



**inclusive  
arts  
vermont**



**Annual Report  
2023**

# A REFLECTION

**Friends and Supporters of Inclusive Arts Vermont,**

**There is no denying that this was a year of change for our small, but mighty organization. With change inevitably comes a sense of uncertainty, an uncertainty that lingers in the air even when tangible sources may not. Rather than burying this uncertainty, I'd like to take this opportunity to name it and acknowledge its ongoing presence in our daily work. The pandemic highlighted IAV's resiliency and that malleability will continue to be a valuable quality as we evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of our constituency across the state and beyond.**

**Mirroring trends in our broader society, IAV has experienced many ups and downs this year:**

**On the personnel front, 2023 brought about an Executive Director transition, Development Director transition, and several program management transitions. As with common governance cycles, we also welcomed several new and wonderful board members while saying goodbye to several others that served the organization well. All the while, we have continued to find innovative new ways of working together in a remote landscape with the ongoing goal of transparency and collaboration.**

**From a financial standpoint, we are continuing to emerge from the pandemic with both challenges and opportunities. Challenges have included the sunseting of pandemic relief funds, federal funding cuts for the arts, increased competition for funding, and inflation impacting charitable giving across the nonprofit sector more broadly.**



Portrait of Sarah Brown. She has pale skin, short blond hair and is smiling at the camera. She is wearing glasses, a black blazer, and a grey scarf. There is green foliage behind her.

# A REFLECTION

Simultaneously, we have been working to bring our income and expenses in greater alignment to ensure the organization can remain viable for years to come. Though the path may not be easy, I am optimistic about the potential for broader and more sustainable revenue streams in the upcoming year, all while carefully prioritizing how we spend each dollar you generously contribute.

As you will see beautifully illustrated in the pages that follow, IAV successfully carried out robust arts education programs throughout the 2022-23 year that directly impacted the lives of thousands of Vermonters. I encourage you to explore these highlights for compelling narratives of what can be achieved when we prioritize access and pool our resources in support of the magic of the arts.

Regardless of any uncertainty we may continue to navigate, what remains constant is our commitment to expanding access to the arts for Vermonters of all abilities and delivering high quality arts education, exhibition, training, and advocacy programs.

I am excited about what the future holds for Inclusive Arts Vermont and the ripple effects our work is having across the communities, state, and populations we serve. Being a microcosm for the change we want to see in the world is what drew me to this role and I am confident that we are doing just that!

Thank you to our broad network of donors, funders, partners, sponsors, staff, board, Teaching Artists, interns, volunteers, exhibiting artists, constituents, and beyond who continue to make this important work possible! We are tremendously grateful for each and every one of you!



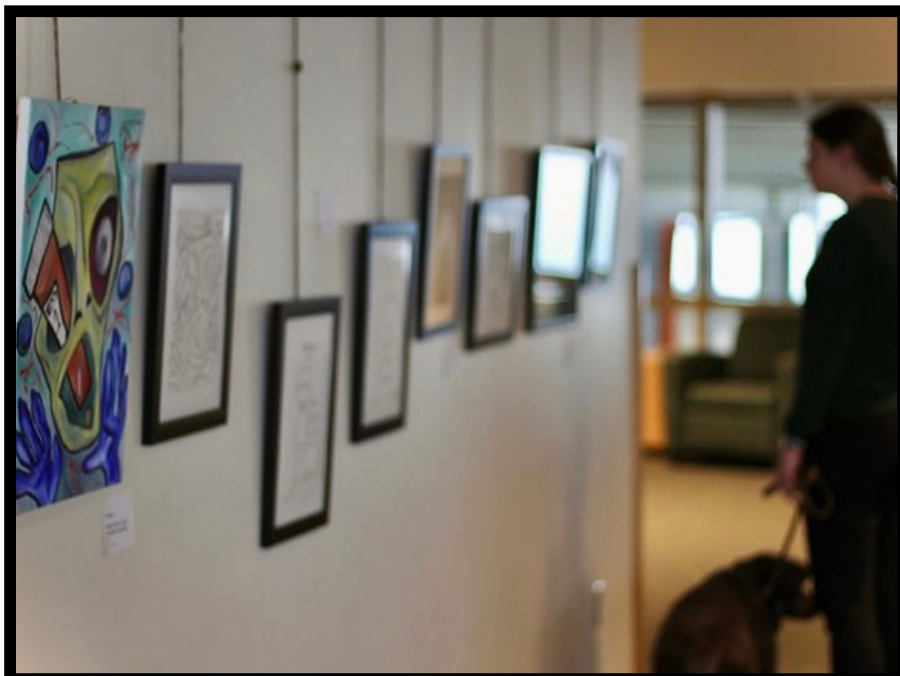
**Sarah R. Brown**  
Executive Director

# EXHIBITIONS

*MASKED*, our 2022-23 exhibition featuring artwork by 22 Vermont artists with disabilities, traveled to its final venues, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH, and the University of Vermont's Davis Center in Burlington, VT.

