Shaping the Community
OI Provides Resources for Artists

Wheeling painter Sarah Weed displays original paintings framed and mounted at the Stifel Fine Arts Center.
A Message from the President

Danielle McCracken speaks at the Arts in Our Communities Conference January 25 in Charleston.

I write this message upon my return from the "Arts in Our Communities Conference" in Charleston that focused on the impact of arts and cultural programs on economic development and tourism in West Virginia. I was honored to be part of a panel discussion to talk about how Oglebay Institute contributes to the creative economy and was a pioneer in this very topic, not just in West Virginia, but also on a national level as the oldest Arts Council in the nation. It’s inspiring to think about our inception in 1930 and the vision of our founders who believed arts, nature, and cultural programming were essential to a thriving community. Even during the midst of a depression, 110 associate members contributed $100 each to help establish Oglebay Institute. Through the continued support of our community, OI has grown exponentially, and we touch more than 80,000 people each year. Examples of how Oglebay Institute contributes to the vitality of our region are as follows:

• Through partnerships with schools, we are helping to develop the next generation of creative thinkers. Creativity is among the top five applied skills sought by business leaders. Through classroom-based programs, we are eliminating barriers like transportation and income that may limit exposure to arts, nature and cultural programs. Research shows a direct correlation between arts learning and classroom performance.

• Oglebay Institute’s historic facilities and collections provide a deeper understanding of Wheeling history. Cultural tourists want to engage personally with its people and culture, spend 60% more in communities, stay longer, and are more likely to return.

• The newly established Rural Arts Collaborative is allowing OI to broaden its reach into more communities and employ additional artists.

• A community rich in opportunities for people to engage in the arts provides a quality of life the helps to retain and attract residents and employers.

After considering some of the points from above, I hope that you realize the deep impact of your support to Oglebay Institute. We thank you for allowing us to continue to deliver upon that vision that is as relevant today as it was when we were founded more than 88 years ago.

Best Regards,

Danielle Cross McCracken
Oglebay Institute President

Your Support Makes a Difference

Individual and corporate contributions make a significant impact at Oglebay Institute, ensuring that all of our patrons can enjoy exceptional programming at affordable prices. Here are two ways you can make an impact with your gift this year:

The Schrader Environmental Education Center is raising $19,000 to deliver in-school programs to more than 3,000 students in classrooms in West Virginia and Ohio. Beginning in first grade, students learn about form and function through experiential learning of animal characteristics. Over the next four years, they build a strong scientific foundation so that they’re prepared to tackle the 6th grade REAP program. Your gift to the Schrader Center will help to cultivate the next generation of environmental stewards.

Schrader Center naturalist Michael Hensley uses a model watershed to teach fifth grade students at Warwood Elementary School about the effects of different types of pollution on communities and aquatic life.

At the Mansion Museum, preservation is paramount. As you may have read in the Fall 2017 issue of Memberworks, the speed and totality of fire make it the most significant risk to the Mansion and the collection housed there. In that light, OI is pursuing the purchase and installation of an automatic fire suppression system designed specifically for facilities such as the Mansion. Grant funding from the West Virginia Division of Culture & History, the McWilliams Foundation and the Hess Family Foundation will underwrite the majority of the cost associated with this project. Approximately $50,000 remains to be raised. Through your contribution, you can be a part of preserving local history and artifacts, as well as the Mansion itself, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Mansion Museum curator Kara Yenkevich examines a porcelain vase from the personal collection of the Oglebay Family, currently on display in the Mansion Museum’s Oval Sitting Room.

Contributions to either of these projects can be made online at oionline.com/donate. Indicate your designation in the “comment” section. You may also mail your contribution to Oglebay Institute, 1330 National Road, Wheeling, WV 26003. Please make checks payable to Oglebay Institute and note your designation in the memo line.

Thank you for considering a gift to Oglebay Institute!
Underwood Appointed Development Director

Martins Ferry native Micah Labishak Underwood has been appointed development director for Oglebay Institute.

