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arts

KOSSUTH COUNTY
ADVANCE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 2023 • SECTION C

CAPTURING IMAGES

By Kim Wegener
Features Writer



WESLEY—Jennifer Kramer's favorite type of photos to capture are scenery photos in all four seasons. Approximately four years ago Kramer of Wesley began taking photos with her cell phone. Her love of taking photos quickly developed into a hobby.

Kramer said she never took photos when she was younger. In addition to looking for interesting scenery angles for her photos, she also takes animal photos.

"I would say I go out and take photos on a weekly basis. When the weather is warmer and during the fall is when I take more photos on a daily basis. I take a lot of pictures around Kossuth County. When I travel on vacations, I take a lot of photos too. I also travel to certain areas in Iowa to take photos," Kramer said.

She posts her photos on social media and displays a few of her photos in her home. If a person asks for a certain print of hers, she has allowed them to use that print.

Kramer doesn't sell her photos at this time, but she said she wouldn't be against it if someone would be interested in her photos. Right now she has no immediate plans to display her photos in a gallery or show but that could be a possibility in the future.

In addition to photography, her artistic talents include playing the piano. She loves writing, traveling, sports, spending time with family and being outdoors.



FUN FACTS ABOUT JENNIFER

FAVORITE MOVIE: anything horror or action packed

FAVORITE BOOKS: To Kill A Mockingbird, Catcher in the Rye, The Outsiders, anything suspenseful.

FAVORITE BAND OR TYPE OF MUSIC: definitely metal, big hair bands and old school grunge.

FAVORITE BOARD GAME: checkers

FAVORITE HOBBIES: traveling, sports, reading, being outdoors, spending time with family.

FAVORITE RESTAURANT: I like too many to list, don't have a specific favorite.

FAVORITE FOOD: steak

DREAM JOB: musician



A REFLECTION OF EXPERIENCES

By Amy Frankl-Brandt
News Editor

Deb Arndorfer has always been a curious creative. That has taken her all over the world and allowed her to forge many amazing and important friendships. In addition to that, art has helped her cope with many of life's inevitable struggles and challenges.

Arndorfer grew up on a farm near Corwith and graduated from Garrigan High School. After high school she had gone to college in Madison, Wis. for two years when she decided she wanted to travel the world for awhile. Those travels would take her all over Europe including India, London and France. "That's when my real education began," Arndorfer said. Her first love at that time was acting. When she was in London she joined a theater company and took a few art classes in her spare time. In Paris she took a mime class for four months. " But I've always enjoyed art and making

Arndorfer..see page C4



Stinson Prairie Arts Council director Anne Kohlhaas introduces Debra Arndorfer to the crowd at the Kossuth County Artist exhibit held last November at the Algona Publishing Gallery. Amy Frankl-Brandt photos



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Arndorfer

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things with my hands.”

She eventually came back to New York and went to school at Amherst and joined a theater company there. “I always knew I would end up back in New York,” Arndorfer said. Eventually, along with some of her acting colleagues, she started a theater group. One year she had done a total of five plays. She had the lead in the last play which ended in May. It was too late to audition for the next season but she still wanted to do something creative for the summer. There was a school called the Arts Students League on West 57th Street that was established sometime in the 1800s. It was very famous, a lot of famous people came through that school in the 1920s and 30s during the big art movement. Arndorfer decided to take a class at that school. One of her teachers there was 86 years old and had them drawing life-size people which began her love of large-scale art. “I still



A close up of some of the 3-dimensional altar pieces Arndorfer made out of paper. Amy Frankl-Brandt photos

did some acting, I was in a couple productions at NYU, I've always been in the arts in some way. I had some unbelievable and amazing teachers and mentors.”

“What I liked about doing my own art is I had more control. I didn't have to wait for rolls or depend on anyone else to work.

say in my writing and what I can't say in my writing I can say in my art. They both reflect each other. When I'm working on something creative, I am most at one with myself and out of myself at the

I had more freedom, I could work all day and all night if I wanted to.” She would take classes at different schools whenever she had the chance. She's played around with pottery, photography, collages and book making to name a few. She would eventually earn a degree from UCLA in art history.