The art featured was rich, poignant, and diverse in media and meaning. And yet, we believe the exhibitions are about more than the art on the walls!

IAV's exhibitions and related programs are rooted in access. Our tour venues were physically accessible. We offered a full range of accessibility features, including print materials in braille and large print, an audio tour, verbal descriptions of every work in the show, tactile elements, sensory kits, and ASL and captioning at events upon request.



A row of framed artworks on the wall. The first piece is in clear focus and depicts a green face with an orange pill bottle. The rest of the art is in soft focus and in the background, a person with a dog is looking at the art.

By centering access alongside the art, the emotional labor of having to seek out access information or make access requests is removed for artists and visitors alike. This cultivates the inclusion we hope will exist in the broader world.

One artist shared, ***"I don't have the resiliency to represent myself and advocate for myself as an artist so I deeply appreciate that I didn't have to. The leg work was already done for me."***

While *MASKED* was touring, we blended in-person and remote engagement options through exhibition tours. For the first time this year, we offered remote tactile tours to community members who are blind or have low vision. We created tactile packets, with touch elements related to the featured artwork and mailed them to participants. Over Zoom, we collectively listened to audio descriptions of the art, sound bites from artist talks, and engaged with the featured art pieces through touch. For example, a small artificial mossy rock for Paul Betz's photo *Mossy Crevice*, or a tactile recreation (where compositional elements are raised/embossed) of Karen Lloyd's photograph *A Promise For Tomorrow*.



# EXHIBITIONS



A snapshot of tactile kit contents. It includes a raised representation of a tree and cloudscape (Promise of Tomorrow by Karen Lloyd), white tulle at the top (Fibrosis: Covered in Tulle by Aurora Berger) and two mossy rocks at the bottom (Mossy Crevice by Paul Betz).

The tactile tours were a success and we are excited to expand this offering with our upcoming 2024 exhibition *CYCLES*.

We held 4 virtual artist talks and a closing panel discussion centering the voices and experiences of exhibiting disabled artists.

For collage artist David Roy, *MASKED* was his first exhibit. He participated in our closing panel. Here, David reflects on the impact of Masked on his life and his art, ***"MASKED gave me a new confidence in myself, my life has changed a lot since MASKED has started. I feel like MASKED in a sense gave me my own sense of identity, because it came at a very pivotal time of my life. I will always be thankful for MASKED. It made me the artist I am today."***

In the Spring with *MASKED* closing, we began planning our upcoming exhibition *CYCLES*. The open call went out in August. Since then, 28 artists and 33 works have been selected for the exhibition, which will tour the state of Vermont between February 2024 and December 2024, kicking off at the University of Vermont's Davis Center.

***I loved the interactive immersion with the visual, audio, and tactile components. They worked together to help me feel like I was viewing the art in person.***

**-Tactile Tour Participant**

***The verbal descriptions of the art pieces could stimulate our other senses and bring back related memories.***

**-Tactile Tour Participant**

# START WITH THE ARTS

In 2023, Start With The Arts served 231 people at 18 sites (21 early childhood educators, 178 children, and 32 families). This past year, we piloted an extension of the program called Arts First, designed specifically to support providers and the emerging needs of young children with intensifying mental health and behavioral needs.

100% of participating children showed improved kindergarten readiness skills, including improvement in Vermont Early Learning Standards in Language Development, Early Reading Skills, and Creative Expression. In FY2024, we plan to serve 15 Start With the Arts sites and continue piloting the successful Arts First program at 2 sites.



A collage of paintings by children in SWTA. They had read "They All Saw A Cat" and then created their own cats with watercolors and markers!

