

Oglebay Institute

Winter 2020

MemberWorks

The Newsletter Connecting Members and Friends to the Nation's Oldest Arts Council

*Dance for
Everyone!*

School of Dance
Serves All Abilities
with Inclusive Programs



Student Sarah Czapp, pictured with School of Dance director Cheryl Pompeo and instructor Kimberlee Kafana, benefits from OI's inclusive and specialized opportunities.

A Message from the President



AEP external affairs manager Joelle Moray (left) presents a check to OI development director Micah Underwood and president Danielle McCracken (right) to expand environmental education programs in Ohio and Marshall County schools.

The community is at the heart of Oglebay Institute. We are constantly paying attention to relevant topics that affect our community and asking how we can create and adapt programs to enhance the lives of those we serve. As our 90th anniversary approaches, we at Oglebay Institute continue to honor

our mission set forth nine decades ago, while striving to deliver programs in fresh and innovative ways.

By taking arts-rich programs and experiences beyond our walls into classrooms and communities, we hope to increase reach and strengthen impact to under-served and at-risk populations by breaking down barriers to participation. We help to develop creative thinkers and provide young people fun and engaging ways to learn. Through programs like our upcoming “Presence: An Exploration of Aging Through Art” exhibit, we bring the community together to bond around a theme that is relevant to us all.

In this edition of Memberworks, you will read about some of our recent partnerships and collaborations, as well as some of the exciting programs planned for the coming weeks—programs that educate, entertain, inspire, connect and include.

I would like to thank each of you for your support, which allows Oglebay Institute to continue its 90-year legacy of bringing the best of arts, nature and cultural programming to the Ohio Valley. Your generosity and patronage sustain our work and directly contribute to the vitality of our communities in exciting and creative new ways.

Best Regards,

Danielle Cross McCracken
Oglebay Institute President

Schrader Center Brings Nature-inspired Programs to Libraries

At libraries throughout the Upper Ohio Valley, Oglebay Institute's Schrader Environmental Education Center brings nature-inspired programs inside all year long. The one-hour programs are appropriate for all ages and can be tailored to meet the needs of the host library and their anticipated audience.



In 2020, the Schrader Environmental Education Center will expand its library programs, which serve facilities in West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Hands-on activities draw participants deep into the learning process. They might experience the life of a plant with seed yoga, eat like a bird during the “Bird Beak Buffet” or build different animal nests. They might also meet the Schrader Center's Animal Ambassadors, including snakes, turtles and a toad. Lesson content changes with the seasons, and returning attendees are always learning something new from arctic animal habitats to caterpillar transformation.

The Schrader Center offers programs on seasonal topics from fall through spring. For the summer, the program intersects with the Collaborative Summer Library Program's national theme. This year, that theme is fairy tales, mythology and fantasy. Schrader Center director Molly Check will lead participants through stories, games and hands-on activities that explore the role of nature in legends and tales from around the world.

“Libraries are an integral part of any community,” Check said. “I am grateful for our involvement in so many wonderful libraries across the tri-state area.”

Last year, programs at 15 libraries in West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania engaged more than 800 people. While audiences tend to include primarily children, the content can be adapted for anyone from pre-school to adult. Check noted that many libraries book daytime programs throughout the school year to serve preschool-aged children and homeschool families. The library in St. Clairsville schedules programs during afterschool hours for elementary and middle school students.

“By taking our environmental education programs to the libraries, we are able to reach new audiences and connect with families who may not be able to travel to the Schrader Center,” Check said.

Booking details for upcoming library programs are available at the Schrader Center by calling 304-242-6855.

136-Year-Old Portraits Receive Conservation Work

Two portraits in the collection of The Museums of Oglebay Institute are undergoing conservation work thanks to financial support from the McWilliams Foundation.

The portraits, painted by portrait artist George W. Storm in 1883, are of Chester and Sarah Hubbard.

A Wheeling resident from the age of 4, Chester Dorman Hubbard (November 25, 1814 - August 23, 1891) was a two-term US Representative from West Virginia, who previously served in the Virginia General Assembly and Virginia Secession Convention of 1861, prior to the American Civil War. He was instrumental in the founding of the state of West Virginia.

