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For Immediate Release

Lincoln Arts Announces 2024 upstArt Grant Recipients

Lincoln Arts announced the recipients of its 2024 upstArt Arts Access Grant program. Through the program, upstArt grants are awarded to arts organizations that provide programming to under-resourced populations, as well as non-arts focused human service organizations that seek to incorporate arts opportunities into their programming.

“We want to bring arts opportunities to those who can benefit most from that access,” said Troy Gagner, Executive Director of the Lincoln Arts Council. “The upstArt grants program prioritizes serving Lincoln’s under-resourced groups and reflects our commitment to providing therapeutic and culturally resonant experiences to under-resourced populations.”

upstArt grants prioritize funding for projects that align with the goals of the upstArt program, which is to provide individuals facing barriers an opportunity to engage with the arts, fostering inclusivity and cultural enrichment, as well as offer the arts therapeutically to the populations that need it most. Partial funding for the grants program is made possible by the Ken Good Beautification Fund in honor of Good’s lifelong vision for a future filled with beauty.

A total of 11 grants (\$25,000) were awarded to the following organizations for projects that sought to use the arts to better the lives of those in need:

2024 upstArt Grant Recipients

Asian Community & Cultural Center

Untold Migrant Stories is a digital storytelling program for refugee and immigrant youth in Lincoln that encourages students to document their lived experiences and share them with the public through community showcase events. Through this project, students learn photography and video editing skills to document a story that is important to them or someone in their community and share their completed projects with others.

Belmont Community Center

As part of its spring break programming, the Belmont Community Center will offer young students the opportunities to express creativity and collaborate with peers and local artists. Participants will learn from one another and teaching artists to create a handmade group art project to be presented to the community in a culminating art fair.

BlackIsBeautifulNE

To promote and celebrate black representation in the Lincoln community, BlackIsBeautifulNE is hosting a Juneteenth Art Exhibit and Celebration. With a vision to showcase diverse artistry—including fashion and musical arts—the event will bring together a mix of local black artists and businesses to honor the Juneteenth holiday.

ECHO Collective

ECHO Collective offers three ongoing creative circles and four 8-week art courses on quilting, bead weaving, and textile weaving to refugee and immigrant women. Through this programming, participating women can spend time bonding with one another, building a sense of community, and creating.

Lincoln Community Playhouse

The Playhouse Senior RadioActive Players provides seniors ages 55+ with the opportunities to explore interests in the theatrical arts, build connections, and find community. Through the program, participants perform a stage production for audiences as a radio show.

Lincoln Music Teachers Association

The LMTA Music Outreach Program provides low-cost music lessons, instruments and their upkeep, sheet music, and community performance opportunities for up to 50 area limited-resource children. K-12 students must meet Federal Free/Reduced Lunch guidelines.

Midwest African Museum of Art

The Midwest African Museum of Art will showcase the beauty of African culture in schools, libraries, and other community venues throughout Lincoln by teaching

traditional African Drums, dance, music, and storytelling, with a vision of bringing diverse groups together and encouraging respect for the values incorporated within the African tradition.

NeighborWorks

NeighborWorks seeks to promote collaboration and connections among the Malone neighborhood with its Malone Mural project. Residents of all backgrounds and abilities will be invited to help create a mural of a known and valued landmark in the Malone area—the Cottonwood tree in Trago Park. Under the guidance of local artist Albert Maxey, participants will use their handprints to form the leaves of the tree, representing the collective strength of the neighborhood's residents.

OmniArts Nebraska

With a vision of accessible theatrical experiences for all, OmniArts brings to light a prominent social issue to the community with its latest production, "Utilities Included." To be performed at venues including The Mill and BLIXT Arts Lab, the free show encourages accessibility and inclusivity among audiences while also promoting support for local businesses.

Proyecto Cultural

Through the Sangre Azteca Folkloric Dance Program, Proyecto Cultural provides a safe space through self-expression and teaches program participants the beauty of Hispanic culture and traditions. Through the project, Proyecto Cultural teaches traditional, Hispanic, and Indigenous dances while exploring traditional Mexican music. The program culminates with performances throughout Lincoln-based schools, community centers, events, and nearby cities.

Wellbeing Initiative, Inc.

Wellbeing Initiative's Creative Connections offers participants a safe environment to connect with others and to express creativity in a variety of ways. As part of the program's expansion, individuals create art pieces throughout their yearlong journey to recovery. At the end of the year, participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their growth and healing by reviewing their various works.

For more information about the Lincoln Arts Council or the upstArt Grants program, please visit <https://www.artscene.org/upstart-arts-access-grant-program>, or contact Quinn Hullett, Engagement Manager, at 402.314.5384 or quinn@artscene.org.

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