co-Chair, Public Art Action Committee Chair)  
Stephanie Marlin-Curiel (Co-Chair)  
Janet Oberto (Secretary and Marketing Action Committee Chair)  
Stephen Poltorzycki (Treasurer)  
Cristin Bagnall (At Large member)  
Ali Carter (Planning Department Liaison – non-voting)  
Tom Davison (Programs and Festivals Action Committee Chair)  
Kimberley Harding (Grants Action Committee/Arlington Cultural Council Chair)  
Stewart Ikeda (School Committee Appointee)  
Lydia Kenig Scher (Working Artist community – ArtLinks representative)  
Beth Locke (Chamber of Commerce/Business Community Representative)  
Andrea Nicolay (Cultural District Managing Partnership Chair)  
Aneliese Ruggles (Fundraising Action Committee Chair)  
Linda Shoemaker (Non-profit arts organization representative)

ACTION COMMITTEES:

PUBLIC ART (Arlington Public Art):

Adria Arch (Chair)  
Stephanie Marlin-Curiel  
Cecily Miller  
Lorri Berenberg  
Janet Oberto  
Purvi Patwari  
Marie Peters  
Dava Silva  
Sean Snyder

GRANTS COMMITTEE (Arlington Cultural Council)

Kimberley Harding Co-Chair  
Lisbet Taylor, Co-Chair  
Dave Harris  
Becky Holmes-Farley  
Jeff Timperi

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Aneliese Ruggles (Chair)  
Barbara Costa  
Cathy Garnett  
Tiffany Pounds Williams

MARKETING COMMITTEE

Janet Oberto (Chair)  
Stewart Ikeda  
Beth Locke (CDMP)  
Amy Mongeau (Webmaster)  
Stephen Poltorzycki  
Jan Whitted (CDMP)

PROGRAMS AND FESTIVALS COMMITTEE:

Tom Davison (Chair)  
Linda Shoemaker  
Cristin Bagnall  
Lydia Kenig-Scher

### CULTURAL DISTRICT CORE MANAGING PARTNERS

Andrea Nicolay (Chair, Director of Libraries, Town Representative)  
Adria Arch and Stephanie Marlin-Curiel (Co-Chairs, ACAC)  
Beth Locke (Chamber of Commerce Business)  
Jenny Raitt (Director of Planning and Community Development)  
Linda Shoemaker (Arlington Center for the Arts)  
Jan Whitted (Capitol Square Business Association)

### CULTURAL DISTRICT PARTNERS AT-LARGE

Mike Buglio (Arlington Center Merchants Association)  
Alberto Guzman (Arlington International Film Festival)  
Pamela Meister (Arlington Historical Society)  
Charlotte Pierce (St. John's Coffeehouse)  
Aimee Taberner (Cyrus E. Dallin Museum)  
Elizabeth Taylor (Arlington Cultural Council)  
Judy Weinberg (Arlington Friends of the Drama)

The Commission's Core Committee meets monthly, on the first Thursday of the month, usually at Town Hall. All meetings are open to the public. The Commission's four action committees have unlimited volunteer opportunities open to the public without formal appointment. People are welcome to contact us to get involved via our website, [artsarlington.org](http://artsarlington.org). Action committees also meet monthly in between core committee meetings.

## Website and Branding

ACAC's crowning achievement this year was the creation of a comprehensive Arts and Culture website, [artsarlington.org](http://artsarlington.org). The website covers: news and announcements, the cultural district, public art, grants and resources, a comprehensive listing of Arlington's arts and culture assets, an interactive map, and the highly anticipated cultural calendar powered by Arts Boston. ACAC contracted with Nilou Moolchala of NYM to design and develop the website and design logos for the website, for ACAC, and for the Arlington Cultural District. See below.



Screenshot of ArtsArlington homepage



For the calendar, ACAC chose to contract with Arts Boston to provide the platform. Linking with Arts Boston ensured that listings were vetted by Arts Boston staff and that users would be incentivized to post on the calendar as their postings would appear both on our website that filters Arlington events, and on the Arts Boston website, which has a broader audience.

The Arts Arlington website went live on September 8<sup>th</sup> with a formal launch on Town Day, September 15<sup>th</sup>.

ACAC hired a webmaster, Amy Mongeau, to maintain and update the website, push content through social media channels, as well as send out a monthly newsletter, the first of which was sent in November.

The following are highlights from a report on user data collected between September 8 and December 6.

Since launch (Sept 8-Dec 6):

- 1,203 users
- 83% of all users are new, 16.6% are returning
- 2,056 sessions (defined as: the instance that a user visits the site and interacts with it in any capacity)
- 3.97 average page views per session (how many pages are viewed per site visit)
- Returning users view on average 5 pages per session
- Returning users stay on the site on average 2 minutes longer than those who are new

Demographics:

- 73.5% female
- 25% of users are between the ages of 55-64
- 20% between 45-54
- 19% between 35-44
- 17% 65+
- 15% between 25-34
- 3% between 18-24

Users are predominantly from MA, but include users access the site from all of New England and throughout the East Coast.

