



NEWS

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For Immediate Release

County Arts Commission Awards COVID-19 Relief Grants *32 arts nonprofits receive aid for financial recovery during pandemic*

Redwood City – The San Mateo County Arts Commission is proud to award \$168,600 in COVID-19 Relief Grants to 32 arts/culture and arts services nonprofit organizations to help them recover from the financial hit of the ongoing pandemic.

“The commission is very proud of its grantees and their contribution to the health and vitality of the community. I have received many calls and emails expressing deep gratitude for the commission’s support as these organizations try to financially recover while developing strategies to serve our county in a changing landscape,” said Arts Commission Director Robin Rodricks.

The 32 grants awarded range in size from \$4,900 to \$8,000. The Grants Review Panel evaluated 38 applications received with an eye towards those organizations working with underserved communities and/or whose work reaches a large segment of the county, according to Rodricks.

The awardees include the following six examples:

- Fuse Theater Education in Redwood City will help guide youth on producing socially responsible plays.
- The Beat Within (TBW) has provided writing workshops (creative writing, poetry, and biographical) to the students at the Youth Services Center for over 10 years. During the pandemic, County Probation staff requested production of virtual workshops for the students, and the Commission’s grant will help fund this transition. In addition, TBW also took it upon themselves to deliver “care packages” to the facility for the boys, consisting of supplies and snacks.
- Arts Unity Movement, of San Mateo, will use the grant to convert their *Dynamic Alignment* (movement therapy) program to a digital platform.
- San Bruno Mountain Watch will use the funds to resume its art and nature field trips for students from Title 1 schools that had been postponed due to the pandemic.
- Hillbarn Theater, in Foster City, is using funds to produce online theater classes in collaboration with San Mateo Foster City School District.

- Harmony Project, which provides a free of charge after-school program of intensive, multi-year instrumental music education for underserved youth throughout the county who would not otherwise have access to quality music training.

Arts and culture organizations are key to a vibrant and health county on any given day but supporting them is even more important during the current health crisis.

"The County recognizes that the arts are second responders — both for pandemic recovery, and for giving people voices and facilitating discussions and healing in complex, painful times. Arts and culture are essential to mental health," Rodricks said.

About the Arts Commission

The Arts Commission consists of 10 members, appointed by the Board of Supervisors, two each residing in one of the supervisorial districts. It exists to promote and encourage the arts, to serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors, to prepare and update the County's strategic and cultural plan, and act as a liaison with arts organizations to ensure collaboration and coordination related to culture and art activities in San Mateo County.

Learn more about the Arts Commission at: <https://cmo.smcgov.org/arts-commission>

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