

CAC Corner: Art is Essential

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The life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction in the life of the nation, is very close to the center of a nation's purpose – and it is the test of the quality of a nation's civilization. –JOHN F. KENNEDY

I believe the arts are essential to the life of a nation. It is therefore essential the arts are accessible to all. There are many arts organization committed to welcoming everyone. I am highlighting Art Access of Salt Lake City. Take a few minutes to review their 12 programs dedicated to access and inclusion. If you are inspired as I am by their work, share this information with groups in your community.

Art Access conducts twelve mission-driven programs yearly, which are described briefly below:

(1) Art Access Gallery is an access point through which artists with disabilities can join the mainstream arts community by exhibiting their artwork together with artists without disabilities. It is also an important way for patrons to further develop an understanding of people with disabilities and disability issues in Utah.

Our visual arts workshops – (2) Kindred Spirits, (3) Teen, (4) Adult, and (5) Veterans – are taught by professional artists and enable participants of all ages and abilities to create art in an inclusive and accessible environment.

(6) Our Partners professional artist mentoring program matches emerging artists with disabilities or those with limited access to the arts one-on-one with professional artist mentors.

(7) Our Artist Residencies bring arts professionals to facilities such as rehabilitation centers, care centers, senior centers, and other service venues.

(8) Our Integrated Arts in Utah Schools program provides arts education services to students, ages 3 to 22, who receive special education services in Utah schools and in other disability service venues.

(9) Our Literary Arts program provides creative writing workshops in facilities where adults and teens with disabilities live or gather, runs a community writing group, produces an annual literary magazine, and conducts a disability and literature book group.

(10) Our Theatre Arts program seeks to educate the public to respect differences through plays produced by our partner, PYGmalion Productions.

(11) We loan our Permanent Collection of artwork by Utah artists with disabilities to community organizations.

(12) Finally, Everyone Welcome, a training program for docents and staff at Utah cultural facilities, focuses on accessibility and inclusion.