- 78% of users are from Arlington
- 13% from Boston
- 8% from Burlington
- 4.5% from Cambridge
- 3.6% from Lexington
- 50% of users access site from desktop computer, 43% on mobile phones, 7% on tablets
- 60% of users came to the site directly by typing in [artsarlington.org](http://artsarlington.org)
- 30% of users came via social media
- 6% of users came via organic search
- 4% of users came from a website referral (another site linking to ours)

Days with email blasts or social posts linking back to the site see a significant spike in traffic - currently an average day is 20-30 users, average day with email/social post is 70-80 users.

- 51 people have subscribed to the newsletter via the website
- 663 total unique people on mailing list
- Facebook followers: 407
- Instagram followers: 131



## **Cultural District Managing Partnership (CDMP)**

The CDMP devoted the first half of the year to formalizing their structure. The structure consists of a core executive committee and standing task groups, of which the marketing and impact analysis committees are currently active. An ad hoc subcommittee, "Committee to Fill the Gap", has formed to focus on activating the area between the East and the Center in order to create a more cohesive district. Since the formal adoption of the newly expanded ACAC, the CDMP marketing committee is being integrated with the ACAC marketing committee. The broader managing partnership consists of businesses and organizations within or affiliated with the District. The executive committee meets monthly while the full managing partnership meets quarterly.

### **Arlington Cultural District Core Managing Partners**

Andrea Nicolay (Chair, Director of Libraries)  
Stephanie Marlin-Curiel and Adria Arch (Co-Chairs, ACAC)  
Beth Locke (Chamber of Commerce)  
Jenny Raitt (Director of Planning and Community Development)  
Linda Shoemaker (Arlington Center for the Arts)  
Jan Whitted (Capitol Square Business Association)

### **Managing Partners At-Large**

Mike Buglio (Arlington Center Merchants Association)  
Alberto Guzman (Arlington International Film Festival)  
Pamela Meister (Arlington Historical Society)  
Charlotte Pierce (St. John's Coffeehouse)  
Aimee Taberner (Cyrus E. Dallin Museum)  
Elizabeth Taylor (Arlington Cultural Council)  
Judy Weinberg (Arlington Friends of the Drama)

Using funds supplied from a 2018 MCC \$5,000 grant, the CDMP worked with Nilou Moochala of NYM design to develop a Cultural District logo, and the Cultural District and interactive map pages of the [artsarlington.org](http://artsarlington.org) website. Other marketing materials created using these funds included Arlington Cultural District information cards and decals for Arlington's storefront businesses in the district and large street decals to be applied during festivals and special events.

The "Committee to Fill the Gap" issued an open *Call for Ideas* over the summer and collected 87 ideas. The planning department has catalogued the ideas in accordance with the Arts and Culture Action Plan goals and will be distributing them to the committees assigned to those goals for evaluation and possible implementation.

The CDMP's Impact and Analysis Committee has met to gather data gathering measures including: bikeway counts, Arlington Friends of the Drama tickets, Coffeehouse attendance, Library visitors, Regent Theater attendance, Capitol Theater attendance, Dallin Museum visitors and Russell House visitors. The planning department has submitted a technical assistance application to the Metropolitan Area Planning Counsel to help to develop tools for impact analysis.

In December the CDMP received word that (for the second year) they were successful in being awarded an MCC \$5,000 Grant to cultural districts for work to be completed between January and June 2019. The 2019 grant will cover marketing and programming within the District.



## Public Art Committee (Arlington Public Art)

The Public Art Committee, originally established as Arlington Public Art in 2010, now has a significant history in Arlington. Celebrated installations include the Boys and Girls Club mural, painted transformer boxes, outdoor art exhibitions in our public parks, and the annual *Chairful Where You Sit* exhibition/fundraiser. Since the Mass Ave East Arlington redesign was completed, Arlington Public Art has been working with professional Public Art Curator Cecily Miller on community engagement and to produce works of public art that reflect the values of our local community. Cecily also coordinates with planning department projects as the landscape of our Town changes, with attention to the Massachusetts Cultural Council (August 2017) designation of East Arlington to Arlington Center as a Cultural District. Cecily created and implemented *Pathways*, a project specifically designed to showcase the bike path and Spy Pond as a cultural resources while activating the Bikeway as a cultural connector between East Arlington and Arlington Center to fill in this “Gap” in our Cultural District. As a professional consultant, Cecily Miller implements a range of projects aimed at producing high-quality, commissioned public art for Arlington, partnering with local and outside-Arlington artists. The projects specifically focus on community engagement to meet our mission.

Community engagement projects this year included:

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Fox Festival Parade

Animal mask making workshops were held at the Thompson School and the Fox Library and in Arlington Center during *Porchfest*. Many families from the community participated, with their creations, in the parade that was held as part of the *Feast of the East Festival* and led by the Second Line Social Aid and Pleasure Society Brass Band. The parade is largely funded by the Friends of the Fox Library.