Providers often comment about the "magic" of the arts as they witness the shifts in energy, connection, and engagement in their young learners. When they witness this magic, it encourages provider buy-in and commitment to using the SWTA model beyond our time at their site. The learning becomes a toolkit for both providers and the children in their care. Here are two reflections:

A teaching artist shared the following with us, ***"We talked about how colors make us feel. The children used liquid watercolors to stain white coffee filters in their favorite colors. Colors that make them feel happy. When the most recent storms hit the area, a tree fell and hit the swing set on their playground. The children took a branch from that tree, painted it and hung all the dried coffee filter paintings off the branch with a filament line. When I came in the following week, they were so excited to show me the mobile they created from something 'unfortunate' to something 'beautiful!'"***

# START WITH THE ARTS

An Arts First teaching artist shared, *"We made our own feelings flashcards. This went so well! And the 'MAGIC' worked. There was one little girl who was having BIG hard feelings. She joined us and drew about it, and after a little while she drew a silly picture that made her laugh so much! She felt sooooo much better! I just brought some markers and cardstock cut to about the same size as the feeling flashcards that they love and mirrors for materials. We talked about feelings, took a look at some of Todd Parr's cards, even came upon the howling dog one when the childcare dog was outside howling! Then the children were invited to look into the mirrors and tell us how they were feeling and notice what that looked like. They all loved the activity and the provider thanked me for showing her how something so simple could change the energy as much as it did."*

## Blending art and early literacy to build a lifelong love of learning.

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*One little girl, age 3, who attends one of the sites that I work with, received a gift card to a bookstore and she was allowed to choose two books. After she chose them her mom asked her why she picked those two and she said that it was because I read them to her!*

*I read those books at least two months ago, and she remembered them! I love this quiet and important impact that we are making on young lives!*

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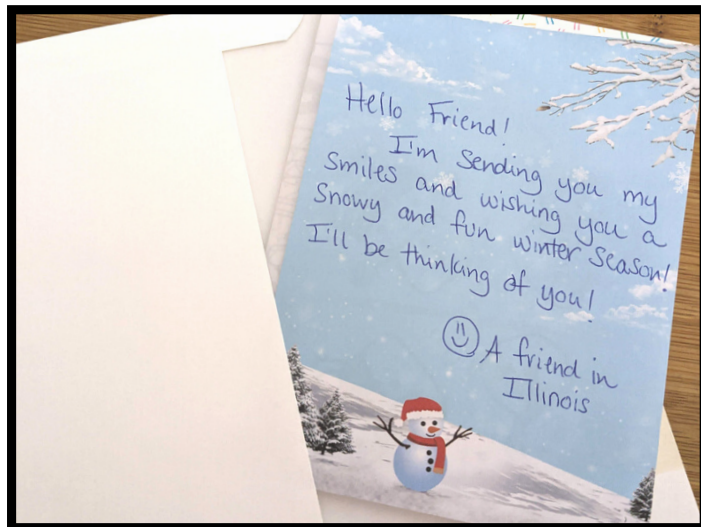
*One little boy asked his mom, who is the childcare provider, why I can't come to their house and read him his bedtime story.*

*Another little girl borrowed one of my books so that her dad could read it to her at bedtime.*

*This VSA program was provided in part by a 2022-23 contract with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.*



# SCHOOL RESIDENCIES



Two images next to each other. On the left: a child works on decorating their mailbox before it is added to their tiny home. The student is painting red stripes onto the cardboard. On the right: a close-up of a letter on snowman stationary with blue writing wishing students a fun and snowy winter.

Last fall, teaching artist M. brought a load of cardboard boxes to a classroom filled with possibilities. Students were going to create their own artistic homes.

Students worked to put the boxes together, helping each other, creating systems, collaborating, for some students for the first time. Each student slowly and intentionally transformed their cardboard box into a safe space of their own.

Students used markers, paint, stickers, and big imaginations to create tiny homes that met their own specifications. They were able to set their own tiny home rules, practicing setting healthy boundaries and exercising their agency and voice.

Then, one student made a choice that changed the trajectory of the whole residency experience and made these tiny homes much much bigger than anyone could have imagined. This student asked to add a mailbox! Riffing off this idea, M offered students the choice to have letters sent to them from folks in the broader community.

One student said, "Why would we? No one will send us mail!" There was great fear that no one would "show up" or "follow through," an experience that is unfortunately common in the life of many students. They expressed feeling nervous and vulnerable. M and the community had their backs, and soon they would know it.



# SCHOOL RESIDENCIES

These letters had the potential to combat loneliness, to create feelings of brightness and connectedness, so the students made the brave and awesome choice to receive letters in their tiny home mailboxes.

