



Fiscal Year 2023 Highlights

Grants to Arts Organizations, Communities, Schools, and Individuals

Total: 116 awards and grants totaling \$570,268 were awarded to area organizations and artists through twelve grant or award programs, including:

- **\$225,821** for **39** grants through our **Art Projects Grants** & **\$39,430** for **2 Art Project Legacy Grants**
- **11 Operating Support Grants** to arts organizations totaling **\$107,363**
- **\$32,677** for **14 Quick Support for Organizations Grants**, awarded for organizations for activities such as planning for an Art Legacy project, strategic planning or board training, costs to apply for 501(c)(3) status, small equipment purchases, or small arts projects
- **\$56,664** for **7 Equipment/Facilities Improvement Grants**, awarded for the purchase of equipment items and facilities improvement that will aid in the organization's capacity to serve the community through the arts
- **\$25,409** to **7** area schools for artist residencies and arts related field trips through our **Arts in the Schools Grant Program**
- **6 grants** were awarded to students through the **Art Study Opportunity for Youth Grant Program** for a total of **\$2,749**
- **42** individual artists were granted a total of **\$82,895** for projects to further their careers as artists through the following grants: **Advanced Artist Fellowship, Artist Growth, Artist Equity, and Quick Support for Artists**

Awards

SMAC awarded the Prairie Disciple Award for \$1,000 in 2023 to Lee Kanten of Ortonville (Big Stone County). This award is to recognize a person who has been instrumental in promoting the arts in the 18-county area of southwestern Minnesota. Lee is an international and award-winning director and producer who made his career in the Twin Cities creating motivational and communications films for Fortune 500 companies, but it is in Ortonville and the surrounding region where musician and filmmaker Lee Kanten has made the most impact. Lee donates his film production skills locally to organizations, non-profits and artists. He uses his voice on KDIO radio co-hosting a weekly morning show where he grasps every opportunity to promote arts in our region. He frequently submits stories to the local newspaper for the Big Stone Art Council's column, "Opening Doors." His nominator said, "Arts advocacy is embedded in the heart of this 'Troubadour of the Prairie,' (as some of the locals have dubbed him) and he intends to provide outlets for the arts with jam sessions for musicians, variety shows, and more outdoor concerts this summer, all in an attempt to help spread creativity and support arts in our community". Another community member's letter of support said, "if SMAC wants to honor someone who has lived and breathed the arts and arts support, Lee Kanten would truly be an Arts Disciple."

Other Programs, Technical Assistance & Services

- In July 2022 **SMAC moved to a new location!** We are now located at 509 West Main Street in downtown Marshall.
- **SMAC Annual Artist Retreat** held at the Danebod Folk School in Tyler: This retreat allows creatives in our region to take part in two days of high-quality arts workshops, taught by artists from our region to support and highlight our regional artists, and catered to multiple artistic disciplines, at a very low rate for participants. This weekend also includes arts performances and celebrations from artists in our region. Every year we have a performance that's free and open to the public on the first evening of the retreat; In 2023 we featured interactive Danish Dance lessons, taught by a family that had grown up in Tyler.
- In partnership with the Department of Public Transformation and the Yes! House (of Granite Falls), SMAC held an **"Intro to Civic Arts Workshop"** at the Marshall Public Library, free and open to the public, catered by local business Mariachi Fiesta. We had attendees from many different counties totaling 26 individuals.
- **9 Online Grantwriting Webinars and 3 Q&A sessions** were conducted with 89 people logging on. Videos of the webinars are recorded and provided online for viewing after the live event. All staff also have reservable meetings times available to meet by Zoom, phone, or in person.
- **In-Person Grant Information Session, held in conjunction with Minnesota State Arts Board** in Luverne, MN.
- SMAC applied for and received a **grant from the US Bank Foundation** to help support more grants awards in our Artist Equity Program.
- For the first time SMAC ran a **Special Fundraising Campaign** for our Art Study Opportunity for Youth grants and it was a great success! Supporters donated over \$2,500 in extra funds, enabling us to grant out at least 5 additional grants to student artists.
- SMAC's **Annual Arts Celebration** was held in Appleton at Valley District Dance (the former county courthouse). SMAC encouraged a tour of sites around Appleton that we helped fund through grants, including the 52 Wing Mural, Appleton City Park Mosaic Benches, Window murals at the old Electric building along the river and a community arts exhibit at the Art & Culture Center. We also encouraged attendees to watch a sample dance class at Valley Dance District. During social hour the LqPV JH guys group (of Lac qui Parle High School), along with music teacher Chad Felton, entertained guests with live music. Tickets to the event included a locally catered meal and cash bar from Plazita Mexican restaurant and the public presentation of our 2022 Prairie Star, John Sterner and our 2022 Prairie Disciple, Melanie Loy.
- This year SMAC continued out **County Arty Party's!** These are casual and free events meant to let arts supporters in the area network with each other and with SMAC staff. Each event features local arts performers and is catered by local establishments. We hosted in a new county of our region every month for the past two years! This year we held Arty Parties in the following counties: Meeker, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Renville and Rock. We will finish with the remaining 2 counties (Redwood & Swift) in our region in fiscal year 2024!
- The **SMAC Art Gallery** provided **6** regional artists (all SMAC grantees) the opportunity to have a solo exhibit. Each exhibit included a virtual exhibit, as well as a virtual Artist Talk, which are still available to

view on our YouTube channel, Facebook and website. Exhibits in FY 2023 included: Dan Wahl of Walnut Grove, Jammie Niemeyer (formerly of Maynard), Deb Meyer of Madison, Laura Deleski of Willmar, Andrew & Molly Rivera of Hutchinson, and John K Sterner of Marshall. Musicians featured at the artist receptions included Lee Kanten of Ortonville, Georgette Jones of Watson, Pete Lothringer of Marshall, and Emily Carlene & Darwin Dyce of Ghent.

- Staff held monthly **Grant Support Open Office Hours** on the second Tuesday of every month from 10 am to 2 pm. Applicants and grantees can use this time with staff to talk through project ideas or get help with finding the right grant program, filling out a grant application, preparing work samples or budgets, or completing a final report for a grant received.
- In June of 2023, SMAC welcomed our first Move for America Fellow, Latisha Wade, as an **Arts Ambassador** for a full year. The role of an arts ambassador is to build relationships, connections and networks with groups and communities that SMAC has not been successful in serving or reaching. The position prioritizes creating connections with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) artists and organizations and/or other groups or communities historically excluded in the region.
- In 2023 SMAC hired a **new part-time Communications Assistant**, John Kellen of Willmar, to help us with sharing regional arts events, supporting local artists and arts organizations, and collecting and communicating stories of our grantees with our communities.
- SMAC participated as a **regional partner for Welcoming Week** efforts, which included promoting and supporting communities in our region that held events striving to make their communities more welcoming places for all.
- **SMAC conducted Arts Needs listening sessions** to inform our new biennial plan in the following counties: Rock, Redwood, Meeker, Murray, Lac qui Parle, and Ortonville. We also conducted a virtual survey, open to the public of our 18-county region, on Arts Needs in the region to inform our biennial plan.
- The **VOICES** newsletter is published online monthly and includes upcoming SMAC events, grant information, arts opportunities, news items and more!
- **SMAC's website www.swmnarts.org** continues to provide up-to-date information on resources for artists and arts organizations, available grants, news and arts opportunities, on-line grant forms, recorded webinars, calendar of arts events (including virtual & updated daily!), accessibility offerings & resources, a regional arts organization & artist registry, and more!



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