

Grants for the Arts

2016 Long Island Arts Grant Awardees

The 2016 Long Island Arts Grants had a successful year with 66 arts and cultural organizations and individual artists being funded for their community minded and arts driven projects. The Huntington Arts Council will be following four of this year's grantees throughout their yearlong creative processes to shed light on the important ways that they are enriching the greater Long Island community.

An exciting new component has been added to the Long Island Arts Grants for the 2017 cycle. The Creative Curriculum category will now be called Creative Learning to include projects for lifelong learners. The Creative Learning category will now offer two funding strands: K-12 In-School Projects and After-School and Community-based Learning. Funds can support arts education projects that take place in-school during the school day and/or in after-school and community-based settings for youth and/or senior learners. This change was made in an effort to expand collaborative opportunities for teaching artists and to provide meaningful arts education programming to people of all ages. More on this change will be publicized later this summer (August) in the Creative Learning guidelines, which will be available at www.huntingtonarts.org.

The Long Island Art Grants are made possible because of The New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) Decentralization Program, which was established in 1977 to reach out communities that might not otherwise be able to access state funds. The Huntington Arts Council administers the DEC Program to Long Island to make arts support available to geographically, economically, and ethnically diverse populations, and to increase the vitality of and livability in our local communities and neighborhoods.

Creative Communities



BRIDGEHAMPTON, NY — The **Hamptons Take 2 Documentary Film Festival (HT2FF)** champions and celebrates the rich, diverse and challenging world of documentary film. Their aim is to bring the work of talented and deserving documentary filmmakers to new audiences. This year HT2FF received funding to expand its "Take in a Take 2 Film" project. The project started as a collaborative effort between the festival, filmmakers and local libraries and organizations to offer year-round access to quality documentary films.

With its grant funds, HT2FF will develop and formalize this program by compiling a "festival collection" that includes over 50 documentary films from its 2008 to 2015 festivals, film synopses, and branded DVD cases to make available to the public. They also have collaborated an outreach initiative with local libraries to offer their archived festival films without charge. With this trove

of documentaries, one library in particular, the Hampton Library in Bridgehampton, created a film night on the last Monday of every month, which is free and open to the public. The Director of the Hampton Library in Bridgehampton also has assembled a documentary film section of HT2FF films, which are available to circulate with local library patrons.

HT2FF hopes that this project will be able to further promote the documentary film genre, broaden the exposure of filmmaker's films, and guarantee a steady supply of top-notch documentaries to both libraries and other likeminded organizations.

HT2FF applied to the Long Island Arts Grants because of its emphasis on community engagement. Their outreach project is geared towards reaching the many hamlets and towns on the East End of Long Island, and they look to extend its reach to a broader audience who seek out quality programming and films.



FREEPORT, NY—The **Long Island Arts Council at Freeport (LIACF)** is a non-profit organization that is committed to the idea that the power of the arts is to touch the mind and enrich the soul of the individual and community through advocacy and education. With their grant funds, LIACF is collaborating with Operation S.P.L.A.S.H., a volunteer non-profit chartered by the Town of Hempstead, which patrols the South Shore of Long Island's urban waters to remove debris and monitor and identify pollutants, as well as their sources.

Together LIACF, and Operation S.P.L.A.S.H will be working on the "Recycling Art" project. The goal of the project is to teach Long Island youth about environmental sustainability and conservation by creating art out of materials that are overlooked, discarded, broken, or forgotten and transforming them into artwork. LIACF will showcase how trash can be magically altered in to something beautiful and sustainable by anyone! They expect this project will help students realize the need to raise awareness of the community's relationship with the Earth by being caretakers and stewards of it through environmental sustainability. LIACF also wants to impart to the students that art is all around us and can be created by anyone, even with every day recycled objects not generally considered as useable for art. By making children aware of this, LIACF hopes it will change their perspective to look at aspects of daily living differently and creatively. The student's artwork will be exhibited and double as citizen education about the issues of Long Island-based ecology, conversation, and solid waste pollution.

