



**Economic Development Board
Creative Sonoma Update
December 2023**

STAFFING

Tara Thompson has been hired as the new Director and joined the staff on November 29, 2023. Experienced in managing a broad range of arts programming and public art projects within local government, Tara Thompson most recently served as the City of Santa Rosa's Arts and Culture Manager, where she was employed for the past 16 years.

PUBLIC ART

Fire Memorial

Staff has finalized the rubric for selecting sites for the memorial, and the Fire Memorial Task Force is selecting their prioritized sites. The County's budget manager requested that we bring 5 sites to the Board of Supervisors for their final decision, and the goal is for this to occur in February 2024.

Public Art Consultancy

The presentation of the Public Art Plan, which has been in development for the past year and a half, was postponed from its first presentation date in September 2023. Due to new Director Thompson's extensive background in public art planning and processes, she will work with County staff to bring the item back to the Board of Supervisors at a new date in winter or spring 2024, to be announced.

ARTS EDUCATION

Collaborations

- Arts Education Manager Debbie Yarrow collaborated with the Dean of SSU Arts & Humanities to address workforce needs for Prop 28 and develop opportunities to credential new arts teachers and/or expand arts credentials for current teachers. The meeting included the provost, education and arts deans and faculty, Sonoma County Office of Education representatives, as well as Arts Education Alliance leaders. A core group will be formed for next steps.
- 20 school district representatives attended a virtual **Community of Practice for District Arts Leadership Teams** hosted by Creative Sonoma. Facilitated conversation was led by statewide learning strategist, Celena Turney. This is an effort to support districts with an arts plan to continue to implement their plans.
- **Advocacy & Appreciation Night at the Symphony** was a pilot project with the Symphony to acknowledge local arts educators and advocate for arts education. Eighteen local arts educators were acknowledged at the Symphony's Nov. 4 concert. Local arts educators received complimentary admission for themselves and guests and were acknowledged during the concert. Almost 1,000 inserts were distributed with advocacy materials.

Arts Educator of the Year Award

Creative Sonoma was approached by the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts earlier this year about partnering with them to establish this new annual award. Funded by a LBC donor and in a process co-

created by LBC and Creative Sonoma , the winning TK-12 arts educator will be awarded \$1,000 and honored each spring. The deadline for nominations is January 12, 2024.

Poetry Out Loud

Creative Sonoma is charged by the state to administer our county's Poetry Out Loud competition, a national poem recitation program for high schoolers, and staff are currently recruiting for high school participation. The funding for this program is from the National Endowment for the Arts, via a grant from the California Arts Council.

Arts Education Alliance Mixer

The next Arts Education Mixer at Mitote will take place Jan. 24. To increase discussion around jobs, SCOE credentialing agents will be in attendance to converse with attendees.

GRANTS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2024 Arts Education Framework Grants were awarded to these school districts: Geyserville, Healdsburg as well as Petaluma's Old Adobe and Waugh were awarded grants to develop a new arts education strategic plan. Windsor and Sonoma Valley were awarded student arts showcase grants. The total grant funding of \$35,000 for this round was provided by the Hewlett Foundation.

2024 Arts Impact Grants for Organizations

46 eligible applications were received and are currently under review. The funding pool is \$150,000 with an additional award pending from the National Endowment for the Arts. Once we receive official notice for that additional award, we will be able to complete the review process and begin contracting with those selected. We expect to award around 35 grants to Sonoma County nonprofit arts and culturally-specific organizations.

2023 Arts and Cultural Equity Fellowship Grants

The current 2023 Fellows Cohort will be receiving training in January and February 2024 on financial management and stability to support their creative entrepreneurship. Simultaneously, the 3rd round of grants will open for applications in late January and will award up to 8 awards of \$6,250 each. This grant program is funded by an anonymous private foundation.

Professional Development Partners

Two organizations are partnering with Creative Sonoma to present professional development series for individual artists and creatives. The Sebastopol Center for the Arts and Raizes Collective will host slates of professional development speakers and trainers during January – June 2024. Some training will be targeted to artists members of those organizations, but each will also include public workshops that Creative Sonoma will co-promote with each organization.

Learning Cohorts

Creative Sonoma is contracting with a trainer who will present a 6-part training series for up to six community-based arts centers in Sonoma County, to assess and then develop or hone their business operating models as well as financial and fundraising plans. This will take place in early spring 2024.

ArtSurround

Most of the Artists have either completed or installed their projects and are listed on www.creativesonoma.org/artsurround-projects/.