On September 20, 1842, Chester Hubbard married English-born Sarah Pallister (February 2, 1820 - November 5, 1899). They had five children. The couple is interred in Greenwood Cemetery.

Their descendants donated the portraits to The Museums of Oglebay Institute in 1985. For the past 35 years the portraits have been exhibited in the period room setting of Earl W. Oglebay's office.

The temporary removal of some artifacts for the 2019 installation of the fire suppression system presented a perfect opportunity for the 136-year-old portraits and their original frames to receive restoration treatment.

The portraits are currently at the Pennsylvania Art Conservatory, with an anticipated return in the spring of 2020.



Portraits of Chester and Sarah Hubbard are currently undergoing restoration.

Towngate Launches Youth Playwriting Contest

Launched in memory of Towngate Theatre's founder, the Harold G. O'Leary Youth Playwriting Contest gives young playwrights the opportunity to bring their stories to life with a full-length production. Oglebay Institute director of performing arts Tim Thompson shared why he and his colleagues chose this program to celebrate O'Leary's legacy:

"Two of Hal's favorite and most treasured programs that he created for the Towngate were Parcel Players and the National Playwriting Contest," Thompson said. "He loved working with new plays and their playwrights. Dave [Henderson], P.D. [Gregg] and I could think of no better way to honor our mentor and founder of Towngate Theatre than by combining the two programs with a playwriting contest for our youth theatre."



Towngate Theatre

The winning play will premiere during the summer 2020 Parcel Players season with a production directed and designed by Towngate's professional staff. Founded in 1967, Parcel Players offers young people interested in theater a chance to act, direct, design sets, make costumes, program lighting and more. Some past Parcel Players have gone on to roles in national and regional theater productions and television. Others teach, direct and perform throughout the country.

In addition to having a play produced on Towngate's stage, the winning playwright will receive a \$400 stipend.

Interested playwrights can find more details and submit a play online at oionline.com/playwritingcontest. Submissions are open through April 3, 2020.

School of Dance Receives ASPIRE Award

In October 2019, OI's School of Dance received an ASPIRE Award from the American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (AAASP) in recognition of its adaptive dance programs.


While dance has not traditionally been thought of as a sport, former OI dance parent Debbie McKay saw merit in nominating the School of Dance for its efforts to engage students of diverse ages and physical and mental abilities.

Director Cheryl Pompeo said she was thrilled for the recognition of these programs and their impact on an underserved group of students.

She added, "Winning the ASPIRE Award not only marked the achievements of the adaptive dance program, it recognized dance as a sport."

Based in Atlanta, Ga., the AAASP established the Adapted Sports Programs in Recreation & Education (ASPIRE) Awards to showcase people and programs that have taken a proactive and innovative path in support of competitive sports programs for student athletes with physical disabilities.





Pictured are some of OI's dance students and instructors. Front row, left to right: Susan Weekly, Katie Robinson, Sarah Czapp, Kelsi Weaver and Emilia Heusel. Back row: Natalie Boord, School of Dance instructor Kimberlee Kafana, Amber Huntley and School of Dance director Cheryl Pompeo.

Dance for Everyone!

School of Dance Serves All Abilities with Inclusive Programs

Like everyone else, people with developmental delays and physical challenges can greatly benefit from creative expression through the arts. Dance allows those with differing abilities the opportunity to express their individuality, gain self-confidence and experience the joy of movement in new and rewarding ways.

Oglebay Institute's adaptive dance programs create an accessible environment in which people of all abilities can create and collaborate. Year-round in-studio classes and outreach programs embody director of dance Cheryl Pompeo's mantra—"Everyone has a right to dance."

Russell Nesbitt

Oglebay Institute conducts a dance outreach program at Russell Nesbitt Services, Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides personal care, service and life opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

It began five years ago when Amber Huntley, a client at Russell Nesbitt, wanted to dance. Her mom, Sue, worked as a customer service representative at OI and her younger sister Kaylee was a dance student. Amber would often accompany them to the studios.