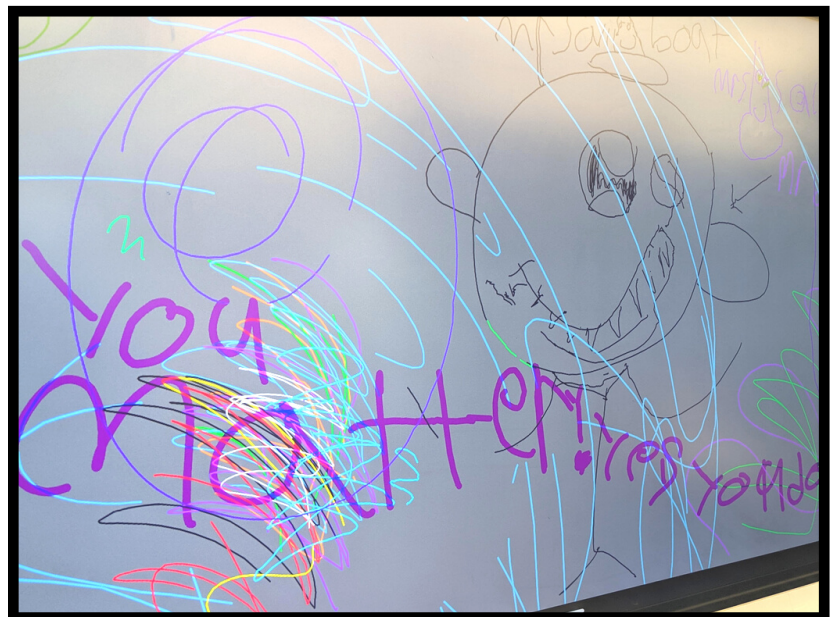
The community showed up! Dozens and dozens of letters and cards arrived, filling the students' mailboxes. As they read or had the kind words from strangers read to them, well wishes from across the country, the students beamed. One student shared, "I feel loved today," while another said, "this is one of the best days of my life."

Receiving mail has had a profound impact on the students' confidence, sense of belonging, and also their willingness to learn letters and reading skills, something many of them had been very reluctant about. These tiny homes and letters gave them a reason to learn, a motivation, and they felt safer asking for help. One student said, "Maybe next year, I can read my own letters!"

Creating community is art! Making connections is art. Because of this residency, the students feel more engaged in their community and their learning, more excited to read and connect, and more willing to try new things.

**In FY2023, our Collaborative Arts Integration Residency program served 257 students in 20 K-12 classrooms through 14-20 hours of process-based arts activities in a range of genres integrated into classroom environments and curriculum.**

**This was a 78% increase in the number of students served as compared to the prior year. Data collected from classroom teachers has strongly demonstrated an increase in self-confidence and joy of students as a result of participation in the program, along with improved school attendance, flexibility, and openness to new ideas.**



A smart board in a classroom with drawings and lines. In purple text a student wrote the words teaching artist M says to them everyday. "You matter! Yes you do!"

*This VSA program was provided in part by a 2022-23 contract with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.*

# ADULT ARTS PROGRAM

This past year, we held 10 Adult Art classes with 109 participants. Some class highlights include a Playful Performance class that combined theater, music and aerial silks; printmaking and pottery partnered with BCA; a theater class that wrote and performed an original play; music with Mike; and drumming with Rebecca!

This year, we also welcomed Kirsten Martsi as the new Director of Adult Arts Education.

## Participants and partner organizations shared:

*Went to class just to say hi to peers and listen. When someone gave me a drum I pounded the negative emotions.*

*I liked getting to play the drums or shakes at my own pace or enjoy getting into this with no pressure and enjoying myself.*

*Mike engaged everyone in the drums or their music of choices. There was a smile on each one's face - playing their solo starting off the round.*

*The time flew by so fast, the enjoyment of being there.*

*Everybody encourages and claps for each other playing instruments.*



A yoga studio. Hanging from the ceiling are large hammock structures. There are outlines of bodies resting in the hammocks..

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This winter, we announced with great pride, our first annual virtual Arts Access Summit, a daylong remote conference centering disabled artists and practices for accessible programming, art-making, and art curation. The summit featured a keynote from Jen White-Johnson

Jen is a disabled and Neurodivergent Afro-Latina art activist and design educator whose visual work aims to uplift disability justice narratives in design. Jen uses photography, zines and collage art to explore the intersection of content and caregiving, emphasizing redesigning ableist visual culture.



A screenshot of a zoom meeting with four videos. Top left, Megan smiling, top right, Kat with mouth open as if laughing, bottom left, Jen with head turned slightly giving two peace signs, bottom right, Heidi and Gable and Alexandra outside of a car waving and giving thumbs up.