All roads lead back to home and that also held true for Arndorfer. She moved back to Algona to be closer to family. Her large-scale paintings have been on exhibit with the Stinson Prairie Arts Council. She is also working on a couple books, one of which is a work of fiction about a woman painter during the renaissance period. “My art and my writing kind of go hand in hand,” Arndorfer said. “What

I can't say with my art I can

Arndorfer..see page C9

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ALL CALL THEATRE IS ENTERING "A WHOLE NEW WORLD"

ALGONA—All Call Theatre Company is entering "a whole new world" with the upcoming performance of its newest musical, "Aladdin Kid's." The production runs about 45 minutes and opens for two shows, Saturday, January 28 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, January 29 at 2 p.m. Performances will be held at Ed and Betty Wilcox Performing Arts Center, 715 S. Sample, in Algona.

The live, in-person performance of the musical adventure is based on Disney's animated film, Aladdin. Gina Geving, Director explained why she chose the musical. "I wanted to do a show that would give the community a fun theatrical event to look forward to," she said. "I feel like if people come and watch the show, it'll give them a break from everything else that's going on in their lives." Geving said. "Once Aladdin was announced, the kids were very excited, we had a record number of actors audition for parts."

Mindy Duff, the music director for the play, will lead students through an Academy Award-winning score by Alan Menken, Howard Ashman and Tim Rice. The cast will perform such favorites as "Ara-

bian Nights," "A Whole New World," and "Friend Like Me."

Geving also mentioned that "this production of 'Aladdin kid's' differentiates itself, "I felt that the kids' version is the most appropriate format for our younger actors to perform, while allowing the high school actors to bring pizzazz, and technical expertise. The older actors always go the extra mile to make the show great. Geving commended the fellow cast-mates camaraderie, "We have such a great group of actors, they are so helpful to each other and the younger actors." stated Geving.

"Aladdin Kid's," is based on the 1992 Disney film of the same name, centers around a young beggar in the fictional, Middle Eastern city of Agrabah. Aladdin (played by Seth Walker) finds a magic lamp which releases a Genie (played by Benjy Trainer), granting him three wishes to do as he pleases. With the ability to ask for whatever his heart desires, along with his budding interest in Agrabah's Princess Jasmine, (played by Joey Doerning), he learns that all wish-

Aladdin Kid's..see page C9



Cast members practice for their upcoming performance at the Wilcox Performing Arts Center. Kelsey Throne photo



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PERFORMING MUSIC TOGETHER

By Kim Wegener
Features Writer

Their love of music brought them together. Performing music keeps them together. It all started six years ago with five women performing the Green Day song, "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" together for a showcase hosted by Russ and Angie Lachney. The Lachneys own Stringwinders Music in Algona.

Each year the Lachneys' guitar, piano and violin students perform in a showcase along with Marisa Merkel's piano students.

"In December 2016, we had several adult ladies taking music lessons (at our store). I asked them if they'd like to join me in playing one song, "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" by Green Day, for the showcase," Angie Lachney said. "At that time, I played ukulele...not well, but I knew a few chords. We had so much fun rehearsing that one song for hours and hours, we decided to keep getting together to learn more songs, just for fun."

Merkel said, "We really enjoyed playing together and decided that we should meet regularly and just jam. It then grew into the Chick Band. People started calling and asking us to play for different events such as RAGBRAI, library programs and social hours. We were all amateurs and it was just time for us to all make music together and have a good time. We all come from different backgrounds: nursing, insurance, teachers, parents and business owners."

Band vocalist Merkel said the band plays a wide variety of music but they enjoy performing rock, country and some pop music the most. The group meets on Wednesday evenings to practice together.

BAND NAME CHANGE

"We all have very busy lives but music brings us together. We make time for this band because we have so much fun together. We have practiced in many different venues in the past such as a church, both Stringwinder locations and now we are in a band room in the Lachneys' garage," Merkel said.

"We have had some turnover in band members the most

Midland Vibe..see page C7



Marisa Merkel and Melissa Lentz perform with Midland Vibe. Kim Wegener photo

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Midland Vibe

From page C6

in the last two years. Because of this turnover we changed our name from the Chick Band to Midland Vibe. We currently have three hours of music from when we started and just had one song that we played a million times.”