Underwood has been working in West Virginia's non-profit arts sector for nearly a decade. Most recently, she served as development director, at Lewisburg’s Greenbrier Valley Theatre, the State Professional Theatre of West Virginia, where she worked for five years. Her career began at the Wheeling Symphony, where she served in such roles as development associate, education coordinator, and youth orchestra manager.

While in Lewisburg, Underwood appeared onstage as a dinosaur in *The Skin of Our Teeth*, Amanda in *Narcoleptic Pillow Fight*, the Innkeeper’s Wife in *Man of La Mancha*, Fern Arable in *Charlotte’s Web* and a feather fan dancer called Desiree Adorable. In 2014, she portrayed young Tammy (and other characters) in the theatre’s touring production of *Stand by Your Man: The Tammy Wynette Story*, which included a performance at Wheeling’s Capitol Theatre. She has also been seen on OI’s Towngate Theatre stage as Lucy van Pelt in *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, Beauty in *Beauty & the Beast* and Curley’s Wife in *Of Mice and Men*.

Underwood graduated from Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy and holds a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Florida. She is thrilled to be back in Wheeling and looks forward to enjoying everything the city has to offer.

OI Marketing Team Attends National Conference

In November OI director of marketing Misty Klug and assistant director of marketing Russell Brown attended the 2017 National Arts Marketing Project (NAMP) Conference in Memphis, Tennessee.

NAMP is a program of Americans for the Arts dedicated to helping arts organizations better understand the marketplace in which they operate and recognize the benefits of an aggressive, outward-looking audience development effort. Attracting more than 500 attendees annually, the NAMP Conference provides real time access to new marketing research, audience engagement strategies, and live networking opportunities.

Expert speakers included a mix of marketing professionals from technology, media, hospitality, and consumer engagement as well as leading arts professionals sharing lessons with their peers. The Conference comprised keynote speakers, panel talks, hands-on educational workshops and peer-to-peer roundtables. Some of the topics included arts advocacy, increasing loyalty among arts patrons, social media strategy, fighting audience attrition, grabbing audience attention, latest audience research in arts marketing, utilizing staff resources more effectively and using the arts to embrace and promote diversity.

“When attending the NAMP conference is an invaluable experience. Through an unrivaled roster of expert speakers, relevant content and a variety of learning formats, we returned inspired and equipped with actionable ideas,” Klug said. “NAMP does an extraordinary job of honing in on the most critical issues that face arts marketers today and providing training and resources to increase earned income through greater audience engagement.”

Southwestern Energy Gift Helps Provide New Administration Offices

The residential property, located at 26 Cypress Ave., was renovated to house the office of the president as well as offices for development, marketing, finance and human resources. Staff members moved into the new space in July.

A gift of $19,000 from Southwestern Energy along with funds from the Robert Browne Charitable Trust assisted with the purchase and renovation.

The purchase provides financial benefits to OI, saving money on rent to reinvest into the organization while building equity. Additionally, the new space better meets the functional needs of the administration team and is more accessible to other staff members as well as the public.

“Southwestern Energy has been a generous and loyal partner, supporting our summer camp programs in addition to this gift,” OI president Danielle McCracken said. “We are also grateful for the bequest from Robert Browne. His generosity and foresight has helped us with this and other important capital projects at Oglebay Institute.”
OI Provides Resources for All Types of Artists


Whether they’re hoping to learn a new skill or looking for a place to prepare and show their work, OI provides artists, craftsmen, dancers, musicians and thespians with a wide variety of services. At OI, they find quality instruction and supportive learning environments, venues to exhibit and sell artwork, stages on which to perform and countless opportunities for collaboration, camaraderie and creative expression.

Both the experienced artist and the novice can participate in the wide variety of classes offered at OI. Some look to hone their craft and sell their work, while others try a different class and a new medium every season.

Winnie Hurd is a local potter who lives near the Stifel Fine Arts Center. She’s been taking classes for some time and frequently visits the pottery studio. Any student enrolled in a class may come and use the studio during open hours.