*Feast of the East Festival Parade*

## Bikeway Haiku

Part of the “Pathways” project on the Minuteman Bikeway, the Bikeway Haiku project engaged over 400 people across 3 towns and was created as part of the Tri-Town 25th anniversary celebration of the Minuteman bikeway. Arlington Poet Laureate, Cathie DesJardins and Arlington poet Jessie Brown conducted haiku workshops in connection with the project. A panel of three poets selected 75 haiku, from many entries, to stretch 10 miles along the Minuteman bikeway. (Weather conditions prevented all the haiku from being installed; a complete reinstallation is planned for spring.)

A Bikeway Haiku celebration took place on Sept 29th in partnership with Cambridge Typewriter – kids and adults sat at tables in Uncle Sam Plaza to write additional Haiku which were then read aloud, with haiku from the project, by the authors through a mic in the plaza. The celebration included a mobile harp concert by renowned jazz harpist and Arlington resident Deborah Hanson Conant who was pulled along, by a bike, on the bike path. *Artlinks* created flowers from metal cans that were sold as a fundraiser.



*Installing haiku on the bike path*



*Creating Haiku on vintage typewriter*

## Pathways

Two other installations completed the Pathways exhibition this past fall. Both celebrate the abundant bird life in the area and are inspired by the critical food and habitat the green spaces along the Bikeway provide for neighborhood wildlife.

**Colony by Christopher Frost** is a playful sculpture composed of miniature architectural structures wrapping around and climbing the trunk of a mature maple tree near Spy Pond Park. From the perch overlooking the pond, playing fields and Bikeway, invisible inhabitants watch the world go by.

**Extraordinary Ordinary Birds** is a set of art cards that pay tribute to neighborhood birds with painted portraits by Resa Blatman and text compiled by Ellen Reed. Gorgeous images and pithy facts are meant to get people started bird watching along the Bikeway and engage in stewardship activities in their own back yard. The project launched with 4 cards, four more will be printed in the Spring.



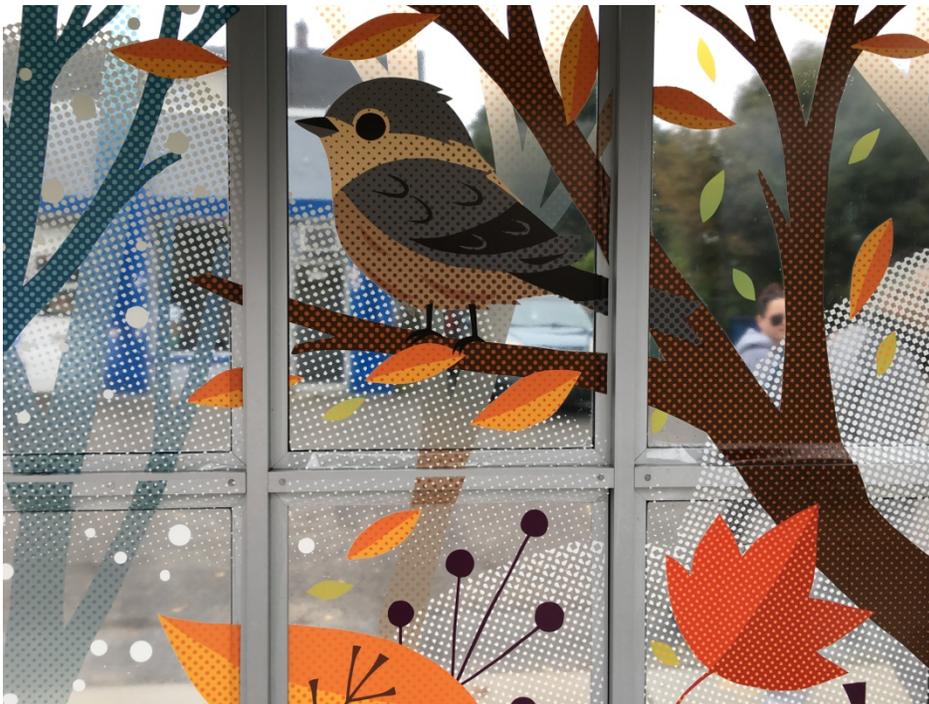
*Colony by Christopher Frost*



*Chickadee by Resa Blatman*

### **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project**

Public Art Curator Cecily Miller worked with Ali Carter of the Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development to get permissions from the MBTA to install art in five bus shelters along Mass Ave for six weeks to promote the BRT project, with two additional murals. Cecily authored and Arlington was awarded a \$37,000 grant from the Barr Foundation to complete these projects. Five bus shelters were decorated with public art, with two by Arlington artists Eileen De Rosas and Johnny Lapham. Two were by Somerville artists, James Weinberg and Imagine, and the final was by the Boston artist team, Mike Moss and Claudia Raveschiere. James Weinberg was commissioned to create a beautiful fox mural on the wall of Za's Pizza and Salad. The Fox Library is adorned with wheat paste murals of animals by Eileen De Rosas. Information for each project is detailed on our website at [artsarlington.org/publicart](http://artsarlington.org/publicart) and was included in press releases for the Barr Foundation's BRT project launch.



