



August 30, 2020

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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It's hard to believe that it has been eight years since we started the Arts Alliance of Greater Waynesboro (AAGW), and seven years since we launched our Destination ARTS! initiative by converting empty buildings into art galleries and featuring live music up and down Main Street. Our goal was to help revitalize our downtown, bring people together, and stimulate new business through promoting the arts.

Back in 2012, the prospects for success looked bleak. But take a look at the enclosed map and program list! Today, our downtown boasts 13 different arts venues, including art galleries, artisan and antique stores, a ceramic arts center, an artist studio, and a music center. Hundreds of artists and thousands of pieces of art have been displayed over the years, and hundreds of music and performing arts events have been presented.

However, this year, the COVID-19 pandemic hit us hard. We closed Music Makers and Gallery 50 on March 13, and we were challenged to safely continue connecting our community through the arts.

During the shutdown, we kept our social media presence active and continued our weekly eblasts, sharing videos from local musicians and interactive ways to enjoy the arts online. We started an online shop for Gallery 50, giving people the opportunity to browse and purchase over 200 works of art and handcrafted items from the safety of their own homes. Our Songwriters Forum and Writers Forum also adapted and continued to connect over Zoom. Partnering with Mainstreet Waynesboro, we also started our own Facebook livestream specials: Virtual Happy Hours, which showcased Waynesboro's local musicians and downtown businesses—including all of the galleries and pottery studios.

As we entered the green phase on June 19, we took precautions for reopening: scheduling a disinfecting appointment from Gladhill Services, spacing chairs in Music Makers for safe social distancing, and implementing new health and safety policies.





We value the wellbeing of our volunteers, musicians, artists, and community as a whole, and we are striving to make the arts safely accessible.

Since we launched our Destination ARTS! programs in 2013, other organizations have joined us in our revitalization efforts,

and the town has grown in other exciting ways. There is a new brewery and a distillery, a vibrant Main Street Park, a growing number of high-quality restaurants, an ice cream shop, a coffee shop, and new businesses opening as we speak. We admire their own efforts in keeping our community safe, and we are grateful for your support of local businesses during these times.

Truly, we stand proud, recognize that we have come a long way, and look forward to the future of the arts in Waynesboro. We will come out of this pandemic stronger.

But if we are to continue to provide our services, we need your help now more than ever. Most of our programs are offered free of charge, and much of the work is done by our dedicated team of volunteers. However, we still have expenses, including rent and overhead for our buildings, musician and artist fees, insurance, and marketing and promotion costs.

Please join us in keeping the arts alive in Waynesboro by making a contribution to the Arts Alliance of Greater Waynesboro. Help us continue to make Waynesboro a vibrant, vital community and a destination for the arts by completing the enclosed card to send a check or to use your credit card. We also welcome your donation online. Visit www.ArtsAllianceGW.org and find the Donate button.

Thank you for your generosity and support! We look forward to hearing from you soon, and to seeing you at our events—online or safely in person. We hope you all are staying safe and healthy!

Jonathan Ingels
Board President

Andrew Sussman
AAGW Founder