"I enjoy the classes," Hurd said. "And I try to help out a little bit. If a kiln needs to be emptied, I’ll stop by and check on that part of the process of pottery. I started taking classes when I retired, simply out of interest and curiosity." Hurd sells her pottery in yard sales and says her goal is simply to sell enough to cover the cost of her next art class. She also enjoys the friendships she’s made and finds that her fellow artists are a valuable resource of their own.

"Everybody helps each other and it’s just a wonderful group of people," she said.

Even for those artists who work on their own, OI offers classes that can assist the artistic process. For example, a digital photography class provides instruction on how to photograph work for an art show application. Similarly, the Stifel Fine Arts Center offers framing classes.

Rick Morgan, the Stifel Fine Arts Center director, said, “We have a really nice [framing] program that we’ve created over the years. We teach the high school students how to cut a mat as part of our high school art exhibition.” After the program’s inception, adult artists began to inquire about framing as well.

Wheeling painter Sarah Wood credits framing lessons with Stifel Fine Arts Center director of education Brad Johnson for jump-starting her career as a professional artist. She now sells her reversed glass acrylic paintings at Etc. on National Road in Wheeling and through her Facebook page. She has also exhibited at Oglebayfest, Crosscurrents and Oglebay Institute’s Holiday Art Show & Sale.

"The lessons I took gave me insight into the importance of learning the entire framing process, which I now use in presenting my work," said Wood. “Students learn the skill of framing, but they also save money when it comes to preparing their own work for sale or display,” adds Morgan.
For Artists:

• Framing and mat cutting studio
• State-of-the-art pottery studio with open studio times and year-round classes
• Exhibiting and artwork sale opportunities
• Up-and-coming artist program at Oglebayfest

For Dancers:

• Classes for children beginning at age 1
• Public performances of classic ballets
• Renowned guest instructors
• Progressive curriculum to prepare students for the professional world of dance

For Actors:

• Six seasonal plays comprised solely of local actors
• Open auditions
• High school & adult improv groups
• Poetry readings & open mic nights
• Parcel Players summer youth theater program for high school & college students

Recently, the Stifel Center added custom framing services for those who don't want to try it themselves.

Morgan said people often hesitate to sign up for a class because they're not sure which one to take or are worried they need to have experience. “We encourage people to contact us. Our staff members happily make recommendations based on a person's interests. Also, we have classes for all skill levels. You don't need experience, just the desire to learn a new skill,” he said.

One class may lead to many, and the artist who finds joy in their work may go on to consider showing pieces in OI shows. “Some of my students have started to create quality works,” Morgan said. “As a result, a lot of them start entering shows and sell their work at Oglebayfest and the Holiday Show and Sale.” These annual juried art shows also include Crosscurrents and the Regional Student Art Show.

Traditionally, OI's art exhibits have taken place at the Stifel Fine Arts Center. However, Michael McKowen, OI director of exhibitions, recognized the need for a smaller gallery. Many local artists don't have a body of work large enough for a space like the gallery at the Stifel. Thus, the Gallery at Towngate opened as a sister space, allowing visitors to peruse the exhibits at their leisure while also enjoying a movie, theater production or concert at Towngate.

Towngate Theater supports performance artists, as well, and produces several shows each year. Those roles aren't filled by Broadway stars; they're filled by novice and budding performers here in the community, young and old alike. The actors and musicians on stage are coworkers, neighbors, and friends. Two improv groups – The Crazy 8s and the Left of Centre Players – perfect their craft in front of live audiences. High school and college kids perform spoken word poetry, and local writers share their work at the open mic. Area musicians perform on the Towngate stage. Regional and local filmmakers also showcase their work through Towngate's Art House Cinema.

