

June 15, 2021

WOMEN'S IMPACT NETWORK ANNOUNCES 2021 ARTS AND CULTURE GRANTS

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Four local arts organizations recently received grants totaling \$50,000 from the Women's Impact Network of New Hanover County.

The grant recipients are **The Arts Council of Wilmington and New Hanover County, The Cameron Art Museum, Brooklyn Arts Music Academy and Opera House Theatre Company.**

The **Arts Council's** \$20,000 award will help underwrite the cost of the Rail Trail Design and Engineering Study. The Wilmington Rail Trail is an effort by a cross-section of community stakeholders to transform the decaying infrastructure of the disused Atlantic Coast Line rail bed into a community gathering place, an anchor that will connect and enhance residential, cultural, commercial, and recreational districts.

A grant of \$20,000 to the **Cameron Art Museum** will partially underwrite the cost of *Boundless*, a new permanent public sculpture by North Carolina artist Stephen Hayes, which will be installed on the grounds of the museum in November. *Boundless* commemorates the little-known story of the legacy and agency of United States Colored Troops (USCT) in New Hanover County.

The **Brooklyn Arts Music Academy's** "Music is Life!" program received a \$5,000 grant. The program is aimed at young children who have had Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – which include poverty, divorce, racism and physical abuse. Music is Life! engages children aged 3 to 5 with weekly instruction in singing and in playing the harp and violin. For children with ACEs, music has been shown to foster resilience in a number of ways.

Another \$5,000 grant was awarded to **Opera House Theatre Company** for its Multigenerational Theatre Arts Program. As its name suggests, the project will allow young people and older adults to learn and train together. WIN's grant will help provide scholarships for at-risk youth, enabling them to take weekday performing arts and theater trade classes in the fall of 2021 and to be mentored by professionals in these fields. The instruction will culminate in a musical production in December.

This year's grants help fund WIN's broadest-ever range of projects, said WIN chair Isabella Hinds.

"Two of the projects reflect our vision of *impacting* residents of the community – specifically the very young, teenagers, and seniors – by investing our funds to make

possible high-quality arts experiences and instruction in music and theater," she said. "Two of the projects represent something of a departure for WIN: very large projects that have long-term value for the region, its arts, economic development, and cultural and racial inclusiveness.

"WIN is committed to *impact* on our community above all and the Rail Trail Project aligns perfectly with our mission," Hinds continued. "This project will not only add immeasurably to Wilmington's appeal to arts tourists, it will also reunite our Northside and literally transform our community."

The Women's Impact Network of New Hanover County was founded in 2011 as a collective philanthropy organization. Its members' annual financial contributions make up the funding pool each year, and its grant-making rotates each year among four areas of focus: education, health and wellness, the environment and arts and culture.