*Detail of bus shelter installation by James Weinberg*



*James Weinberg finishing installing his work on the bus shelter*



*Za Restaurant mural, East Arlington by James Weinberg*

## **Additional Projects, Public Art Committee:**

### **Youth Banner Project**

*The Arlington Public Art Youth Banner Initiative* is aimed at young people in grades 6 through 12, with the equivalent homeschool level, to promote and encourage development in the visual arts and to provide an opportunity for youth to participate in temporary public art projects in Arlington. Funding is provided by the Gracie James Foundation in memory of their daughter, Gracie James, an Arlington High School student. Now in its third year, the *Youth Banner Initiative* invites teens to submit designs relating to a specific theme to be digitally reproduced on vinyl banners. Each year, between 20 and 30 designs are chosen to be placed on light poles along Mass Ave. in Arlington Center. This year 90 students submitted designs with 20 designs selected.



*Arlington Youth Banner Project*

### ***Chairful Where You Sit* Fundraiser and Exhibition**

This year the much-loved annual *Chairful Where You Sit* fundraising exhibition took place in conjunction with the *Feast of the East*. Local artists and creative neighbors transform ordinary chairs - often "orphan" chairs found in the trash - into works of art. Artists use imagination and diverse materials including paint, collage, fabric, live plants, leather, string, hockey sticks, toys, and more to astonish and delight. Chairs have been whimsical, serious, stunning, sporty, political, and more. All chairs are made available for purchase by the public for a donation of \$100, with the proceeds dedicated to support APA's programs. This year, *Chairful* raised approximately \$2,000.



*Visitors viewing Chairful Where You Sit*



*Chairful Where You Sit*

**Public Art Fundraising Summary for calendar year 2018**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Project</b>
National Parks Service Grant	\$2000	Pathways
Arlington Cultural Council Grant	\$1000	Pathways
Friends of the Fox	\$1500	Fox Festival
Local Businesses	\$600	Fox Festival
Chairful Where You Sit	\$2,000	Pathways
Individual Contribution	\$500	Pathways
Aeronaut Brewery	\$500	Pathways/Bikeway Haiku
Local business, Architecture Firm	\$250	Pathways/Bikeway Haiku
Bike Committee Lexington	\$450	Pathways/Bikeway Haiku
Bike Committee Bedford	\$500	Pathways/Bikeway Haiku
Bike Committee Arlington	\$500	Pathways/Bikeway Haiku
Artist/Craftsman Paint Donation	\$500	Pathways/Bikeway Haiku
House Party	\$2,761	Pathways
Family Foundation	\$1,000	Pathways
Massachusetts Cultural Council Grant	\$2,500	Pathways
Barr Foundation Grant	\$37,000	BRT Project
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$53,561</b>	

## **Fundraising Committee**

The newly formed fundraising committee is currently conducting research on revenue streams that support the arts in other towns. Under discussion is the possibility of adding a checkmark to the water bill for "beautification" that would support multiple projects. This has proved to be a long process that will require additional support and input from the town to inform what fundraising other committees may have for the remainder of this year and information about their general income mechanisms and fundraising efforts.

## **Grants Committee (Arlington Cultural Council)**

In July 2018, Arlington Cultural Council (ACC) formally combined with other major arts and cultural organizations in Arlington to be folded under the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture (ACAC) umbrella. Although still identified by the state as ACC, it is now locally known as the Grants Committee (GC) of ACAC.

A local council of the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), a state agency, it consists of volunteers appointed by the Arlington Board of Selectmen for three-year terms. Council members, who may serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms, are charged with the responsibility of supporting and encouraging the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences in Arlington, primarily through the annual distribution of state allocated funds to applicants through a competitive grant process. Though much of the committee's business is related to grant cycle activities, occurring September through December, the GC is active year-round and generally meets on the second Monday of each month. All meetings are announced in advance on the Town website and are open to the public.

During 2018 meetings again took place at the Town Hall Annex, First Floor Conference Room. In this, the second year of MCC's fully electronic application system, the GC participated in their new Supplemental Grant Pilot Program, in which funds are transferred upfront to grantees, once the awards are announced and paperwork returned. This is a change from a reimbursement model, in which grantees must expend their own funds, then submit receipts in order to receive the grant money. The GC was one of 19 Local Cultural Councils to participate.

MCC's goal is to eventually conduct the program statewide. The change makes the process easier for grantees, Councils and municipal personnel. One new member has joined the GC – Heidi Kendig, a ceramic artist/teacher, who works at Harvard University as a grants/finance manager in research administration. She is a welcome addition to the Council and was inducted just in time for the new 2019 grant cycle.