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Pictured with OI director of exhibitions Michael McKowen, Ibaraki, Japan native and Houston, Pa.-based Nihonga painter Hiromi Katayama exhibited her work at the Gallery at Towngate in January and February. Opened in 2016, the gallery provides public space for local artists with smaller bodies of work.
Above, American Legion Post 521 were recipients of a military-themed tree decorated by Ceil Dumas and Christine Sacco (front). Also pictured are Post 521 trustees Willie Merryman and Jick Weatherson, OI director of administrative services Connie Moore and OI executive assistant Lynnette Sickles.

Presented by Belmont Savings Bank, with additional support provided by The Cafaro Foundation/Ohio Valley Mall, Panhandle Cleaning & Restoration and Perkins Restaurant and Bakery, Oglebay Institute’s annual Festival of Trees garnered nearly $18,000 to provide organizational support.

Above with Oglebay Institute president Danielle McCracken are Denise Mattone (left) and Kandi Jo Glatzer of event sponsor Belmont Savings Bank.

Offering a warm welcome to new and returning patrons, director of performing arts Tim Thompson and OI president Danielle McCracken stand outside the newly-restored front doors of Towngate Theatre.

This project, which was performed by Adventures in Elegance, addresses some key restoration priorities that were outlined in a Historic Structure Study that was prepared by McKinley and Associates last winter. This work prevents future water damage and removes potential safety hazards. It also maintains the beauty and integrity of this historic structure and cornerstone of creative life in Wheeling.

The project was completed in November with support from the City of Wheeling’s Façade Improvement Grant Program, David & Charl Kappel, Jane E. White, a bequest from Stephanie H. Bloch, the West Virginia Division of Culture & History, with approval from the West Virginia Commission on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

To learn more about how your immediate and future gifts can support the Towngate Theatre, contact Micah Labishak Underwood, director of development, or Danielle Cross McCracken, president, at 304-242-4200.
Oglebay Institute’s School of Dance presented the Raising the Barre Dance Gala October 28, garnering support for the school to continue to provide the best training, instructors and resources for young dancers.

Pictured above, left to right, is event sponsor Peter J. Lim, School of Dance instructor Kimberlee Kafana, event sponsors Gary & Missy Glessner, OI president Danielle McCracken, event sponsors Kristin & James Carson and School of Dance director Cheryl Pompeo.

Longtime School of Dance supporters Don and Rhoda Thompson (above) and Vaughn Miller and Peggy McCulley (below) attend the 2018 Raising the Barre Dance Gala.

OI’s School of Dance was privileged to host a ballet workshop with Moscow Ballet Soloist and Audition Director Alisa Bolotnikova October 9. The School of Dance also was a proud host studio for auditions for the 25th anniversary of the Great Russian Nutcracker, performed December 6 at the Capitol Theatre in Wheeling.

Pictured above with Bolotnikova (right) is School of Dance director Cheryl Pompeo.

Holidays at the Mansion
Mansion Museum

The Mansion Museum’s period rooms were once again lavishly transformed with holiday-inspired themes for the season by volunteer decorators and area businesses. Holidays at the Mansion is generously sponsored by Panhandle Cleaning & Restoration.

Pictured above in the Sewing Room at the November 10 opening reception are decorators Mary Fahey and Erikka Storch representing the Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce.

Above, decorators of the Mansion Museum’s dining room, Jenny Jebbia and The Jeweled Bird owner, Joan Berlow-Smith. Below, Judi and Tom Tarowsky of the West Virginia Storytelling Guild decorated the Pioneer Kitchen to the theme of “A Welsh Christmas.”

First Friday
Towngate Theatre

Sponsored by Main Street Bank, the November 3 First Friday event at Towngate Theatre featured the first solo exhibition of Wheeling painter Clare McDonald. Independent film shorts by Jeff Madzia and spoken word with The Proser were also part of the evening of free entertainment.

Pictured above is exhibiting artist Clare McDonald with filmmaker Jeff Madzia.
It’s a Wonderful Life: 
A Live Radio Play
Towngate Theatre

Towngate Theatre staged It’s a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play in December, a fresh and inventive spin on a beloved holiday tale featuring a talented ensemble of local actors.