The summit included workshops on employment policies and adaptations for folks with disabilities, presented by New England ADA, inclusive practices in classrooms, an artist panel featuring artists Jeff Kasper, Karen Krolak, and Aurora Berger, and a session with Inclusive Arts staff on considerations for accessible programs. We offered admission on a pay-what-you-can model to make sure it was as accessible as possible. Over 50 people attended the Summit, including folks from all over Vermont, throughout New England, and even some international participants. The day was dynamic and powerful, with bountiful learning moments, deep connections, beginnings of collaboration, and expansive access networks.

Summit participants shared ***"Overall I gained a greater awareness of the range of disabilities across race/gender/ different populations."*** and ***"I loved the array of sessions and the encouragement to attend as much or as little as possible. I attended the keynote address, which was wonderful and the artist panel, which left me feeling more than anything that a beautiful community was created. I loved the pre- and post-communication with its many resources."***



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This year, we offered Professional Development trainings for arts non-profits, college arts students, staff and board members. **100% of participants in our 2023 training programs reported increased knowledge in accessibility practices for artists and viewers. 67% reported that being part of the exhibition directly impacted and improved their accessibility practices and policies.**

In the fall, we welcomed a new IAV Management Team member, Kirsten Martsi. Part of their new role is serving as the Director of Professional Development Expansion. Kirsten's focus will be building on the success and increased demand for Professional Development trainings by working with new and existing partners to develop new PD offerings throughout 2024. And we are excited to already be building relationships with new organizations and crafting offerings for their individualized needs.

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*I worked with IAV to plan and host on two trainings for State of Vermont communications and marketing staff. The IAV team were incredibly thoughtful and responsive throughout the entire process.*

*They created detailed, well-paced, interactive agendas for our trainings, put on both trainings in a way that fostered openness, vulnerability, and a spirit of collective learning amongst participants with the tone they set throughout the trainings.*

*Not only did the participants learn a lot about accessible communications and design - and able to immediately put into practice what they learned - but I felt like I also gained a new partner and resource - IAV - in the State's work to further accessibility.*

Testimonial from Elle O'Casey, Chief Marketing Officer  
State of Vermont

# MORE MAGIC

**Participants in  
Inclusive Arts Vermont  
Programs: 19,206**

**A 237% increase in  
engagement over FY22!**



An IAV staff and board group photo at our annual POP fundraiser. Everyone is outside smiling on a sunny day while bubbles float in the sky.



Heidi, Sarah, and Alexandra stand together at the LEAD conference in Boston, MA. They are near a poster says, "LEAD 2023, Registration/Questions."

**"I am useful, see -  
and I am not  
done yet!"**

***-School Residency  
Student***

# A YEAR IN DATA

## INCOME

Government Contracts	\$92,380
Foundations	\$198,000
Fees for Service	\$56,110
Individuals	\$24,128
Events	\$2,568
Interest	\$93
Corporate Giving	\$1,519
Misc. Income	\$2,412
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$377,210</b>

## EXPENSES

Program	\$222,205
Admin	\$113,606
Operating	\$72,754
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$408,564</b>

## NET INCOME

(REVENUE - EXPENSES)  
-\$31,354

## OUR PROGRAMMING YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

Total Participants: 19,206  
Total Adults Participants: 18,718  
Total Youth Participants: 488  
Total Virtual Programs: 13  
Total In-Person Programs: 58  
Total Programs: 71

## INCLUSIVE ARTS VERMONT MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Sarah Brown, Executive Director
- Megan Bent, Director of Communications and Digital Access
- Kirsten Martsi, Director of Adult Arts Education and Professional Development Expansion
- Peggy Rainville, Director of Early Childhood Programs
- Heidi Swevens, Director of Community Partnerships and Exhibitions
- Alexandra Turner, Director of Inclusive Education

*And a tremendous thank you to our departing staff who served!*

- Katie Miller, Executive Director (through Jan 2023)
- Kat Redniss, Director of Communications and Development (through Sep 2023)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Kaitlyn Barr\*
- Riaz Clark\*
- Kristen Connors\*
- Masha Harris, Secretary\*
- Kassandra Kohler, Treasurer\*
- Maya Kraus
- Debbie Krugipudi
- Abbey Pratt, President\*
- Samantha Zimmer\*