On April 23, the GC honored its 2018 Grant Recipients at "A Celebration of Arts and Culture" in Arlington's Robbins Library Community Room. About 45 guests attended. Representative Sean Garballey's office provided handsome, official State of Massachusetts Commendations, that were warmly received by grantees. Accomplished entertainment was provided by members of the Arlington High School Jazz Band: Sam Harris - Electric Guitar, Evan Barker - Electric Bass, and Julian Carpenter - Melodica. Town businesses once again graced us by donating refreshments – Menotomy Grill and Tavern, FoodLink, Not Your Average Joe's, Anthony's; East Side Deli and Trader Joe's, with sponsorship by 13 Forest Gallery (Edible Arrangements). All were acknowledged with signs and an announcement from the podium. Special kudos to Council member Asia Kepka, who outdid herself decorating the space, bringing Spring indoors for a magically festive atmosphere. And thanks to Andrea Nicolay, Director of Libraries, for providing the space.

On September 14, 2018, the GC participated in Arlington's annual Town Day celebration. This year, in celebration of the inauguration of newly structured Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture (ACAC), the GC shared a tent with ACAC and Arlington Public Art (APA). All provided literature and information about upcoming arts events in Town, and Council members distributed postcards with links to current grant applications and guidelines. The new artsarlington.org website includes information about Arlington Cultural Council under "Grants

and Resources.”

#### GRANT CYCLE (2017-2018)

On September 17, 2017 GC offered a free Application Information Session for those planning to apply for funds. Members offered attendees advice on their proposal ideas, stressing that evidence of thoughtful planning and preparation for projects and their budgets, including letters of agreement with venues, earned higher points in the selection process.

By October 16, GC's FY 2018 deadline, because the 15<sup>th</sup> fell on a weekend, a total of 30 grant applications from schools, individual artists, and cultural groups were submitted to GC. Requests for funds totaled \$31,977. \$12,300 was the allocation from MCC, and a total of \$15,062 was awarded. Following the application deadline, applicants were invited to two optional public presentation sessions October 29 and November 1 at Town Hall, that provided an opportunity for them to elaborate on their projects and answer clarifying questions from Council members.

On December 20, 2017, the GC held a proposal deliberation meeting in which the total allocation of \$15,062 was awarded to 19 grantees, with one subsequently being withdrawn, due to a change from the contracted project. Applicants not receiving funds were notified by December 22, and those receiving funds were notified on January 7, 2018, after MCC's minimum 15-day wait period for legitimate contesting.

#### GC 2018 GRANT RECIPIENTS

##### GRANTEE PROJECT AWARD

Arlington Center for the Arts Artist Survival Series \$ 500  
Arlington Center for the Arts I'm New Here:...Migration \$ 800  
Arlington Cultural Council Art in Windows Initiative \$ 793  
Arlington Jazz Workshop and Jam Session \$ 1,500  
Arlington Public Art Pathways: Art on Minuteman Bikeway \$ 1,000  
Claudia Donnet Middle Eastern Dance \$ 600  
Courtney Sundell Public Art at Magnolia Park \$ 500  
Cyrus Dallin Art Museum Restoration and Unveiling \$ 1,000  
Delvena Theatre Isabella \$ 400  
Emily Calvin-Bottis Talking Chair \$ 774  
[Family Folk Chorale WITHDRAWN \$ 750]  
Gail McCormick Our Changing Town \$ 800  
Marion Carroll Music to Cure MS \$ 500  
Paul Marotta Arlington Seniors Story Wall \$ 1,500  
Philharmonic Society Almost-Spring Concert \$ 1,000  
Robbins Library Arlington Author Salon \$ 900  
Thompson School PTO Art of Ancient Greece and Rome \$ 595  
Tommy Rull A Musical Journey Through the Years \$ 150  
True Story Inc. The Listening Project \$ 1,000  
TOTAL: \$15,062

The GC is pleased to highlight the following two grants of note.

- 1) Emily Calvin-Bottis' highly imaginative Taking Chair, installed in April at Robbin's Library surprised and delighted patrons who chanced to sit in it and were rewarded with poetry readings by Arlington residents, including "Spring" by second grader, Sam Liu. An interactive digital experience, via hookup to a vintage radio, The Talking Chair debuted on April 5, 2018 for National Poetry Month and ran the entire month. Some 20 residents submitted their work through a broad call for entries led by Arlington's Poet Laureate Cathie Desjardins who made the selections. A printed version resided on the side table, next to the radio. The chair's technology allowed the Library to repurpose the chair when the poetry exhibition concluded, when it relocated to The Children's Room. (See picture and blog on the Robbins Library Blog.)
- 2) Paul Marotta's Arlington Seniors Story Wall occupied a place of honor on the walls of Town Hall's second floor, beginning October 22, 2018 where it lauded 13 of Arlington's oldest citizens through stunning photographs with narrative. Three panels eight by ten feet long documented the stories of these contributors to the growth and development of Arlington. The project took almost eight months to complete. Mr. Marotta is a photographer for the

world's leading photo wire service agencies.

Plans for 2019 include the annual "Celebration of Arts and Culture" in the Spring, Town Day booth in September, and the annual Grant Cycle, with 2020 grant applications due by Tuesday, October 15, 2019.