Current Midland Vibe band members include Josie Bjstrom, Julie Collison, Angie Lachney, Russ Lachney, Melissa Lentz, Marisa Merkel and Matt Stein.

“Usually after a big gig we have a practice where we all bring our songs. We would like to try and make a list of wish songs. Then we listen as a group and see if we can make it happen. A couple hard practices and we can push a song out. We really like to play outdoors in the summertime when everyone is dancing and having a good time,” Merkel said.

“We have played at the pub in Bancroft for their social event the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and it is personally one of my favorites. The more fun the crowd has the more fun it is to sing and play our music.”

Merkel has played piano, clarinet, saxophone and sang in choirs all throughout her high school and college years. She has a degree in music education from Waldorf College. Merkel is in her ninth year teaching 3rd-8th grade music in the Algona School District.

“I have been singing since a very young age, singing with 80’s commercials on the TV. But I started singing in public at St. Michael’s Church as a 12 year-old after our then priest Father Ed Murray heard me sing and told me I needed to be a cantor. I was so short I had to have a step stool to reach the microphone. Singing was a place I felt most comfortable and I enjoyed making people smile,” said Merkel.



Drummer Angie Lachney performs with the band at Party in the Park. Kim Wegener photo

little box that you sit on that has a bass and snare sound depending on where you hit it). As our set list grew and we aspired to have a more rock and roll sound at times, I very briefly switched to electric guitar,” Lachney said. When we realized we needed a more dynamic percussion sound instead, I hung up the guitar and bought my first drum set in August 2018.”

She said it was very intimidating starting from square one on an instrument at the age of 40, but she is so glad she took on the challenge.

“I whole-heartedly recommend it for any adult that has ‘learning to play an instrument’ on their bucket list. I have a long way to go, and lots to learn, but I feel myself improving and can play stuff now that I never thought I’d be able to play when I first started four years ago,” Lachney said.

The best part of being in this band is our Wednesday night jam nights. We get a

couple of hours every week to just play music. Playing on stage is still terrifying for me at times, but it’s also super exhilarating! Playing in front of people really gives me a reason to practice and all of us working toward the same goal to sound the best we can possibly sound is very motivating.”

Her favorite song to play with the band is “Dreams” by The Cranberries.

PUSHED OUT OF COMFORT ZONE

Like Lachney, Lentz learned to play an instrument as an adult, the guitar only six years ago. She serves as the band’s acoustic guitarist.

“I played piano when I was younger. I was also active in vocal music and band in school. I decided that I wanted to learn to play guitar, so started taking lessons about six years ago.

“I still consider myself a student of guitar. Being in a band has helped me play more confidently. I have also found that I am learning the guitar and songs much faster now than when I first started playing,” Lentz said.

“It is extremely difficult to learn a new instrument as an adult, this group of people has helped me continue to learn, pushed me way out of my comfort zone and made the whole process so much fun!”

Lentz admitted she never saw herself as being in a band but she is so glad she has had the

STINSON PRAIRIE ARTS COUNCIL

2023 FINE ARTS EVENTS



OUR MISSION:
To encourage and promote the awareness, appreciation, and practice and performance of the arts in our region.



2023 CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

January – All Call Theater presents – Aladdin • February – Jimmy Buffet Night at the Perky • March – Junior High Art Show • April – Area High Schools Art Show
June – Sumner Solstice @ Plum Creek Winery • July – Art in the Park Founders Day, Omaha Street Percussion Band • All Call Theater – Once Upon a Mattress
August – Gallery Show @ Algona Pub. • October – Area Photographers Show
November – Area Artist Show • December – Art Sale by local artists

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HOW THE ARTS BENEFIT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The cost of products and services continues to rise and organizations everywhere have increasingly been feeling the pressure to reevaluate budgets. It's no different in school districts nationwide, with school boards making difficult decisions about which programs to keep and which will have to go in order to save money.

