Dear Friends,

Happy 2020! We begin the year with LCA’s new strategic plan in place to guide our organization. There are seven strategies to the plan, and in this newsletter we will touch upon two:

- Expand and broaden LCA’s arts education programs and integrate technology across all in-house and outreach arts education programs, and
- Increase awareness of LCA and its programs with robust communications, marketing and partnerships.

Our education program is extensive and thriving, and we love telling our community about the impact it creates. We will outline our initiatives through an interview with Hannah Hammond-Hagman, LCA’s Education Director. Also featured is a profile of one of our donors, The Dale E. Landsman Arts Foundation.

On a personal note, I have now been with LCA for just over ten years. I want to thank the whole community for the privilege of my rich experience. I have formed many great friendships and learned profound lessons from all of you. Here’s to a bright future together!

Sincerely,
Janet Bloch
Executive Director

Creativity was always front and center in the Landsman household. Before moving from Chicago to Long Beach, Indiana in the late ‘70s, Dale Landsman and his wife Peg had made a successful life for themselves in advertising and the arts. Their belief in the importance of the arts, especially in the lives of children and young adults, has become a family legacy in the form of the Dale E. Landsman Arts Foundation, administered by the Unity Foundation of La Porte County.

The Landsmans’ daughter, Eve Wierzbicki, creator of the organization Dig the Dunes, is the local spokesperson for the arts foundation, which awarded grants to LCA’s Teen Arts Council in 2018 and 2019. “I felt that was what my dad would have wanted,” says Wierzbicki. “It seemed like a perfect fit.”

Dale Landsman worked for several of Chicago’s leading advertising firms before starting his own agency on the city’s north side. The Landsmans went from keeping a summer home in Long Beach to moving there year-round, bringing Dale’s agency to the area in the ‘90s. When he passed away in 2001, the arts foundation was created to honor his memory.

The Teen Arts Council, says Eve Wierzbicki, is exactly the sort of program her father would have backed. “It seems LCA is ‘out there’ now,” she says. “It’s not stuffy. I think they’re doing a really good job of breaking down the intimidation factor.”
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING AT LCA

Q&A with Education Director Hannah Hammond-Hagman

Q: Hannah, can you give our readers a brief overview of the extensive educational programs offered by LCA?

A: Sure! We offer spring, fall and summer art classes for adults and children, including kids’ summer camps. Scholarships are available for any student who needs support to pursue a creative passion at LCA. We recently expanded our scholarship program to include adults through funding provided by Unity Foundation of La Porte County. Beyond these classes, we also offer program opportunities for our local youth and families, adults living with cognitive challenges, after school programs—literally thousands of people in our region.

Q: Are area students taking field trips to LCA?

A: Absolutely, nearly 1,800 children a year come through our doors for our Student Learning Tour program. For many of our students, a trip to LCA may be their first experience visiting a cultural institution. We have amazing trained educational docents who create a welcoming and inspiring experience for our youngest visitors. Students discuss the exhibited artwork and also make their own art while they’re here. We’ve expanded this program immensely in the past year and currently serve school districts from La Porte, Porter and Lake Counties as well as southwestern Michigan. We also provide outreach programming for students at 11 different area schools in partnership with Michigan City Boys and Girls Club and Safe Harbor after school programs. Our curriculums include Literacy through the Arts, visual arts, dance, music, photography and STEAM (programs that integrate science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics).

Q: You mentioned STEAM programs. Can you say more about that? Why is LCA integrating technology and science into artmaking?

A: Like many arts education researchers and practitioners, I believe that art and science processes and ideas are deeply connected. Contemporary art education needs to embrace and utilize technology as a tool for imagination and creation to build relevant programs that address the needs and expectations of our students. Certainly, contemporary art practices engage with technology. With generous support from NiSource, we’ve been able to procure a suite of iPads and other tools that we use to incorporate technology into all our education and outreach programs and to provide professional development for our dedicated team of teaching artists.

Q: What programs does LCA offer for families in particular?

A: We’re continuing our popular free Family Day programs that correspond with the three major exhibitions at our center. They give kids and adults opportunities to connect with each other while enjoying “no pressure” family-friendly exhibition tours and interpretive art projects. This year we also offered free Family Pop-Up Art Days in three different Michigan City neighborhoods that were well-attended and very well-received. These Pop-Ups reached new families and helped increase awareness of our programs.

Q: Would you update us on the Teen Arts Council (TAC)?

A: These high school students from across the region continue to thrive and accomplish so much. TAC member Savannah Starr won the 2019 Regional Youth Arts Award, a tri-county competition, the first win in the history of the award for a teen from La Porte County. And the Center for Creative Solutions gave awards to two TAC members for innovation and creativity: one to Savannah Starr and one to Olivia Jobbe for her leadership in creating a collaborative mural at the Swale Music Festival. Also, Charity Smith and Alexis Reynolds were asked to sit on Michigan City’s Youth Leadership Commission. We have a great group of seniors that are going through portfolio reviews and college applications right now, so we’ve been working extensively on portfolio development as a group. College scholarship offers to TAC members are significant. Olivia was actually just awarded the Presidential Merit Scholarship from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, which is a tremendous achievement.

Q: Many LCA members are ardent supporters of arts education. How can they help?

A: We are very grateful to our members and community for their support! One thing we would love for others to understand is that in order to sustain our excellent art education and outreach programs we need to generate funds that support not only our programs, but our building, our exhibitions, and LCA’s amazing staff, as those are necessities. We are always seeking new ways to reach even more people with our high quality programs.

All told, TAC senior students have been offered over $453,000 in scholarship money this year!