The integration of the Arlington Cultural Council into ACAC initially raised questions around potential conflict of interest and jurisdiction issues that were efficiently resolved between the Mass Cultural Council, Town Council, and the Department of Planning and Community Development this year. In question was whether entities of the ACAC would be allowed to apply for funds if the ACC were within the umbrella of ACAC operating as its Grants Committee. Questions included: whether any larger strategic conversations taking place in the ACAC meetings in which ACC were represented could influence the priorities set by the ACC and whether any additional funds allocated to the ACC by ACAC would be subject to the same rules and same grants timeline as ACC's funds from the MCC. These issues were resolved in accordance with MCC and ACAC bylaws.

In 2018, the Arlington Cultural Council was pleased to award \$15,062 in grants to 19 recipients, with one withdrawal.

#### **Andrea Nicolay: *Arlington Author Salon***

Organized by a group of community, literary Arlington residents and employees, the *Arlington Author Salon* hosts free quarterly literary events on Thursday evenings at Kickstand Café. Each Salon features three different local authors, from Arlington and surrounding towns, around a specific, changing theme. The authors read and discuss their work and conduct discussion with the audience. Local bookseller *The Book Rack* provides copies of the authors' books for sale. Presentations include the innovative use of props: slides, music, dance, etc. resulting in an experiential evening. Works presented include: fiction, non-fiction, poetry and journalism.

#### **Pam Shanley, Arlington Center for the Arts (2 grants): *Artist Survival Series* and *I'm New Here: Perspectives on Migration***

*Artist Survival Series*: Arlington Center for the Arts serves as a community of emerging and established artists for both Arlington and surrounding towns. The just completed *Artist Survival Series* provided a vital service to the artistic community by empowering artists to successfully market, show and sell their artwork. Three workshops in the *Artist Survival Series* addressed the areas of professional development: creating artist websites, promoting artwork on social media, and photographing artwork for sales and marketing. Each of these three topics were deemed to be of high value to artists seeking to grow their audiences and approach galleries for representation.

*I'm New Here: Perspectives on Migration*: The Arlington Center for the Arts moved to their new home at 27 Maple Street while concurrently opening their inaugural season of programming. The opening exhibit, *I'm New Here: Perspectives on Migration* and its accompanying programming marked the beginning of a new, dynamic arts space in Arlington. The exhibition was a juried show with an inspiring venue for dialogue for learning about the issues of migration as they apply to our community and in the world at large and a platform for the stories of people who have migrated voluntarily or not, for social, political and economic reasons, as well as those who have helped them resettle. Included also was attention to artwork inspired by different types of migration, climate change and the natural world, and the intricacies of small migrations in our daily lives.

#### **Arlington Cultural Council (ACC)**

This year for the first time, the ACC initiated its own project, a pilot *Arts in Windows Initiative* to test the waters for enlivening vacant storefronts with art installations. Running from April through December at Music Studios of Arlington Center at 399 Mass. Ave., 6 artists displayed their work for approximately six weeks each. After testing feasibility an *Art in Windows Initiative* can be expanded to enliven empty storefronts, as well as windows of existing businesses, to assist with the creation of visually enticing window displays that will enhance engagement and commerce. This program highlights Arlington's legacy and enhances our current, rapidly expanding reputation as a community that values the creative arts. The pilot project is being run in collaboration with the newly reconfigured Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture.

### **Arlington Jazz Workshop and Jam Session at Arlington Jazz Festival by Dan Fox**

In its seventh year, the Arlington Jazz Festival, an immersive community event, took place from April 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> at venues throughout town. It is now in the first year as a non-profit organization. Offering seven events over four days with many free to the public, the ACC grant enabled low prices to the ticketed events to encourage increased participation from Arlington residents and participants from surrounding communities. Two events were funded through this grant: the Saturday night performance at *Artlounge Arlington* by Boston area musicians, followed by an open jam session with open participation; and a masterclass led by festival headliner and international jazz star John Patitucci at Town Hall held before the final performance. The Festival is inclusive and diverse, offering performance opportunities to local teens, Arlington-based amateur and professional musicians and Boston area musicians.

### **Cecily Miller, Arlington Public Art, *Pathways: Art on the Minuteman Bikeway***

Arlington Public Art and the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture are collaborate to bring art to a section of the Minuteman Bikeway that runs through a largely residential area of the Town's newly designated Cultural District. Entitled *Pathways*, this initiative is designed to strengthen the identity and vibrancy of the Cultural District by connecting East Arlington and the Center with a bike and pedestrian friendly route that is enhanced by changing, temporary public art. The project builds on its 2017 success and establishes an ongoing venue for the public to experience outdoor exhibitions while enabling artists to develop place-based work. *Pathways* installations are inspired by the character of the surrounding neighborhoods, woodlands, Spy Pond and the Bikeway itself. Two new works were commissioned.

### **Claudia Donnet (aka Seyyide Sultan): Middle Eastern Dance Theatrical Performance**

In the Fall, the Sarab-Mirage Dance Company, under the direction of Seyyide Sultan, presented a Middle Eastern dance performance. Performers included 6 -10 dancers with Seyyide as principal, and additional professional guest dancers. This was an original program created by Seyyide. The dances introduced different traditions and includes props and other elements for visual interest. The first stage of the work funded was concept development, choreography, and dancer recruitment. The second stage was the rehearsal period.

