Letter from the Executive Director

What an incredible two years of teamwork, learning, and commitment!

A 2020 Stanford Social Innovation Review study identified hundreds of nonprofit organizations exploring some type of permanent partnership with another organization as a direct COVID-19 impact. Across the country, the pandemic inspired organizations to innovate and look for efficient ways to operate.

After two years and at least 291 person hours of thoughtful negotiation, strategic planning, and careful financial and operational integration, the Manitou Springs Arts Council and the Manitou Springs Creative District are delighted to announce that we are now Creative Alliance Manitou Springs, or CRANE for short.

We continue to serve artists and promote public art as part of creating a more livable community. Other certified Colorado Creative Districts in communities like Steamboat Springs, Telluride, and Crested Butte have recently completed such mergers. The Creative District and the Arts Council decided that together, we can make a bigger impact and serve the Manitou Springs community more effectively.

Our vision is a thriving, vibrant arts and business community that moves us toward an inclusive and creative future. Our mission is to lift artistic and economic vitality. We believe that creativity IS good business and collaboration is the most powerful tool we have.

We can’t do any of this work alone.

We will continue to work closely with our community stakeholders and key partners like the City of Manitou Springs and the Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development as well as our business community, venue operators, artists, creatives, nonprofit organizations, and residents. These vital public and private partnerships help us engage creatives and community leaders in improving the quality of life for everyone.

Thank you, Manitou Springs, for the opportunity to serve and celebrate you every day.

Becca Sickbert
Executive Director
Creative Alliance Manitou Springs
Who We Are and How We Work

We work through community partnerships that activate both public and private assets. We build and support programs that connect arts, cultural, and heritage projects with businesses, city government, and community development efforts. All of our projects and programs are the result of needs indicated by our artists, creative nonprofits and business and gallery owners. We strive to build investment in our creative community: One hundred percent of our artists and other creatives are compensated for their work.

Creative Alliance Manitou Springs is funded primarily by grants and the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development through partnership with the City of Manitou Springs. We operate as a State-Certified Colorado Creative District under the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT). OEDIT certifies communities that contribute to the state's economy through creativity, culture, and the arts. The program's goal is to help communities increase jobs, incomes, and investments in creative places like Manitou Springs.
Our Values

Collaboration & Inclusivity
We hold space for differences of opinions and approaches. We build a big tent that welcomes creativity across all disciplines and socio-economic backgrounds. We meet people where they are and create accessible programs. We listen to what the community needs and wants.

Respect & Community Pride
We listen, we celebrate, we focus on the positives and build on strengths. We advocate for Manitou Springs.

Transparency, Fairness, Accountability
We hold ourselves and others accountable. We share information and resources. We learn and report.

Creative Alliance Board of Directors as of December 2022

The Creative Alliance Board of Directors is composed of at least seven members with a majority of those serving on the Board required to demonstrate residency or significant involvement in the arts/culture/business community.

Ralph Routon, Board Chair  
Colorado Springs Business Journal/Colorado Springs Independent  
Manitou Springs Resident

Audrey Gray, Board Vice Chair  
CRANE Public Art Committee Chair, Professional Artist

Pat Sitzmann, Board Treasurer  
ENT Credit Union (Retired), Community Volunteer, Manitou Springs Resident

Edie Greene, Board Secretary  
UCCS, Professor Emerita of Psychology, Manitou Springs Resident

Farley McDonough, Board Member  
Owner, Adam’s Mountain Cafe

Fred Darpino, Board Member  
Artist, Fred Darpino Studio & Gallery Owner

Jeanne Solze, Board Member  
Cheyenne Mountain Village CFO (Retired)

Julia L Wright, Board Member  
Artist, Commonwheel Festival Organizer, Manitou Springs Resident

Mary Snyder, Board Member  
Graphic Artist, Community Volunteer, Manitou Springs Resident
Program Impact

ART ON THE AVENUE WAS A KEY PART OF THE CITY OF MANITOU SPRINGS’S 150th CELEBRATION. Since 2004, the Arts Council had facilitated acquisition and installation of artwork in public spaces on or near Manitou Avenue in partnership with the City of Manitou Springs. There are currently over 60 works of art on display representing 51 artists. In 2022, we installed eight new works to celebrate 150 years of Manitou Springs city life. These installations inspire visitors and residents alike. With internship assistance from the Bee Vradenburg Foundation, we are poised to launch our walking tour app encompassing the City's entire collection.

