



Welcome & Introductions – Theresa

Welcome – and thank you for joining us for the official launch of Keep Your ArtsAlive!

I would like to recognize those in attendance today: **[please identify yourself when your name or organization is called]** TRUSTEES, STAFF, ArtsAlive! PARTICIPANTS, SPECIAL GUESTS AND MEMBERS OF THE PRESS.

Children's Museum of Fennville

Mason Street Warehouse

City of Allegan - Regent Theatre

Allegan Area Arts Council

Mid-Lakes Chorus - Sweet Adelines

Otsego District Library

Allegan District Library

Ransom District Library

Waterfront Film Festival

Otsego Area Historical Society

Plainwell Music Society

Saugatuck Douglas Library

Saugatuck Center for the Arts

Leighton Township Library

Dorr Township Library

Allegan Historical Society

Plainwell Arts Council

ArtsAlive! has been a year in the making. The idea for ArtsAlive! came out of the frustration of watching our non-profit arts & cultural organizations struggle to stay afloat as the economic situation lead to a sharp decline in federal, state, local and individual support. It is becoming commonplace for the arts and cultural organizations that are fortunate enough to have staff, cut back on hours, services and salaries. Anything to keep the organization going.

The Allegan County Community Foundation is acting as the conduit to bring these organizations together with people who appreciate, enjoy and recognize the importance of having arts and culture in our society.

Do we take for granted the art fairs, the live theatre, the museums, the summer concerts in the park, the libraries where we escape to study the arts and cultures that give us entertainment and wisdom? Probably. We probably do take these things and places for granted.

But if we don't do something now – several of these organizations will just simply disappear. Do we want to live in a society without arts & culture? I don't.

ArtsAlive! is an opportunity for everyone who appreciates the value of having arts and culture in our society to do something to **Keep our Arts Alive in Allegan County!**

There are 17 non-profits participating in ArtsAlive! Those 17 organizations are competing for votes. Votes costs \$1 each – people can vote for as many organizations as they like, as much as they like, as often as they like. The competition culminates on September 24th at the Silo here in Allegan. The top five vote getters will be announced and they will share the net proceeds of ArtsAlive! However, every organization benefits. The night of the ArtsAlive! Bash, each organization will receive a check equal to the voting dollars cast on their behalf. An organization with 430 votes, who may not end up in the top five, still receives 430 dollars.

You may have noticed the promotional materials provided to the participants. Thanks to the sponsors and donors of ArtsAlive! these organizations are not absorbing any cost to participate. We are still seeking additional sponsors because we want to facilitate a successful and rewarding competition for the participants.

I want to encourage everyone – if you have utilized your local library, movie theatre, art center, museum --- join us to Keep our Arts Alive in Allegan County. It won't happen by accident, we must act together to keep our arts alive.

Thank you.

I would like to introduce Paula Baker, President of the Allegan County Community Foundation Board of Trustees.

PAULA:

Good Afternoon. Thank you for joining us today.

As trustees of the Allegan County Community Foundation, we are stewards of the gifts made by donors past, present and future. We are responsible for how this community foundation serves the residents of Allegan County.

When the idea of doing something for the Arts & Cultural non-profit sector was presented, there was excitement and frustration. Excitement because of the possibilities. Frustration because we had experienced the economic downturn too. It had become necessary for us to focus our grants on organizations serving the homeless, the hungry and our vulnerable populations. We didn't have the funds available to support the arts and cultural community. But with the input of several committed volunteers, ArtsAlive! took on its own life. Sponsors and donors have stepped forward to make ArtsAlive! possible.

ArtsAlive! covers many bases. Yes, organizations are going to become more visible because of this effort, and yes – the financial support will be a tremendous benefit to them. But there is another component to ArtsAlive! that the Board of Trustees embraced. The arts and culture sector attracts tourists, they employ hundreds, there is an impact on economic development in our communities where arts and culture are present. On a grand scale, the Waterfront Film Festival is ranked 5th in the nation. Thousands of people will descend on Saugatuck to experience the film festival. On an everyday scale, our museums, art shows, music and theatre opportunities all draw people to our county.

It is imperative to support these organizations because they are an integral part of what makes this county so alive and vibrant.

As trustees, we are honored to offer ArtsAlive! to Allegan County.

Thank you.