### **Courtney Sundell: *Public Art at Magnolia Park***

The goal of this project was to paint the three utility structures on "Apple Hill" near the Thorndike Street entrance of Magnolia Park in East Arlington. The Park has recently undergone extensive renovation, which has created renewed enthusiasm for it within the neighborhood. The

transformation of the utility boxes by public art welcome visitors to step into a world of joy and imagination as they enter the Park. Through community involvement and fundraising, the project promotes public art within this neighborhood and foster a sense of pride and ownership in the Park's upkeep.

### **Cyrus Dallin Art Museum: *Restoration and Unveiling of Cyrus Dallin Bust and Painting***

The Dallin Museum restored and will unveiled two recently acquired artworks by Cyrus Dallin: a circa 1930's oil on canvas painting of the artist's backyard and a 1927 plaster portrait bust of Charles Lindbergh. The painting was cleaned, varnished, and lined on a panel by Peter Williams, a Boston art conservator with over 30 years of experience. Renowned sculptor and conservator Robert Shure of Skylight Studios in Woburn restored the bust. This process included the removal of modern paint, cleaning and filling areas of loss. Bob, with previous experience restoring sculptures for the Dallin Museum, offered most of his services in-kind for this project. The restoration of these two artworks culminated in a public unveiling program at the Dallin Museum in June. The speakers engaged discussed the historical significance of these works.

### **Delvena Theatre Company: *Isabella at the Robbins Library***

On November 8, the audience was asked to step back in time to meet Isabella Stewart Gardner, the famed founder of Boston's own Gardner Museum. They learned about her life, charm, friends and acquaintances, travels, stylish taste and unconventional behavior. This dramatic performance featured two actresses in an informative, entertaining presentation. After the performance, the cast led a discussion about Isabella.

### **Emily Calvin-Bottis: *Talking Chair at the Robbins Library***

A Library visitor sees a welcoming armchair. She sits and hears: "I'm Cathie Desjardins, Arlington's Poet Laureate, reading "Spring" by second grader, Sam Liu." The pleasantly surprised visitor listened to a short poem. She stands, reconsiders, and sits again to hear a different Arlington resident recite another poem. The *Talking Chair*, an interactive digital experience, debuted at Robbins Library on April 5th for National Poetry Month and continued for the month. It featured poems solicited from 20 residents through a broad call for entries led by Arlington's Poet Laureate who made the selections. The poems were recorded by Arlington residents and printed for accessibility. The chair's interactive technology allowed the Library to repurpose the chair upon conclusion of the project with future uses envisioned as sharing local history or a children's theme.

### **Gail McCormick: *Our Changing Town***

Arlington's economy is stable, but there has been a surprising number of business closings resulting in empty storefronts reflecting the experience of other towns across the U.S. New fees that encourage building owners to find renters may have helped fill some vacancies, but do the new businesses add needed elements that create a unique, vibrant and thriving downtown? This project examines the specific causes of our small business closings, asks what residents really want in a local shopping district, and reflects on the best ways to support that vision. This project consisted of three elements: an exhibit of Arlington street scenes created by local artist Gail McCormick from 2012 - 2016 that show the changes town business districts have recently undergone; an exhibit of thought provoking possible future streetscapes, and an interactive 'whiteboard' engaging people in imagining the future. The exhibition was installed Arlington Town Hall's second floor gallery from March 20<sup>th</sup> - April 28th.

**Marion Carroll: *Music to Cure MS***

On October 28, a concert of opera, songs and chamber music will support the *Accelerated Cure Project for Multiple Sclerosis*, a nonprofit, founded by Arlington resident Art Mellor, dedicated to curing MS by determining its causes. Featured works included an opera scene and a piano solo by two local composers at the Park Street Congregational Church.

**Photographer Paul Marotta: *Arlington Seniors Story Wall***

The Arlington Seniors Story Wall, photo exhibition, captured personal and life stories of Arlington's oldest residents in conjunction with the perspective of Arlington's youngest and newest families. It is a series of four 10-foot long, continuous paper prints with sequential images of the subjects and embedded short text story breaks. The exhibit remained for two months, with an opening reception on October 22, hosted by Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine and photographer Paul Marotta. The work revealed untold stories of Arlington seniors in an arresting and immersive manner, shot on state-of-the-art Nikon and Leica equipment, stylized for the inherent character embedded in the subjects' visual features. The photo shoots took place on the visual, striking stone front steps of Town Hall.

**Philharmonic Society: *Almost-Spring Concert Through the Glass Ceiling: Six Centuries of Choral Music from Female Composers***

On March 11, the Arlington-Belmont Chorale presented *Through the Glass Ceiling: Six Centuries of Choral Music from Female Composers*. The program was dedicated to women composers from the 1500's to the present day with all centuries represented. Composers included: Maddalena Casulana, Vittoria Aleotti, Isabella Leonarda, Mary Hudson, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, Amy Beach, Mabel Daniels and Gwyneth Walker. The 19th, 20th and 21st century composers represented New England composers Beach, Daniels and Walker and was the world premiere of a new work by local composer Adria Stolk, faculty at Boston Conservatory, who studied composition at Berklee College of Music with John Bavicchi, celebrated composer, teacher and founding conductor of the Arlington-Belmont Chorale.