Music and arts programs often are the first to be cut when school budgets are tightened. The organization Save the Music says that, during the Great Recession in 2008 and 2009, per-pupil spending in public schools decreased by approximately seven percent across the country. This led to a trickle-down effect that resulted in the cancellation of art and music programs. Since then, many districts have continued to cut arts programs due to budget limitations. COVID-19 also did little to help the situation.

Art program cutbacks are rarely met with open arms, and that resistance has a lot to do with the positive effects such offerings have on students' academic performance.

BETTER TEST PERFORMANCE

Numerous studies have found a correlation between early introduction to music education and a number of benefits for children. Music education can help develop communication skills,

brain plasticity, language, and motor skills. A study conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles used a database of more than 25,000 middle and high school students. The researchers found that students involved in arts performed better on standardized achievement tests than students with lower arts involvement. Furthermore, data from 2015 from The College Board, which produces the SAT, found students who took four years of arts and music classes while in high school scored an average of 92 points higher on their SATs than students who only took one-half year or less.

IMPROVED EMOTIONAL STATES

In addition to better performance on tests, a review in *Frontiers in Psychology* examined several studies linking arts and aesthetic experiences with "broad improvements" in people's emotional states. Those improvements included greater psychological and physical well-being.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Participation and even appreciation of the arts can have an impact as well. Researchers from the Department of Public Administration at the University of Illinois Chicago found that being an art curator or audience member leads to high levels of

civic engagement and social tolerance.

The support and therapy company Evolve Treatment Centers reports that involvement in music and arts leads to overall higher GPAs, higher scores in math and reading and a reduced risk of behavioral problems and suspensions.

Music and arts education are important to students' development. Keeping these programs alive in schools can benefit students in many ways.



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Arndorfer

From page C4

same time. What I do, and what I think every artist does, is tap into everything I've ever seen or experienced. I'm tapping into something much bigger and better than just me."

Arndorfer's last exhibit with the Stinson Prairie Arts Council was a series of large scale altar pieces. "I've seen many beautiful, magnificent ones. I started doing these altar pieces during Lent of last year. I wanted to try and make one out of paper. They're usually made out of wood

and they're enormous," Arndorfer said. "If I had to summarize everything I do, when I hang my art on a wall it feels like I'm also hanging my heart. You do your work, you're isolated, maybe nobody sees it. I'm sure other artists or anyone creating something can identify with that. You put it all out there. Art is subjective, you hope somebody likes it. It's an expression of why we're here."



Three panels of a 9-panel piece that Arndorfer exhibited in 2021. Arndorfer studied the sandhill crane migration to prepare the piece that pays tribute to the crane that will be 36 feet long when completed.

Aladdin Kid's

From page C5

es come at a price. Aladdin (Seth Walker) gets that life lesson that having everything isn't really having everything.

The cast includes Seth Walker as Aladdin, Joey Doerning as Jasmine, Benjy Trainer as Genie, Griffin Geving as Iago, Riker Brindley as Jafar, Shiloh Trainer as the Lamp Vendor and Nate Bronk as Sultan.

Savannah and Isabella Waechter as Dance Captains and featured Agrabahns, Joseph Struecker as Bread Vendor, Zeb Wiita as Cave Guardian, Hannah Severson as Fruit Vendor, Alex Kramer and Ryley Riggert as Lead Guards, Joseph Struecker as Prince Abdullah, Carter Kollasch as Prince Hassim and Ryley Riggert as Prince Malik.

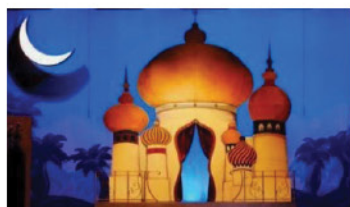
Ensemble - Savannah Waechter, Isabella Waechter, Shiloh Trainer, Hannah Severson, Joseph Struecker, Olivia Adams, Brynlie Erpelding, Addy Erpelding, Lillian Kelley, Natalie Bierstedt, Emily Boever, Kreighton Wiita, Zeb Wiita, Hannah Jensen, Keely Weder, Riley Doerning, Charleigh Steier, Kaylee Casey, Felix Fosado, Andrew

Murphy, Colin Throne, Addison Berte, Alysia Berte, Lucy Weichert, Elise Duff, Nora Miller, Alfred Harren, Lilly Kollasch, Lucy Geving, Ethan Murphy, Rachel Kahle, Emma Kollasch, Carter Kollasch, Isaac Orban, Julian Noyea, Natalie Orban, Marcus Kollasch, Lance Vonnahme, Hope Severson, Alex Kramer, Mollie Thilges, Ryley Riggert and Ella Lauck.