46 regional artists, crafts people and gourmet food producers exhibited at Oglebay Institute’s annual Holiday Art Show & Sale – a unique shopping experience where local residents can shop hundreds of handcrafted gifts at the Stifel Fine Arts Center and Schrader Center in Oglebay Park. The Holiday Art Show & Sale is part of the Stifel Fine Arts Center’s exhibit season sponsored by United Bank.

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Busy parents took advantage of the Stifel Fine Arts Center’s holiday art camps for kids December 21 & 22. Over the Christmas break, children created a variety of fun and educational holiday-inspired art projects to give as gifts or keep for themselves.

Pictured above, left to right, with clay angels are Alliyah Williams, Baylie Hinebaugh and Karlee Williams.

The Gallery at Towngate welcomed the artwork of Hiromi Katayama January 5 at its First Friday event. A native of Ibaraki, Japan, Hiromi practices the traditional Japanese painting style of Nihonga, where subject matter is centered around cherry blossoms. Her artwork was displayed through February.

Pictured above with Hiromi is OI director of exhibitions Michael McKowen (left) and OI director of performing arts Tim Thompson.

Sponsored by United Bank, the Stifel Fine Arts Center’s recently recognized more than a dozen students from 13 area high schools with artistic achievement awards and scholarships.

OI’s School of Dance serves hundreds of aspiring dancers as well as those who just love to move. Through progressive classes, opportunities to perform publicly and specialty workshops with master teachers from around the globe, OI dancers learn the art of dance.

“From tumbling tots in Baby and Me class to extremely focused dancers in our pre-professional program, we engage dancers at every stage for development,” OI director of dance Cheryl Pompeo said. These talented dancers share their gifts and entertain audiences through several public shows including *The Nutcracker*, which is an annual part of OI’s children’s theater season at Towngate.

A key part of OI’s mission is to support these hard-working artists who enhance the quality of life in our community. Just as art brings people together, it also promotes economic growth and well-being. Support for art is support for creative freedom, for connectivity over isolation.

Pablo Picasso said, “The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls.” As Wheeling begins a new era of vibrancy and growth, its flourishing community of artists continues to bring new life to the city.

Member Spotlight: The Loh Family

For the Loh family, membership at Oglebay Institute fostered an early love of the arts and nature, as well as opportunities to spend time together, whether in the audience at the Towngate or on the trails of the Schrader.

Shortly after moving to Wheeling in 1985, Dr. Gary and Janell Loh became OI members. Since then, the Institute has been an essential part of their family’s life.

“I couldn’t imagine raising children here without the activities offered by this incredible organization,” Janell said. “My children, Henry, Daniel, and Emily, all participated in the dance, tumbling, and art programs throughout their early years.”

The children’s involvement continued throughout middle and high school, and now even college, as they chose those programs that most appealed to their individual interests.

Emily took classes at OI’s School of Dance, an experience Janell said gave her daughter dance techniques that have helped her in figure skating and performing in local musicals. During the summer of 2017, she participated in the WV Governor’s School for the Arts, held at Marshall University.

In addition to serving as camp counselor and assistant director for theatre summer camps, Daniel has been seen in numerous productions on OI’s Towngate Theatre stage. He has appeared in such Main Season roles as Francis Church in *Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus* and Richard in Eugene O’Neill’s *Ab, Wilderness!* For the summer 2017 Parcel Players season, Daniel made his directorial debut with *Treasure Island*. He is currently pursuing a degree in cinema studies and film production at Point Park University.

“Towngate Theatre was a foundation for greatness and a catalyst for opportunity,” the 21-year-old student said. “Participating in various theatre/acting camps and workshops since a young age, I found that I could harvest my inner entertainer to help positively influence the world and spread compassion. Leaders such as Tim Thompson, P.D. Gregg, and Walt Warren helped me gain the confidence and tools necessary for the future...I am thrilled to continue my involvement with such a wonderful organization in the years to come.”

Previously a martial arts student at OI, Henry is now pursuing a doctorate degree in material science and engineering at West Virginia University.

