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MEMBERCENTER

The Auer Center for Arts and Culture lobby, featuring *Solar Constellations* by Jim Miller and Diana Thornhill Miller. Photo courtesy of Jim Sparrow.

MEMBERCENTER

MEMBER TO MEMBER

by Jim Sparrow, Executive Director
Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne

"FOR MANY YEARS, COMMUNITIES have looked to use arts centers to spur development. In building such centers they have largely been designed exclusively as arts space focused on drawing patrons for events while pulling larger pieces of property out of a challenged downtown property tax base. Looking at arts centers as integrated "neighborhood centers" is a strategy that is working in Fort Wayne by showing new ways to encourage entrepreneurship, shared community goals, and integrated business practices. The arts are becoming creative industry entrepreneurs and active collaborative partners in all parts of community development as we change the arts business model. The Auer Center was the final piece to anchor the downtown cultural campus. It is in the same neighborhood with the Arts United Center, Museum of Art, History Center, Cinema Center, and Dance Collective. The Auer houses the ballet, Artlink, classrooms, Arts United, FW Trails, and Pembroke Bakery. It is an active public center seven days a week and is connected to the campus through signage, trails, lighting, and landscaping. Central to its operation are integrated services that include central ticketing, book keeping, audit preparation, health insurance, facility management, marketing, and staffing. The second phase of this development will include a black box theater, ceramic studio, and arts incubator program for all four major arts disciplines."

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What's the Big Idea

The Bronx Music Heritage Center

FOUNDED IN 1991 WITH A PLAN to revive the Bronx after the 1970s economy left the neighborhood with vacant residences and abandoned schools, hospitals, and firehouses, the Women's Housing & Economic Development Corporation's (WHEDco) first project was converting a hospital complex into housing for low-income residents.

The arts now factor heavily into the organization's latest project, The Bronx Music Heritage Center (BHMC).

WHEDco Founder and President Nancy Biberman said the genesis of the project came from the need to "build an institution to enshrine the borough's rich, but not widely appreciated, music heritage." She added, "Music, it seemed to me, was a touchstone of diversity of the Bronx. It crossed class and racial divides, and spanned many generations...The fusion of different genres of music has been the hallmark of the Bronx." The Center will highlight the rich cultural history of the neighborhood that has been lost over the years despite the fact that it was the birthplace of hip hop and Latin jazz.

Biberman added, "Our goal is to create a cultural destination here in the Bronx. Other than going to a Yankees game or the Bronx Zoo, people have precious little reason to visit the Bronx."

The project also seeks to help some of the legendary musicians who are still living in the area, but no longer have places to play or even live. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2013 and will include:

- 293 affordable apartments, with 10–20 percent set aside for older (not retired) musicians
- An arts-based public school
- A community performance and event space
- A hydroponic rooftop garden
- Open recreation and green space

Keeping with WHEDco's mission of energy efficiency and affordability, the property will have sustainable design features to achieve LEED certification and the all-important open space for recreation.

The arts-based public school will be a charter created by Bard College for students in grades 6–12, utilizing the El Sistema model of instruction, a “tested model of how a music program can create both great musicians and dramatically change the life trajectory of hundreds of thousands of a nation’s neediest kids.”

Overall, the 6,600-square-foot facility will include a recording studio, workshop and rehearsal space, and an interactive gallery/archive of the Bronx’s musical history.

Former Executive Director of the Bronx Council on the Arts Bill Aguado said, “Music is not just an art form, it is also the spirit of the community; that is, our communities are Latin jazz/hip hop voices mixed with older, traditional voices. BMHC will be more than bricks and mortar. It is a state of mind of our music, culture, and livelihoods.”

Once completed, this all-encompassing, arts-infused redevelopment of the South Bronx can serve as a model for communities across the country that have been seeking an effective way to create community change from the inside out.

For more information about the Bronx Music Heritage Center visit <http://whedco.org/greenhomes/bronxcommons>.



The Bronx Music Heritage Center includes a 200-seat performance venue to celebrate local music; rehearsal and recording studios; and Bronx cultural archives.

LEADERSHIP IN PRACTICE

So, What Do You Do?

Sarah D. VanLanduyt, Executive Director, Arts Council of Johnson County

IN LIGHT OF THE MASSIVE FUNDING CHANGES IN KANSAS last year, the Arts Council of Johnson County in Lenexa, KS is moving forward in new and exciting directions, including reimagining the organization, with help from Sarah VanLanduyt.

What does your job entail? As the executive director, my job entails developing and presenting new and existing initiatives along with handling board support, community relations, resource development, and day-to-day management of the arts council. And we have a great board, volunteers, and administrative assistant to help get it all done!

What is a typical day? I usually start the day by reading through e-mails and news articles. The rest of the day may be spent working on our Shooting Stars Scholarship program and other initiatives and/or meeting with board members, colleagues (including artists, arts organizations, and arts educators), donors, or policymakers. What’s great about this job is that most often my days aren’t the same.

What has your career path looked like? I’ve always been drawn to jobs that help make my community a great place to live and work—especially through collaborative work. My background is actually in history and museum administration. I worked

for a rural county museum in Wisconsin for five years. Much of my work in Wisconsin entailed developing public programs, managing the museum, and working with municipal museums on joint programming and best practices. Those experiences transferred well to my position as program manager for organizational support with the Kansas Arts Commission where I managed the arts-in-communities grant program (funding community-based arts programming) and coordinated professional development opportunities for arts organizations. After about a year with the KAC, I realized I missed the private sector and applied for my current position.

What are your favorite things about the position? My favorite things about working for the arts council are the people and the work I get to be involved in, especially at this point in time in the organization’s and the Kansas City arts community’s evolution. We just went through a rebranding and we’re working on some new initiatives designed to connect the arts sector to the community at large. Plus there’s a really exciting energy in our community right now.



Arts Council of Johnson County board members and Executive Director Sarah D. VanLanduyt, right. Photo by James Maidhof.