

# **ARTS ON THE LAKE STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **Introduction by the President of the Board**

On behalf of the board, staff and volunteers of Arts on the Lake, I am pleased to introduce the strategic planning document.

This plan is the culmination of five months of work by the staff, board members, Arts on the Lake members and volunteers. During that time, we have conducted workshops, on-on-one interviews, held management and staff meetings and evaluated research and data. Our discussions have been at times serious, comical, far-reaching, but have always been centered on how best to build an organization that becomes a valued center for the community.

In developing the plan, it became evident that our members and the community wanted more of what had already been offered. The activities that were the most participatory were the activities most mentioned. To that end, our plan emphasizes developing a staff, securing adequate space, and developing programming that will justify the effort involved. It is a combination of renewing and improving what is within while reaching out to include more of the community.

This plan is rooted in our values and our commitment to provide a place where the community can share, witness and participate in the arts.

I would like to thank the members of the Board of Directors, Advisory Board, Counsel, Artistic and Administrative Director, staff, volunteers, members and external stakeholders whose dedication and insight contributed to the development of our first strategic plan.

Sincerely,

Liz Allison

Acting President of the Board, Arts on the Lake

June 29, 2011

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of Arts on the Lake is to sponsor, encourage, and create opportunities for all the residents of the Town of Kent and the larger community to participate in and appreciate the visual and performing arts, to be a roof and walls for performances, exhibits, classes and workshops. Arts on the Lake will strive to create a place where individuals can realize their creative potential, and where the community as a whole can share, witness and/or participate in this process.

## **Vision and Values**

Because boundaries in the arts can be self-defined, our community reaches beyond Putnam to Westchester and Dutchess counties in New York, nearby counties in Connecticut or as far as the creative spirit can go.

We believe the arts are valuable personally, socially and economically.

We believe participation in the arts enhances a person's well-being and participation by a large number enhances the community.

We believe Arts on the Lake, by creating a place for the arts, provides a service to the community.

We believe the arts should be accessible and affordable to all.

We believe if the organization is built by the community, it will be better integrated into the community.

## **Organizational History and Profile**

Arts on the Lake is an organization located in the town of Kent, New York, founded in 2006 to foster performances, exhibits and art classes. Founding members continue to serve on the board and provide artistic direction. The organization started out performing in homes, then moved to the current facility, the former firehouse at 640 Route 52 in 2007, and began offering workshops, art exhibitions, performances and classes for adults and children. Since its inception, Arts on the Lake has gained a reputation as a unique community-based arts organization that encourages a broad range of artistic expression.

In 2008, a Building and Renovations Committee was formed to plan how to update the former firehouse to become a fully functional arts center. A major grant from the State of New York to the Town of Kent will fund an exterior repair and renovation project for the building in the summer of 2011. A ballet program initiated jointly with the Putnam Arts Council in 2009 was relocated to a more suitable facility in 2010. In 2009, the Development Committee was formed to raise operating funds for program development and expansion. The Friends of Classical Music, formed in 2010, have sponsored a series of classical music programs.

Arts on the Lake currently offers programs in 4 areas: Visual Arts, Education, Theatre and Music. Last year, visual arts offerings included 4 exhibitions for member artists and adult art students, an affordable art sale, a collaboration with the Kent Public Library to present monthly exhibits at the library, life drawing sessions and meeting space for visual artists to discuss topics of interest; 1,150 people attended the visual arts events at Arts on the Lake. The education program offers 4 sessions of classes each year for adults, teens and children and has recently begun sponsoring community workshops. The theatre program presents performances from readings to fully staged productions; last year, 1,040 people attended the thirteen theatre performances. The music program offers performances from rock to classical; last year, 23 music performances were attended by 1,840 people.

The organization's budget for last year was \$85,000, with 1.2 FTE staff and a core team of 22 volunteers. Revenue is generated from programming and fund-raising. Program revenues cover about 60% of operating costs.

### **Core Strategies**

Five overarching strategies will inform Arts on the Lake's goals for the next five years.