"Amber would look through the windows of the studio and say 'I dance,'" explained Pompeo, "and her mom would say, 'They don't have a class for you here.' I thought to myself—we need to fix this."

So Pompeo developed a class for Amber and her roommates, Susan and Natalie, who also have developmental delays. The response from the women was overwhelmingly positive.

In fact, when Susan fell and broke her arm, dance class became her physical therapy. "She was having a lot of balance issues as a result of the injury and was not cooperating with traditional therapy," Pompeo explained, "but she loves dance so we adapted her lessons to work on what her therapist said she needed to work on and she did great."

Pompeo said the therapist credited Susan's work in dance class with allowing her to keep her mobility.

Amber, Susan and Natalie continue to experience the joy of dance at OI. Their enthusiasm led to the expansion of the program.

Staff members at Russell Nesbitt were so impressed that they reached out to Pompeo and asked her to start a dance program at the center so clients who are unable to go to the studio could participate. OI dance instructor Kimberlee Kafana now conducts a monthly dance class for 20-25 Russell Nesbitt clients. In the summer, she also teaches a weeklong adaptive dance camp.

Susan Weekly, (left) and Amber Huntley join School of Dance instructor Kimberlee Kafana and others in a mobility exercise.



Augusta Levy Learning Center

At the Augusta Levy Learning Center, Kafana's "Exploration of Movement" program engages children with autism and other sensory processing disorders. Elementary and middle school students listen to music, process patterns and then dance. Along the way, they are practicing the skills they learn each day in therapy sessions.

"Through our partnership with Oglebay Institute our students with autism have learned how to imitate, participate in group activities and follow a teacher's instruction in a group setting," said ALLC executive director Angela Wood. "Ms. Kim Kafana's ability to modify her dance instruction to meet our students' communication, behavioral and sensory needs has helped make this program a true success."

The many benefits of the program extend beyond individual students. Families feel included in community activities that might otherwise be impossible because of their children's challenging behaviors and lack of communication skills.

"Because of the Oglebay Institute dance program our students have showcased their dance skills at our center's holiday program and some have enrolled in dance classes in their community," Wood said. "We are so thankful for the many benefits this program has provided and hope to continue for many years to come!"

The success of "Exploration of Movement" led to an expanded curriculum, including sessions in visual arts, theater and environmental education.



Kimberlee Kafana leads an "Exploration of Movement" session at the Augusta Levy Learning Center.

Continued on page 10.



OI in Photos

The holiday season at Oglebay Institute is marked by many traditions, performances and the giving spirit. The programs you'll see in the following pages are backed by the support of dedicated volunteers and sponsors. As we reminisce about the joy these events bring, please join us as we recognize the talent and generosity of those who enable us to engage our community through these experiences.

Festival of Trees Stifel Fine Arts Center



The annual Festival of Trees took place November 8-22 at the Stifel Fine Arts Center with more than a dozen professionally decorated trees, along with wreaths and other items, available to purchase. Thanks to tree sales, sponsorships from Belmont Savings Bank and Panhandle Cleaning & Restoration and the work of volunteer decorators, the event raised nearly \$13,000 for OI.

Above are Liz Murad, Mike Taylor and Mark Nicholson of Belmont Savings Bank with Robert Contraguero, Josh Contraguero and Bob Contraguero Jr. of Panhandle Cleaning & Restoration.



Above, at the November 7 Festival of Trees media and sponsor luncheon are longtime Oglebay Institute sponsor Lamar Advertising represented by (from left) Tina Yanok, Natalie Berisford, Jennifer Vera, Jean-Anne Renshaw, Julie Hood and Mandy Kaufman.

Below, Greater Wheeling Sports and Entertainment Authority marketing director Sonya Fedorko (left) and Wheeling Convention & Visitors Bureau marketing director Olivia Litman.