Geving encourages children who enjoy watching theatre to consider getting into acting themselves. "Theater is a very fun community. You don't have to worry about being judged. That's where people want you to be different, not just like everyone else. It's a very supportive community."

Gina Geving is the director and Mindy Duff is musical director of All Call Theatre Company.

This is the second year of performances for the All Call Theatre Company, past productions include "Jack and Bella from Beanstalk to Broadway" "You Must Dream", as well as an improv seminar were presented last year.



ALL CALL THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS



Tickets:
\$8.00 for all ages

Performance Dates:
Saturday, January 28th at 7:00 p.m.
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Kossuth Concert Series



Midland Vibe band members are from left: Josie Bjustrom, Melissa Lentz, Julie Collison, Marisa Merkel, Angie Lachney, Russ Lachney and Matt Stein. Submitted photo

Midland Vibe

From page C7

opportunity to be a part of the Chick Band and now Midland Vibe.

When asked what was her favorite song the band performs is and why? Lentz said that was a tough question because all the band members work together to choose the songs that they learn and play, so she loves all of the songs.

REWARDING TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE

Bass guitarist Matt Stein enjoys when the band plays really classic songs like “Sweet Child O’ Mine” by Guns N’ Roses that he says brings the energy especially with a guitar player like Russ (Lachney) killing it with such an iconic guitar part.

Stein said the band also just added “American Girl” by Tom Petty to their set list which he says “it’s a blast to play.”

Stein’s love of music goes back to his childhood.

“I have been playing music since I started in elementary school, but have been playing bass since 8th grade, so 12 years. I’ve played in a few cover bands in the past, and currently play with Hip Liberty and Midland Vibe,” Stein said.

“Playing music with people is one of the most satisfying and rewarding things you can do. You get to connect with people on

a whole new level, and hasn’t everyone imagined themselves playing their favorites songs on a stage?” Stein said.

ENJOYS WIDE VARIETY OF MUSIC

Julie Collison’s role in the band is keyboardist and pianist. She admits she has very little musical background and like others in the band started taking piano lessons in her fifth decade.

“I played the snare drum for a few years in middle school and high school, but that does not focus on reading music and I am not what you would call ‘musically inclined.’ I didn’t start taking piano lessons until I was 50. I never envisioned that starting piano and keyboard lessons would grow into being part of this band,” Collison said.

Some of her favorite songs to perform with the band include “Wagon Wheel” by Darius Rucker and “My Church” by Maren Morris.

“I have enjoyed learning some new songs like “Sweet Home Alabama”, but I also enjoy some of our rock songs. I think the wide variety of music we play keeps it interesting,” said Collison.

“The people in the band are really fun and it is a very relaxed atmosphere. I am the oldest member, so they keep me young. We have a wide range of musical ability and experience. The more experienced musicians have definitely motivated those of us with less experience to continue to improve and embrace it a little and realize how fun it is. It is hard not to be motivated when you see how talented some of them are and you want to contribute, improve and be a part of it.”

FUN TO LEARN NEW MUSIC

Josie Bjustrom started taking violin lessons about five years ago. Bjustrom said playing in the band just fell into place.

“When I was taking lessons Angie and I worked on a song together for the showcase done through Stringwinders and it took off from there. One thing lead to another and here we are playing in a band,” said Bjustrom.

She enjoys learning new music and playing songs she would have never thought she could play before being part of the band. Bjustrom likes the wide variety of music the band performs from country to pop to rock music.

Merkel is grateful that Lachney brought the band members together.

“I love being a part of this group and meeting every week. I never dreamed I would get to be part of such an amazing group of adults and play my kind of music for fun. This is my childhood dream that I didn’t know I could ever fulfill! I thank Angie Lachney for pushing us together and starting this wonderful group,” Merkel concluded.