We orchestrated online polls, volunteer opportunities, and City Council approvals of the selected artworks. We issued $3500 in cash prizes resulting in two newspaper articles and a story on KOAA Ch 5/30. Our $2500 CRANE Excellence Award winner was Florida-based Flaminio Antonio Lara for his guitar sculpture "Comforting Melody." The $1500 cash prize Community Choice winner was K8E ORR for the "Dance of Tava" mural.
MANITOU MADE

In 2022, we provided monthly group coaching and updates for local merchants. Those 34 hours of small business training sessions and support helped launch 6 new merchants and provide ecommerce support with no monthly web hosting fees. As a result, we not only eased web hosting fees for merchants looking to escape the 30% hike in fees at Etsy.com, we also engaged with 14,384 website visitors primarily from the Pikes Peak region, 27,664 Facebook users (also largely from Colorado), and 7,770 Instagram users. 14,384 online visitors saw at least one Manitou Made product listing before leaving the site.
AVENUE CREATIVE CIRCUIT. First Friday Art Walks are a regional partnership with Downtown Ventures/Colorado Springs Creative District, Old Colorado City Partnership/OCC Historic District, and Creative Alliance/Manitou Springs Creative District. Each month, the entire Circuit promotes galleries and arts experiences across three districts, six miles, and two cities. In 2022, we celebrated the closing reception of the Solidarity Mobile Mural project which had been featured at the Colorado Capitol Building in Denver and was displayed for two months at the Hillside Community Center in Colorado Springs. The Solidarity Mobile Mural project was initially made possible by the Bee Vradenburg Foundation with additional funds from the Capitol Creatives Project managed by Downtown Ventures.
Public Art Survey

Research from the National Endowment for the Arts shows that the presence of art and culture nonprofits and arts and entertainment establishments correlates strongly with increased livability. So we asked the community if and how public art improves their quality of life.

The survey was open for eight weeks and received 223 responses from residents, business owners, and employees. 93% responded affirmatively that Manitou Springs public art improves their quality of life. 71% responded Yes, definitely.

**DOES PUBLIC ART IMPROVE YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE?**

- 70.9% Yes Definitely
- 22% Yes, Somewhat
- 7.2% Neither Improves Nor Detracts
- 0% No, Definitely Not
- 0% Don’t Know

**QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK THEME SUMMARY**

- Makes me happy, joyful; improves my mood (21%)
- Strengthens the sense of community; lends civic pride; sets Manitou Springs apart; spawns other creatives and business ventures (21%)
- Provokes thoughts and mindfulness; inspires me; sparks creativity; causes me to pause and wonder (20%)
- Adds beauty (16%)
- Supports creatives; shows that art is valued and artists are appreciated (7%)
- Enhances the pedestrian experience (5%)
Thank You Sponsors, Donors, Partners and Volunteers!

We are grateful to all of you! Our appreciation for 2021-2022 supporters goes to:

**SPONSORS AND DONORS - Financial Support in Alphabetical Order**
- Bee Vradenburg Foundation
- Ben Kuckel
- Business Improvement District
- City of Manitou Springs
- Colorado Creative Industries
- Colorado Springs School
- Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region
- El Pomar Foundation
- Laurie Wood
- Manitou Arts Culture & Heritage (MACH)
- Manitou Springs Community Foundation
- Manitou Springs Urban Renewal Authority
- Nard Claar
- PARAB Parks and Recreation Board
- Pat Sitzman

**IN-KIND SUPPORT**
- Ace Hardware Uintah Gardens
- Adam's Mountain Cafe
- Armadillo Ranch
- Downtown Denver Partnership
- Downtown Ventures
- City of Manitou Springs
- Econo Lodge Manitou Springs
- Heritage Center/Manitou Springs Heritage Brew Festival
- J-9 Glass
- Lulu’s Downstairs
- Manitou Art Center
- Monarch Investment and Management Group
- PikeRide
- Pikes Peak Bulletin
- Rick’s Garden Center & Nursery
- Smokebrush Foundation for the Arts
- Theo’s Toys

**KEY PROJECT PARTNERS**

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**TOP-SELLING CATEGORIES**

- Baked Goods
- Experiences
- Art
- Home Decor
2021 -2022 VOLUNTEERS

Creative District:
Art on the Ave, First Fridays

- Alison Gerbig
- Pam LeGrande
- Steffany Boucher
- Nicole Riggio
- Tamara Noble
- Chris Sukach
- Ralph Routon
- Audrey Gray
- Farley McDonough
- Edie Greene
- Fred Darpino
- Jeanne Solze
- Julia L Wright
- Mary Snyder
- Taylor Trask
- Denise Howell
- Leslie Lewis
- Sara Lobato

Pollination Stations

- Abbey Smith
- Alice Barnett
- Angela Hartshorn
- Annie Schmitt & Doug Edmondson
- Aubrey Hall
- Barb Winter
- Christina Baker
- Christine Lowenberg
- Elizabeth Domangue
- Jannine Scott
- Jenai Freng
- Joan & Karl Stang
- Judith Chandler
- Justin Trudeau
- Kendal Kelly
- Laura Allen
- Melody Daugherty
- Neale Minch
- Susan Watkins
Get Involved & Watch Manitou Springs Grow

Learn more: manitouspringscd.org/contact