Left, at the November 8 opening night reception, are Festival of Trees volunteer decorators. Front row, left to right: Kimberly Young, Christine Sacco, Mary Fahey, Rebecca Niess and Don Niess. Middle row: Ron Sacco, Janet Peace and Debbie Myles. Back row: Noah Hilton, Betsy Phillips and Ivan Myles.

STEAM Showcase Charleston, WV



In Sept. 2019, OI presented Bricolage's Midnight Radio, Jr. at the inaugural STEAM Showcase in Charleston, W.Va.

After a program overview, OI director of performing arts Tim Thompson invited audience volunteers to perform "How Lil Stinch Seized Soupmas." This play was created by Triadelphia Middle School students and playwright Pete Fernbaugh.

Local elementary school students joined Thompson and OI director of development Micah Underwood onstage to narrate, play characters, make live sound effects and illustrate the program's impact.

A STEAM Power WV grant, funded by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation through the WV Dept. of Arts, Culture & History, supported this project.

Pictured above, left to right, are W. Va. Commission on the Arts member Susan Hogan, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation vice president Jim Denova, Oglebay Institute president Danielle McCracken, Rural Arts Collaborative manager Carmelle Nickens, W. Va. Dept. of Arts, Culture & History curator Randall Reid-Smith and W. Va. Dept. of Education assistant director Erika Klose.

Raising the Barre Dance Gala Stifel Fine Arts Center



Above, Melody Osborne (left) and Raiili Litos. Below, School of Dance director Cheryl Pompeo with Ed Majewski and Jim Beasley.

The School of Dance held its annual Raising the Barre Dance Gala October 26 at the Stifel Fine Arts Center.

As the department's largest fundraiser, support from the event allows the school to continue to provide exceptional training, instructors and resources for young dancers.

Pictured above, left to right, are Annabelle Crews, Kennedy Chesonis, Abigail Hines, Analise Baker and Ella Nugent.



Ballet Inc. Workshop School of Dance



On October 28, Oglebay Institute's School of Dance hosted a ballet master workshop with New York City-based Ballet Inc. founder & artistic director Aaron Atkins.

Above with Atkins and School of Dance Director Cheryl Pompeo are Aalyah Kocher and Addisyn Kocher (front) with Eden King, Chloe Patt and Sarah Czapp.

Holidays at the Mansion Mansion Museum, Oglebay



Above, the Federal Bedroom decorated by Darlene Pempek, Brad Breisch and Lynn Jefferies of Three Labs Salvage.

Below, Kathy Gibeau, Lila Murphy and Karen Stalnaker.

First started in 1973, Holidays at the Mansion is an annual tradition where volunteer decorators and area businesses lavishly transform the Museum's period rooms for the holidays. The event is sponsored by Panhandle Cleaning & Restoration.

Pictured above, left to right, at the November 8 member's opening are Becky Wilmoth, Kathy Fry, Joy Jaeger, Kassie Edwards and Stephanie Hitchman.



Law & Order: Fairy Tale Unit Towngate Theatre



A cast of 30 talented young actors performed *Law and Order: Fairy Tale Unit*—playwright Jonathan Rand's hilarious parody of the popular TV series. The production was sponsored by the Helen J. Prince Foundation.

Front row, left to right, are cast members Flannery Muscar, Elaina Puszc, May Devine, Arabella Ross, Rylin Russell and Cole Tarrant. Back row: Lily Ulrich.

Stifel Holiday Tea Stifel Fine Arts Center



Above, Stifel family members Linda Whitaker, Joan Stamp (standing) and Paula McClure carry on their family tradition of pouring tea at this annual holiday event. Below, left to right: Judy Coury, Francie Bibbo and Dolores Lestini.

The annual Stifel Holiday Tea took place November 19 at the elegantly decorated Stifel Fine Arts Center.

A welcome start to the holiday season, the free community event is a traditional social gathering for hundreds of guests who can enjoy tea sandwiches, cookies and hot tea while being among the first to shop the Holiday Art Show & Sale.

Above, left to right, are Christine Pastor, Kim Ghaphery, Callie Tennant and Mary Marlin.