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CAREER OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH ART DEGREES

Creative individuals may be compelled to pursue degrees in the arts when enrolling in traditional colleges or universities or specialized schools. Studying the arts can be exciting, and an arts degree makes it possible to pursue an array of professional opportunities.

Students interested in the arts may question their desire to pursue an arts degree. Since technology is now ingrained in daily life, some students may wonder if they can chart a successful career path with a degree that does not fall under the STEM umbrella? Thankfully, art degrees can prepare students for a wide range of jobs. Here are some career options to explore.

- **ILLUSTRATOR:** Someone with an arts degree can work in many areas of illustration. This may include fashion illustration, medical illustration, comic book illustration, and even children's book illustration.

- **GENERAL ARTIST:** An artist works with different media to create and sell original works. This may include weaving, glassblowing, painting, or knitting.

- **PRODUCTION ARTIST:** Production artists produce high-quality print materials, packaging and displays

across a variety of industries.

- **CURATOR:** Curators specialize in particular subjects and work in museums. Curators also may work as educators.

- **GRAPHIC DESIGNER:** Graphic designers primarily work in digital artwork for editorial products, company brands and logos and product packaging.



- **INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER:** Industrial designers develop the look of manufactured products, such as cars, toys and home furnishings, among other items.

- **ART DIRECTOR:** Art directors develop the visual style for various items, including magazines, online publications, product packaging, and marketing materials. Art directors work in conjunction with graphic artists.

- **ART THERAPIST:** Art therapists are mental health professionals who use creative outcomes and tools to help patients deal with a variety of mental and emotional issues.

- **INTERIOR DESIGNER:** Artists with an eye for home design will need to take some interior design courses in school, but this can lead to a career making spaces beautiful — both for private and corporate clients.

- **ARCHITECT:** Artistic individuals who also are interested in designing buildings and other spaces can pursue careers in architecture. Illustration skills are a valuable asset to have in this field.

Art degrees can open doors in a variety of fulfilling fields.

Carnegie Centre for the Arts



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ART-BASED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students looking to expand their extracurricular horizons need look no further than the arts. Art-related extracurricular activities can enhance lessons learned in the classroom and provide a way to explore creative pursuits to help relieve stress and improve focus.

Art-based extracurricular activities are easy to find. Consider these ideas to get started.

VISIT AN ART MUSEUM

Those lucky enough to live close to an art museum can wander through the past or get artists' interpretations of the future. Many museums sponsor extracurricular activities for young artists, but even periodic visits using a student pass can provide all the inspiration creative young people need. Museums showcase everything from paintings to sculptures to historical artifacts, so it's possible to find a specially curated collection that appeals to any artist's interests.

ENROLL IN AN ART COURSE

Students who enjoy art can improve their skills by taking art classes and courses that extend lessons learned during the

school day. Perhaps a student wants to hone his or her skills in a particular medium? An art class can do that and even expand on lessons learned in the classroom.

ATTEND ARTS-RELATED CAMPS

Summer camps come in all shapes and sizes, including ones geared around artistic endeavors. When school lets out for the summer or other breaks during the year, students can hang around with like-minded peers in specialty art camps.

TRY OTHER ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES

The arts include everything from music instruction to acting in a play or musical to participating in a choral ensemble. Some children like to experience art through culinary endeavors. Students should not limit themselves to one activity. Dabbling in all sorts of activities may inspire students to pursue new interests.

FIND ART IN DAILY LIFE

One does not need to be enrolled in a regimented program to



“ART-BASED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ARE EASY TO FIND. CONSIDER THESE IDEAS TO GET STARTED.”

enjoy art. Children can engage in art-related hobbies on their own at home or in the community. Find art in collecting leaves and flowers, building sand castles, taking photographs, or just about any other creative endeavor.

Arts-related extracurricular activities can be the perfect way to pass time outside the classroom.



Dance
is art in motion

Have an idea that will improve the arts and culture of our community but need support to make it happen?

Need funding for a community project that will in turn create cultural identity?

We are here to help put your ideas in motion. Reach out today.

haggard-twogood@algonarts.org algonarts.org

haggard·twogood

CHARITABLE TRUST