

# The Ann Arbor Art Center

## 2018 – 2020 Strategic Plan

### **Mission**

The AAAC is an extraordinary nucleus of art experiences. Through exhibition, education, collaboration and advocacy, we invite, inspire and instill art in everyone.

### **Vision**

**Renowned** art educator, presenter & collaborator

**Welcoming** place for art and for artists

**Respected** facilitator of art in public spaces

**Recognized** anchor and partner in the future “Arts District” in downtown Ann Arbor

### **Values**

To accomplish our work of providing access to visual arts for all, we are committed to the following values:

- Creativity and Innovation
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Collaboration and Community Building
- Integrity

### **Goals for Success**

- Happy employees
- More Space
- Increase Fundraising Capacity
- Rebrand

### **Program Priorities**

- High quality arts education and experiences for everyone
- A place and a voice for artists
- The conduit that infuses art in and around Ann Arbor

### **Goals for Success**

At the successful conclusion of our 2013-2016 strategic plan, the Art Center is ready to tackle an updated vision that will begin with strengthening the financial foundation of the organization. Over the past 12 months the Art Center has turned away over 500 patrons because classes were at capacity and events were sold out.

We are actively preparing to meet the economic opportunities and challenges of the future. To this end we are developing a robust, state-of-the-art business model, one that is flexible and enables the Art Center to continue to serve our mission, retain our talented professionals, and easily adapt to inevitable economic fluctuations.

**Goal #1 – Happy Employees**

Create a positive work environment through ongoing facility and space improvements and by nurturing a creative culture. This will:

- Foster positive employee turnover
- Radiate enthusiasm and deliver excellence
- Enable talented arts professionals to make a living in the arts

**Strategies for Success**

1. Ensure competitive employee compensation and benefit packages
2. Continuously improve the workplace environment
3. Support professional and personal employee development

**Metrics**

- Only positive employee turnover (leaving on their own terms for professional advancement)
- Increase the number of professional development opportunities provided annually
- Maintain, at minimum, an 85% average on the annual CEO Evaluation conducted by the board and staff

**Goal #2 – More Space**

Expand capacity from 5 to 9 classroom/flexible spaces enabling the Art Center to:

- Provide operational flexibility during economic fluctuations
- Expand class offerings to mitigate waitlists
- Increase the number of free drop-in programs

**Strategies for Success**

1. Launch ArtNext Capital Campaign
2. Successfully raise \$4.0M to fund purchase of adjacent building and contiguous renovations
3. Deliver excellence in programming for expanded space

**Metrics**

- Campaign fundraising milestones align with budget
- Building renovations completed on time and within budget
- Capacity utilization for new spaces (# classes/term and per space)
- Class programmed in the new spaces have a fill rate of 85% or higher

**Goal #3 – Increase Fundraising Capacity**

Build and nurture strong relationships with current and new donors, passionate students, talented artists, and art enthusiasts, positively impacts our fundraising success in the organization. This will enable us to:

- Build cash reserve and fund endowment

- Ensure financial stability allowing us to expand mission related programs
- Attract and retain new and current donors

### **Strategies for Success**

1. Continue efforts to develop and implement a comprehensive donor relations strategy for the organization
2. Build a strong board of directors capable of leveraging their networks to expand community reach and visibility
3. Attract and hire additional resources to support the development team

### **Metrics**

- Create a full development plan with targets in each category
- Create and implement a formal board composition strategy
- Hire an additional development professional in 2019

### **Goal #4 - Rebrand**

Founded in 1909, and having been in our current location in downtown Ann Arbor for the past 43 years, the Art Center is looking to update our brand to:

- Establish our presence as the visual arts leader in our community
- Ensure that we keep pace with our changing and growing community
- Help retain current, and attract the next generation of art lovers

### **Strategies for Success**

1. Elevate our digital presence in all that we do
2. Work with The Phire Group to refresh visual identity
3. Launch rebrand initiative concurrent with the expansion grand opening

### **Metrics**

- Increase social media following from 27,000 in FY18 to 50,000+ at the end of FY20
- Incorporate new brand identity into the building design and renovation
- Launch the full rebrand

### **Priorities**

Throughout the strategic planning period, the Art Center will align all activities and initiatives around our three priorities. Within each priority we have selected one new initiative to include in our mission delivery. These initiatives have been carefully evaluated and selected to ensure that they leverage existing resources creating the best chance of long-term success.

## **Priority #1 – Create high quality arts education and experience for everyone**

### **ArtBox**

Developed by the professional, enthusiastic, and talented team at the Ann Arbor Art Center, ArtBox is a creative art experience nested inside a box and represents the next level of artistic exploration for all ages. All necessary supplies, along with both written and visual instructions for use, are included in each ArtBox experience.

Imagine a watercolor silhouette, a polymer clay pendant, or a colored pencil collage. The creative project possibilities are endless and each work of art will be unique to its creator. Projects will be cleverly designed to provide age appropriate, hands-on art experiences that are fun and creative. Ideal for both group and individual play, participants will be free to immerse in the creative process and through this process gain confidence, be inspired, and create personal works of art.

## **Priority #2 – Be a place and a voice for artists**

### **Straight Up**

Straight Up began as a pilot series in FY2017. Now a full-fledged, regularly scheduled program, Straight Up is where the Art Center features an individual artist's work in a unconventional space outside of the Art Center. Partnerships are established with local businesses throughout Washtenaw County (Ann Arbor Distilling Company and Alley Bar in downtown Ann Arbor, Hyperion Coffee in Ypsilanti, Leon Lofts in Pittsfield Twp.). Each monthly event features the selected artist's artwork, a local DJ to provide entertainment, and an artmaking experience for all participants. These events are free and open to the public and provide a fun, comfortable, and accessible way for more people to engage with art.

## **Priority #3 – Build the conduit that infuses art in and around Ann Arbor**

### **Art In Public**

The goals for Art In Public are to; 1) Create impactful temporary art experiences in the public realm, 2) Build positive public opinion about public art in Ann Arbor, and 3) Infuse energy into the Old Westside neighborhood to create a future Arts District.

#### Successful Art In Public projects will:

1. Present high-caliber artists and high-quality art installations
2. Provide audience engagement and/or interpretative programming
3. Be accessible to diverse audiences
4. Improve the visibility and reputation of the Art Center
5. Engage community partners (local business owners, city officials, other organizations, etc.)