Wreath Workshop Schrader Center



The Schrader Center hosted a "bows & boughs" wreath workshop on December 4 where guests assembled beautiful holiday wreaths made with fresh evergreens, berries, pinecones and ribbons. Different techniques and styles were demonstrated along with evergreen identification.

Pictured above with finished wreaths are Ruth Ann Miller (left) and Charlotte Hess.

Holiday Art Show & Sale Stifel Center & Schrader Center



Above, at the Stifel Fine Arts Center, Eileen Padgett (left) with exhibiting artists Nancy Tirone and Susan Dorsch. Below, artist Amanda Lilley, Jonathan Blum, Vera Lilley-Blum and Chloe Lilley-Blum (standing).

More than 50 regional artists, craftspeople and gourmet food producers exhibited at Oglebay Institute's annual Holiday Art Show & Sale this past November & December at the Stifel Fine Arts Center and Schrader Center in Oglebay Park.

Sponsored by United Bank, the Holiday Art Show & Sale is a unique shopping experience offering hundreds of locally handcrafted gifts.

Above, at the November 14 opening reception are exhibiting artists LeAnn Leas, Darcy Riggs and Mark Douglas.



The Littlest Angel Towngate Theatre



Sponsored by Unified Bank and Macy's, Towngate Theatre staged the classic Christmas musical *The Littlest Angel*—the humorous & touching story of a young angel who is transformed from a celestial pest to the toast of the Heavenly Host.

Pictured above, front row, are cast members Kelsey Ohler and McKenna Halicky. Back row; Patricia "Pitter Pat" Jeffers, Meghan Ross, Jana Lu Schodzinski and Taylor Andrews.

The Nutcracker Mansion Museum & Towngate Theatre



Above, Brooke Sansone, George Mamakos, Kala Bassa, Molly Henthorne (Clara), Peter J. Lim and Matt Taylor. Below, left to right, are Kaylee Huntley, Madeline Crawford and Sydney Glessner.



Sponsored by Macy's, hundreds of patrons enjoyed OI Youth Ballet Company performances of *The Nutcracker* this holiday season, which included *Nutcracker Teas* at the Mansion Museum and full productions of the classic ballet at Towngate Theatre.

Above, front row from left, are cast members Madison Taylor, Kailey Nugent, Keagan DeRocchis-Wade and Lily Osborne. Back row: Sloane Ren, Kelsey Glessner and Summer Toland.

Holiday Art Camp Stifel Fine Arts Center



Children expressed their creativity by creating clay and 3D paper sculptures, along with mixed-media paintings, at the Stifel Fine Arts Center's Holiday Art Camp December 23.

Pictured above, left to right, with Modernist watercolor & crayon mixed-media paintings are Allison Twigg, Taylor Norman and Hannah Heusel.

Student Art Exhibition Stifel Fine Arts Center



Supporting their fellow students at the January 9 Regional Student Art Exhibition are Starbuck Roberts, Patrick Boldrick, exhibiting artist Golden Roberts and Nava Bauer of Olney Friends School. Below, Jashaur Watkins and exhibiting artist Bryanna Nally of Wheeling Park High School.

Pictured above during the awards ceremony at the annual Regional Student Art Exhibition are winning artists from area high schools. Now in its 31st year, the long-standing exhibit is sponsored by United Bank.

From left front, Stifel Fine Arts Center director of exhibitions Michael McKowen, OI president Danielle McCracken, Hauna Bennington, Ryleigh Jackson, Erin McChesney, Shelby Hannahs, WVU coordinator of art education and assistant professor Dr. Teri Giobbia, WLU department of journalism, communication studies and visual art chair Brian Fencl; middle row, Morgan Doan, Kira Wakulchik, Jade Myers and Stifel Center director Rick Morgan; back row, Rey Sadoff, Carinda Lancia, Callie Cika and Charidy Ward.



WLU Creative Arts Therapy Exhibition Towngate Theatre



The Gallery at Towngate was proud to host the West Liberty University Creative Arts Therapy spring 2020 student exhibition, which explores how art media and the creative process is used to treat and raise awareness of mental health conditions.