**Meghan Ostrander, Thompson School PTO: *Art of Ancient Greece and Rome Educational Excursion***

In January the Thompson School took the 4<sup>th</sup> grade class to the Museum of Fine Arts to explore the Art of Ancient Greece and Rome. The tour immersed them in the life and lore of a crucial era of human civilization and complimented the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks HSS 7.24-7.43, Foreign Languages Cultural Strand. Class members went hands-on to create their own clay busts of portraits, gods and goddesses or mythical heroes, as inspired by the works of art in the Museum. This activity enhanced their knowledge of the creative process of using clay and made history relevant and tactile.

**Tommy Rull: *A Musical Journey Through the Years***

On March 29 Mr. Rull took his delighted audience on *A Musical Journey Through the Years* consisting of a wide variety of cultural styles of music and vocal performance. He sang songs from well-known great artists, such as Frank Sinatra, Barry Manilow, Louis Armstrong, Neil Diamond,

Elvis, Ray Charles, Harry Belafonte, Kenny Rogers, Lou Rawls and Sir Paul McCartney.

### **True Story Inc. *The Listening Project- Storytelling Theatre for Civic Dialogue***

The Listening Project demonstrated to town leaders how the arts - in particular, interactive storytelling theatre, can be a powerful tool for civic dialogue. It will modelled the power of the arts using Playback Theatre to explore two timely town issues, first - how to develop Arlington's new Cultural District and second - safety and respect for people with LGBTQ identities (and the development of the new Arlington Pride Commission). This grant enabled True Story Theater to hold two events on each of the topics and to partner with community groups to increase public engagement and understanding. They subsequently applied to the National Endowment for the Arts "Our Town" program for a similar Listening Project, to work over two years with 8 town partner groups. This Cultural Council grant laid key groundwork for the larger project.

### **Programs and Festivals Committee**

The Programs and Festivals Committee began meeting in October. Their first task was to coordinate with The Cultural District Managing Partnership on their grant application to the MCC that supports programming in the District. They continue to plan including speaking to organizers of *Feast of the East*, *Porchfest* and other existing festivals to find out how the committee can enhance their events, and to launch the street performance program created by Select Board member Joe Curro and approved by the Select Board in June 2014.

### **Marketing Committee**

Marketing efforts focused intensively on the website this fall with publicity and the launch announcement at Town Day. The ACAC booth included a rented, large monitor to display the website that engaged and allowed for staff interaction with booth visitors. Promotional postcards inviting event submissions for publication and overall website promotion were distributed at the ACAC booth and other cultural booths participating at Town Day.

The Committee is currently developing a comprehensive marketing plan, while working within a transitional plan for immediate actions including: website promotion, e-mail list building, baseline metrics and ongoing measurement for digital communications, ACAC activities using social media and marketing materials, development of a content creation plan for website and press, creation of synergies with our schools and partner organizations. The Committee also prioritizes ensuring that stakeholders are well-informed on ACAC activities and commission evolution, supporting the APA and the Cultural District Committee and partnering closely with ACAC committees.

Marketing activities included a news stories for the website, press releases and published drop-in articles to local media Advocate, Patch, Your Arlington; populating social media while building a team-contribution approach, emphasizing boosting member arts orgs activities, such as APA (documenting murals and bus stops and partnering with the Barr Foundation on press efforts), ACA (FaceBook live streamed re-opening), and other related news.

The marketing committee worked with ACMI to develop an ArtsArlington.org branded TV program to promote the ACAC, arts projects town-wide, and spot-lighted the APA's BRT Project; business and arts collaboration in cultural district; and the ACAC website.

### **Integrating the Schools**

School Committee appointee Stewart Ikeda has conducted outreach to raise school awareness and participation in ACAC; connected Public Art, Hardy School and PTO to collaborate on arts workshops, attendance, and active participation in *Fox Festival* and *Feast of the East*. He has conducted outreach to the Community Ed and AHS arts faculty/clubs to promote and use ArtsArlington and will present on ACAC to School Committee.

## **Goals for 2018**

### **Consistent with goals outline in the Arts and Culture Action Plan included:**

- Continue work to develop dedicated funding streams and other revenue sources
- Outreach to town cultural/historic properties/non-profits to determine needs
- Work with Planning Department to identify underutilized and other places that can be repurposed for art and cultural activity. Establishing artist live/work spaces. Ensuring that the arts are represented “at the table” in development projects including the High School and Libraries. Implement any necessary policy changes as listed in the Cultural Plan
- Continue work on activating the entire Cultural District including “the gap”, the stretch of Mass Ave. between Arlington Center and Capitol Square.
- Wayfinding, including awareness for cultural assets
- Develop outreach plan to address partnerships with civic organizations to ensure equitable and inclusive opportunities for diverse participation for artists and audiences