He commented, “Being a part of Debbie McKay’s martial arts class has been very beneficial growing up, one because it introduced concepts and ideas that I found useful when I started fencing in college, and also because it was a good chance to meet other kids in Wheeling growing up.”

As they grew up, the siblings also participated in many of the nature activities offered by the Schrader Environmental Education Center.

“It was a great place to take the Cub Scouts hiking and to observe nature,” Janell said. Her own involvement with the Schrader Center continues. At present, she is a master gardener, working with Schrader Center director Molly Check to create a unique and beautiful pollinator garden.

Janell highlighted the breadth of OI’s programs, noting, “The activities that Oglebay Institute offers provide amazing learning opportunities for kids and adults alike. We definitely recommend participating in as many activities as families are able.”
In the fall, OI’s Schrader Environmental Education Center launched a nature-based afterschool program utilizing the Center’s outdoor classrooms to give kids the outdoor time they need and crave.

“In today’s fast paced world, it’s too easy for all of us to lose the connection to the natural world,” Schrader Center director Molly Check said. “Our afterschool program provides a safe, supportive environment to inspire kids’ curiosity about nature and allows them to decompress after school, burn off energy and have fun outdoors.”

Most time during the afterschool program is spent outside – exploring wooded trails, working on science and gardening projects and experiencing unstructured outdoor play.

“Whether we’re exploring our stream and pond for salamanders and frogs, hiking to a new part of the forest or playing kickball in the field, each day can be very different from the next, as we let the seasons, weather and student interests guide our learning.”

Research indicates that unstructured play helps in child development, building confidence as leaders and developing critical thinking skills.

“When we encourage children to make their own decisions during free play, whether it’s deciding which rock to look under in the stream or which plant they would like to examine under the microscope, they are establishing new pathways in their prefrontal cortices. This area of the brain is responsible for critical thinking, planning, and regulating emotions. Through the simple act of free play, we are helping children develop the skills they will use throughout their lives,” Check explained.

The programs are taught by the Schrader Center’s team of educators, who have degrees in environmental education, biology, environmental stewardship and outdoor/community education.

“Our enthusiastic, knowledgeable naturalists excel at connecting students to the natural world,” Check said. “They each have their own passions, whether it be bird watching, stream study, the butterfly garden or local animals. By showing their own sense of wonder at the natural world, they help instill a love of learning to all of our students.”

Children can also receive help with homework during the afterschool program. However, homework assistance is an optional component, for those who request it, and takes up a minimal amount of time. The primary focus is on exploring the great outdoors.

The Schrader Center afterschool program is available for students in grades 1-5 and takes place on Tuesdays and Thursdays, after school until 6pm. Children can be dropped off at the Schrader Center or bussed directly from school. For more information or to inquire about bussing options, please call the Center at 304-242-6855.

“Oglebay Institute’s Stifel Fine Arts Center is pleased to announce custom framing services.

Available to both the public and artists, this exciting new service can assist customers on all their framing needs.

Posters, prints, fine art, 3D memorabilia, jerseys, photographs and more are just some of the items that can be framed for display. Artists can take advantage of traditional framing, or explore new materials such as wood, cork and aluminum.

“With the closing of several framing shops locally, we are eager to help satisfy the demand for this service,” says Brad Johnson, OI director of art education and framing studio operator. Johnson is the former owner of Art Etc. and has more than 20 years of professional framing experience. “Quality framing not only serves an aesthetic purpose, but is also essential for exhibiting and to preserve artwork,” he adds.

To learn more about how the Stifel Fine Arts Center can help show-off your treasures and works of art, call 304-242-7700 or e-mail: bjohnson@oionline.com for an appointment.
March 1 - April 20
Stifel Fine Arts Center
Wheeling, West Virginia

Connect to the natural world through a collection of pieces made from stone, wood and clay by regional and guest artists from across the country.

Sponsored by

United Bank
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These programs are presented with financial assistance from the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, and the National Endowment for the Arts, with approval from the West Virginia Commission on the Arts.