Pictured above, from left, is OI director of exhibitions Michael McKowen, Dr. Susan Ridley, students Danielle Coss & Savannah Allen and WLU dean of arts & communication Dr. Matthew Harder.

Dancing Wheels

Since 2013, OI's School of Dance has hosted an annual workshop with The Dancing Wheels Company of Cleveland, Ohio—a professional, physically integrated dance company uniting the talents of dancers both with and without disabilities. In 2019, OI hosted a public performance by the renowned dance company.

Dancing Wheels provides role models for young people and combats negative stereotypes. It's not merely "wheelchair ballet;" it's an expression of the human spirit.

The programs are open to people of all ages, with or without disabilities. Participants have included dancers, physical therapy students, educators and parents of children with special needs.

Dancer Kelsi Weaver was greatly impacted by OI's Dancing Wheels workshop. Afterward, she enrolled in dance at OI, where she has now studied for nearly five years. In 2019, she participated in a summer dance program at The Dancing Wheels School in Cleveland.

Kelsi is also a member of the Youth Ballet Company, performing roles in the annual fall ballet and *The Nutcracker*.

"When I dance, I interact with the other girls. I don't just interact with other people in wheelchairs with disabilities," she said. "I think people today try to group us in one group. But just because I'm in a wheelchair doesn't make me any different. And that's something that I think Oglebay Institute really understands and I'm really thankful for that."

Just Like Everyone Else

While OI has had a formalized adaptive dance program for seven years, instructors have been teaching students with special needs for much longer.

Katie Robinson, who has physical and developmental disabilities, has danced at OI for 21 years. "She was our first student with special needs before we even heard the term 'adaptive dance,'" Pompeo said. "She was a just a kid that wanted to dance."

"Every one of us at OI believes that every person has a right to dance. It doesn't matter if you are in a chair or have a prosthetic limb or have a sensory or developmental delay. You're going to dance; you're going to work hard; you're going to set and achieve goals and you're going to have fun—just like everyone else."

Dance student Katie Robinson doing a lunge under the guidance of Kimberlee Kafana.



Kelsi Weaver with Dancing Wheels company dancer and director of community engagement Sara Lawrence-Sucato during a summer program in 2019.

Sarah Czapp

Like many mothers, Jocelyn Czapp enrolled her two-year-old daughter in dance. Unlike most two-year-olds, Sarah had severe scoliosis and lacked three lower vertebrae, half of her sacrum and her left leg.

"I sent her to class with her walker and told Cheryl [Pompeo] that Sarah was going to be a ballerina," Jocelyn said.



Sarah Czapp performing a solo (petite sugar plum) in a 2019 production of *The Nutcracker* at Towngate Theatre.

Pompeo, director of OI's School of Dance, welcomed the challenge. Sarah's therapist joined her for weekly lessons, combining physical therapy with ballet. Eventually, Sarah joined mainstream classes and the Youth Ballet Company.

"Sarah fell in love with ballet because Cheryl made her feel like she was like everybody else," her mother shared. "She doesn't see her as a disability."

That attitude filters down to the other dancers in the studio.

"They never, ever treated her like she wasn't just like them," Jocelyn said.

At age three, Sarah was a baby angel in *The Nutcracker*. This past fall, she danced in *Alice in Wonderland* as her favorite animal, a flamingo, which often stands on one leg, just like her.

Dancing has transformed her world. Sarah is now a patient ambassador for Shriners Hospitals for Children. She also assists in classes for younger children, introducing them to the idea that she can help like any other student assistant.

Sarah continues to grow, literally and figuratively, through dance. The 47% curvature of her spine is now only 17%, a relief Jocelyn attributes primarily to ballet. Now eight years old, Sarah hopes to dance en pointe someday. Creative collaboration with pointe shoe makers, her prosthetics company, Shriners Hospitals and Pompeo may make that dream possible.

Dance saved her life, and Sarah is determined to live it.