\*Denotes current board member



# A YEAR OF THANKS

## INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

- Richard Alther
- Sarah Amos
- Monica Andrews
- Sue Ashworth
- Paul Baldridge
- Kaitlyn Barr
- Francena Beard
- Laurence Becker and Kate Ross
- Kae Bell
- Gloria Bent
- Megan Bent
- Sandra Berbeco
- Darryl and Barney Bloom
- Kristin Bruno
- Jadian Bryna
- Ann and Carl Buffum
- Lynne Cardozo
- Carole Carlson
- Judy Chalmer
- Daniel Cmejla
- Courtney Collins
- Melanie Combs
- Heidi Corriveau
- Susan Crane and Mark Roberts
- Karen Danikas
- Teresa Davis
- Michael Devost
- Christopher Diehl Noble
- Patrica Disilvio
- Carrie Dixon
- Bari and Peter Dreissigacker
- David Ellenbogen
- Esther Evans
- Event Fee
- Janet Felis
- Kavita Finn
- Samara Fogel
- Cheryl Forsythe
- Amy Freeman
- Kelly Gadouas
- Edward Gale
- Amy Gamble
- Adrian Garneau
- Ruth Gminski
- Tim Green
- Joe Greenwald
- Dawn and Robert Grenn
- Paul Gruhler and Jane Marlin
- Jennifer Hall
- Rebecca Harding
- Susan Harrington
- Masha Harris
- Angelica Harris
- Julia Harvard
- Beatrix Hassler
- Ginger Hobbs
- Hillary Holmes
- Karen Huang
- Darlene Jensen
- Peggy Kannenstine
- Mindy Kantor
- Mary Kilbane
- Harvey and Debra Klein
- Kassandra Kohler
- Doreen Kraft
- Maya Kraus
- Deborah Krugipudi
- Johanes Lasher
- Christine LaShure
- Michelle Lefkowitz
- Carlyn Levy
- Larry Lewack
- Keilani Lime
- Mark Lyons
- Carol MacDonald
- Justin Marsh
- Isabella and Peter Martin
- Susan McClure
- Adelaide McCracken
- and Stephen Killam
- Barbara McGrew
- Katie and Stephen Miller
- William Miller
- Emily Mott
- Kris Murnane
- Kristen Murray
- Carol Newell
- Ellen O'Brien and George Neiley
- Edward Paquin
- Alan Peister
- Ryan Pontillas
- Abbey Pratt
- Anne Pratt
- Tony Pratt
- Carol Pritchard
- Kat Redniss
- Andrea Rogers
- Kate Ross
- Gloria Royal
- Alissa Rubin
- Lisa Schamberg and Pat Robins
- Josh Shamoon
- Elizabeth Shayne and Tiffany Bluemle
- Wendy Simpers
- George Sliter and Monika Ivancic
- Andrea Solomon
- Lisa Steele
- Joan Stepenske and Bob Troester
- Robert Stock
- Amy Strickland
- Lisa Succo
- Jesse Suter
- Diane and Fred Swan
- Charlie Teske and Rhoda Lush
- Peter Tkatch
- Geoffrey Tolzmann
- Alison Treston
- Jason Vrooman
- Emily Wagner
- Gigi Weisman and Jane VanBuren
- Susan Wilson
- Melissa Wolfgang
- Suzanne Zaner
- Sam Zimmer
- Christian Zimmer

## FOUNDATIONS & CONTRACTS

- A.D. Henderson Foundation
- The Couch Family Foundation
- Courtney & Victoria Buffum Family Foundation
- Donley Foundation
- Fannie Lienhard Foundation
- Fountain Fund
- Heather Foundation
- Maslow Family Foundation
- National Endowment for the Arts
- Northfield Savings Bank
- State of Vermont
- The Kennedy Center
- The M & T Foundation
- Turrell Fund
- Vermont Arts Council
- Vermont Children's Trust Foundation
- Vermont Community Foundation
- Vermont Humanities

## CORPORATIONS & BUSINESSES

- Amazon Smile
- Art Works Frame Shop
- Davis Studio
- ESV Holdings
- Hickok & Boardman
- K. V. Sbardella Slate Inc.
- Laughing Waters
- LONDONmiddlebury
- Mascoma Bank
- Network For Good
- Shaw's
- Vermont Eye Associates
- VT Wings of An Angel Care

*While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information listed above, if any discrepancies are found, please accept our apologies and notify our Development Office at [development@inclusiveartsvermont.org](mailto:development@inclusiveartsvermont.org). Thank you for your understanding.*