

Accessing Utah's Arts is Easier for People with Disabilities | CPD

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By Wendy Hassan, Consumer Advisory Council member from the Cache Valley Center

for the Arts. A higher percentage of Utahns attend performing arts events than any other state, and we are second in the nation for attending arts exhibits. There are plenty of opportunities, especially around the holidays, and many of them are free. For example, in Cache Valley in December there are more than a dozen free concerts at the Logan Tabernacle. Many schools have excellent choir and orchestra concerts that would be enjoyed by more than the families of the students. Access to the arts for people with disabilities may be easier than you think. All arts organizations that apply to the Utah Division of Arts and Museums for funding need to articulate how they are helping individuals of all abilities have meaningful access to their programming. Individuals with disabilities have performed with Logan Youth Shakespeare, Cache Children's Choir and many other organizations. Some arts organizations specialize in serving individuals with disabilities, such as [Salt Lake's Art Access/Very Special Arts](#) program. Here in Logan, Valley Dance Ensemble offers a "Limitless" class for individuals of all abilities and local artist Michael Bingham has worked to develop adaptive technologies for artists including a wheelchair that you can paint with. He even gave a [TEDxUSU](#) presentation on the subject. Greater awareness of the needs of individuals with disabilities have led many performing arts groups to experiment with sensory friendly programming. The Kennedy Center's goal in providing such performances is "to create a performing arts experience that is welcoming to all families with

children with autism or with other disabilities that create sensory sensitivities." Accommodations may include lower sound and light levels, especially for startling or loud sounds or strobe lighting, space in the auditorium to stand or move around, designated quiet areas, smaller crowds and higher light levels in the audience (house lights). Enjoy your favorite holiday traditions, or discover new ones, but regardless, may you have a safe and happy holiday season.

Michael Bingham shows video of a wheelchair that allows its driver to paint in this TEDxUSU presentation. The chair was created with the help of the Utah Assistive Technology Program at the Center for Persons with Disabilities.