1. *Develop and strengthen programs in all areas to expand participation of and reach to current and new audiences.* Our current audiences want more program offerings and, to fulfill our mission, Arts on the Lake needs to provide the opportunity to participate in the arts to new people.
2. *Raise funds to sustain future programming and achieve a balanced budget.* Arts on the Lake needs to maintain our record of fiscal responsibility to continue as a strong and growing arts center. In addition, our capacity to grow programs is limited by the extent of our ability to invest in capital improvements for the facility.
3. *Provide a superior facility for regional arts center activities.* We need to upgrade the current facility to maximize the functionality of the lower level and meet the expectations of our audiences until we are able to undertake a major renovation that will enable occupancy of both the upper and lower levels for programming.
4. *Build and maintain staff and volunteer organization to fulfill program and administration functions effectively; enable the Board of Directors to focus on governance.* Staff, volunteers and our Boards continue to be our greatest resource. The strategic plan reflects an investment in our most valuable resource through a commitment to develop and expand our paid and volunteer staff.
5. *Reach out to the widest possible audience in a spirit of inclusiveness and increase collaboration with other organizations for the mutual advancement of our missions.* Recognizing that Arts on the Lake can reach wider audiences and increase the impact of programs by coordinating with other organizations, we will work in collaboration with a broad range of organizations.

### **Program Goals and Objectives**

Nurture participation of current and new audiences in Arts on the Lake programming.

- Offer a regular schedule of our most popular events. In 2012, present 6 variety theatre (*Open Mouth*) events, 12 family programs and 2 shows, lectures and/or workshops each weekend.
- Continue program expansion to 3 shows, lectures and/or workshops each weekend in 2014.
- Identify first time participants and cultivate a relationship with them.

Expand reach by attracting audiences from Connecticut, upper Westchester and Dutchess counties.

- Cultivate relationships with participants from the broader region.
- Work with public relations and communication to implement a plan that expands audience reach.

Increase financial contribution while striving to maintain affordable ticket and tuition prices.

- Create program/event budgets where contribution goals that balance revenue needs and affordability.

Double education offerings.

- Build education offerings to double number of offerings and instructional hours received in 2013.

Become home to a theatre company.

- Continue to develop theatre program as a place to initiate new work. Investigate options for an Arts on the Lake based theatre company. Present alternatives, including costs, revenues and facility requirements to Board in 2013.

### **Financial, Administrative and Governance Goals and Objectives**

Attract and retain qualified paid and volunteer staff to run programs and administration.

- Develop volunteer and paid staff appreciation programs.
- Assess/adjust compensation policies for paid staff and establish annual review process for job descriptions.
- In 2012, double the number of regular volunteers and volunteer hours from current levels.
- Increase the number of paid staff to 3.5 full-time employees by January 2014.

Increase the visibility and community awareness of Arts on the Lake as a regional arts center.

- Define and implement a public relations / communication plan that supports the reach and revenue targets set by Programming.

Ensure Arts on the Lake is recognized for its achievements and the value provided to the greater community.

- Place news article about an Arts on the Lake success story at least quarterly.

Double participation in membership and activities.

- Produce 5 member communication activities each year, including the annual member event and 1 activity for new member enrollment.

Operate the Arts Center in a fully renovated building.

- Complete the short-term renovation project in 2011.
- Finalize costs (construction and infrastructure such as furniture and theatrical equipment) and plans for the major renovation project by December 2013.
- By June 2014, locate an annex facility that will meet Arts on the Lake's anticipated needs through 2017.

Acquire broad-based financial resources to sustain the programs and growth envisioned.

- Raise \$30,000 for interior renovations by October 2011.
- By July 2012, create a reserve/contingency fund equal to 3 months revenue from operations.
- Implement a fund-raising plan for operations to generate \$60,000 in 2012, \$90,000 in 2013 and \$120,000 in 2014.
- Raise funds required for major renovation project by December 2014.

Attract and retain an effective and active board of directors whose governance elicits the support of the community and promotes the achievement of Arts on the Lake's mission.

- Establish annual review process for job descriptions.
- Implement a Board Development program.

Establish partnerships with other local arts organizations to develop community plans.

- Initiate a Board of Directors and Advisory Board members networking program to establish and nurture partnerships with other organizations for the mutual advancement of our missions.