Member Spotlight: Dick and Cheryl Jones

For Wheeling residents Dick and Cheryl Jones, Oglebay Institute membership offers a unique way to share arts experiences with their five grandchildren.

The Joneses joined OI in 2011 to support the organization and to take advantage of the many programs offered by the Institute, especially members-only early summer camp registration. They have attended music events at the Stifel Fine Arts Center and Towngate Theatre, art shows at the Stifel, plays at Towngate and a variety of other events over the past several years. Their most memorable experiences have been at the theater.

"We, as grandparents, have received so much joy in the Towngate children's theater productions directed by Tim Thompson," said Cheryl. "Since our grandkids live in Columbus, we wanted to have them spend a week with us in the summer doing fun Wheeling activities."

For 11 years, those fun activities have included OI summer camp. In 2009, their oldest granddaughter, then five, attended her first week of camp at Towngate. Her sister and two cousins followed in her footsteps.

In 2019, the Jones's two youngest granddaughters, Chloe and Anna Steere, continued exploring their love of theater with Annie Musical Camp.

The family's theatrical adventures continued in the fall with a performance of *The Littlest Angel* at Towngate Theatre. While in nursing school in Chicago, Cheryl performed in a production of that play. Her experience—and Towngate's fun production—made sharing the show with her two youngest granddaughters a special treat.

For over a decade, the Joneses have made memories with OI.

"Dick and I have enjoyed all the programs Oglebay Institute has put on that we have been able to attend by ourselves or with family," Cheryl said. "We feel privileged to have such a variety of activities offered to us and would encourage any family to join and be included in the Oglebay Institute family."



Dick and Cheryl Jones with granddaughters Chloe Steere (left) and Tessa Steere after the Annie Musical Camp showcase in 2019.

"Presence" Exhibit Challenges Perceptions of Growing Old

A new exhibition and educational series opens March 5 at Oglebay Institute's Stifel Fine Arts Center. "Presence: An Exploration of Aging Through Art" examines the universal, yet intensely personal, experience of growing old.



Marna Clarke - *Hand on Chest*

Through a variety of media, the exhibition explores a broad range of perspectives—from thriving lifestyles to the harsher realities of aging. "Presence" provides insight into the physical and mental aging process, challenges us to rethink how we perceive age, highlights the therapeutic benefits of the creative process and examines the role of elders in our society.

A series of learning and community-building events will also take place.

"Presence" is part of the Stifel Center's humanities series, developed by curator Michael McKowen.

"I believe that the role of the Stifel Fine Arts Center is to provide a place to commune," McKowen said. "A public art space should invite exploration. By presenting topics that affect every human being, we provide opportunities for emotional, physical, mental and spiritual growth."

The exhibit showcases work from a dozen artists from six states.

Among the featured artists are **Isadora Kosofsky**, a Los Angeles-based documentary photographer, who was recently named one of a hundred "heroines" in photography worldwide by the Royal Photo Society; photographer **Marna Clarke**, who at age 70 decided to chronicle her own aging process; mixed media artist **Sylvie Bucher** whose "Memory" series explores how memory fragments with age and dementia; New York-based poet and founder of the internationally acclaimed Alzheimer's Poetry Project **Gary Glazner**; Ohio watercolorist **Gina Judy** whose paintings depict her father's time in a nursing home; sculptor **Morgan Kranz** whose series of hand sculptures explores how to show compassion for the inevitable aging process; art therapist, educator and artist **Annie McFarland** and mixed media artist **Roberta Rousos** whose work deals with the duality and contradiction of body and soul.

"Presence" also features pieces from four Ohio Valley artists—Thomas Wharton, Jean Och, Debbie Joseph and Robert Joseph and includes work from students in Chatham University's Interior Architecture Program.

Educational programs take place weekly and include panel discussions on aging and dementia, presentations from featured artists, yoga and wellness workshops, spoken word events and art therapy sessions. For a complete schedule of events, visit www.OIonline.com/presence.

"Presence" is sponsored by The Health Plan, WVU Medicine and United Bank with additional support provided by the Home Support Foundation. It is on display through April 25. All programs are free and open to the public.



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