LIACF applied to the Long Island Arts Grants as they felt receiving funds would provide the avenue to fully realize their project and administer it properly. They hope that the grant will also act as a springboard to help the community recognize the worthiness and importance of this project and its goals.



Creative Curriculum

PORT WASHINGTON, NY—**Elise May** is an independent Teaching Artist, educator, actor, singer and storyteller who has performed and taught in the U.S. and internationally. May works with school districts, libraries and corporations on communications skills, community development and developing educational programs using theater arts for vocal empowerment. Using her degrees in Theatre and Communicative Disorders and Sciences, May developed the funded program Multicultural Voices—I Have a Dream, which she is teaching in the Port Washington School District at the Carrie Palmer Weber Middle School and Paul D. Schreiber High School.

All of May's programs are focused on helping students of all ages find their voice. While this can be difficult for many, May has found students who were not raised speaking English or those who have recently immigrated have the most difficulty. Finding inspiration through her mother's immigration story, May has worked with the English-Language Learner population for many years using theater voice exploration, improvisation and dramatic enactments to help these students find their voices and become as comfortable expressing their stories and dreams in English as in their first language.

Multicultural Voices—I Have a Dream draws inspiration from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech as an example of inspired writing, embracing diversity and impassioned presentation. By the end of May's program, students witness their growth by comparing an initial taping of their presentation to a final one. It is May's hope to increase students' comfort level with spoken English so they may perform better in the classroom and have fun using language for expressing their hopes and dreams!

May chose to apply to the Long Island Arts Grants as the Creative Curriculum grant opportunity is a perfect match for her program, Multicultural Voices—I Have a Dream. The school district, administration and parent organizations show as much support as they can but, unfortunately, it isn't always enough to support this growing program. This year's funds have allowed this program to grow from the middle school to include the high school as well. In these times, schools rarely have the budget to fully support a teaching artist or arts education program. The Long Island Arts Grants program helps make it possible to bring this vital program to deserving students.



Creative Individual

ST. JAMES, NY—**Chanika Svetvilas** is a visual artist who through her artwork utilizes personal narratives to share experiences in order to disrupt stereotypes and reflect on contemporary issues and cultural identity to create meaningful dialogue. Svetvilas was awarded for her project, The Space In Between, which addresses mental health differences.

The inspiration for Svetvilas' project comes from being diagnosed at the age of 25 with bipolar disorder. As an artist, Svetvilas wanted to create a multimedia installation for others to gain a deeper understanding of the condition and the diversity of lived experiences dealing with mental health difference, and as someone who has encountered stigma and prejudice due to her disability.

Part of Svetvilas' creative process for this project is including the community in to her final piece. Svetvilas is gathering conversations between loved ones where either a person self identifies with a mental health difference or a loved one is supporting a person with a mental health difference. Svetvilas is also giving artist talks, sponsored by NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), at Mather Hospital in Port Jefferson and at North Shore University Hospital in Plainview to introduce people to her work and project. Currently, Svetvilas is collaborating with Sarah Boles, Coordinator of Mental Health Services at Suffolk Community College Counseling Center-Ammerman Campus and Lisa Melendez, Professor of Library Services and Library Gallery Curator to involve their college community in the project and to launch The Space In Between during Mental Health Awareness Week at the beginning of October 2016.

The Space In Between will be a site-specific installation that will feature these collected conversations and gathered objects and images that relate to a community that self-identifies with a mental health difference.

Svetvilas' hope is that her project will resonate with the audience and that it will initiate and stimulate conversations and dialogue amongst families and communities about mental health difference, while also dispelling myths and breaking stereotypes.

Svetvilas applied to the Long Island Arts Grants program so that she would have greater resources and therefore increase her ability to reach a larger audience, as well as participants, and to ultimately fulfill the true potential of the project, which is to be a catalyst to create a safe place for these important conversations about mental health difference to take place.

Svetvilas is open to participants located anywhere who wish to share their stories. Please contact her at csvetvilas@gmail.com if you would like to participate.

