

January 1, 2025

Dear Friends,

As 2024 ends, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey the Cibola Arts Council and the Double Six Gallery have experienced since my appointment as Executive Director on August 26th, 2024. It has been an inspiring few months filled with growth, creativity, and community engagement, and I am thrilled to share our accomplishments and plans for the upcoming year. I could not have performed all of this without the help and assistance of the Board as well as Ian Smith, Thia Ray, and Myriah Scarpati-Graham. A special thank you to Lezlie Smith for helping me get up to speed as well as her care and guidance of the Cibola Arts Council during the time we were without an Executive Director.

2024: A Season of Renewal and Progress

Since August, we have worked tirelessly to reinvigorate the Cibola Arts Council and the Double Six Gallery. Here are some highlights of what we have achieved together:

1. Gallery Revitalization:

- We revamped the Double Six Gallery to create a more welcoming and dynamic space for local artists to highlight their work.
- Cleared the space of unwanted and old furniture.
- The back vault was cleaned by the staff, reorganized, and transformed into a curated art space.
- Introduced a more concise cleaning of the Gallery schedule.
- Held a clean-up day sponsored by Main Street and Community Volunteers of the “Sculpture Garden.”

2. Community Engagement:

- Partnered with the Sylvia Anzures at the Cibola Citizen, the local newspaper advertising and buying print to promote our events.
- Partnered with Starr Fred at the Local radio station KMIN again to promote our events.
- 2 Fairs attended in the City of Grants to promote the Arts Council and Double Six Gallery.
- Hosted a reception for the Emory brothers in which the entire community was invited to attend and about 160 visitors attended.
- Hosted a “Bayanihan Festival” through the local Pilipino community who provided the community an introduction into their cultural heritage and included dance, song, fashion show, and food. 326 visitors attended.
- Hosted the annual “Cookie Crawl and Light Parade” in collaboration with Denise Hanssen of Main Street. We provided over three hundred cups of hot chocolate and 472 cookies along with five Christmas Card designs with an envelope as an art project for the community.

3. Support for Local Artists:

- Assisted in launching a Mural Campaign with local Artists Blake and James Emory. This Muralist concept was written into the 2024 funding grant through

NMARTS.org. This Grant enabled us to not only paint our front facade, but the Emory brothers have painted almost 15 Murals throughout Grants and the Milan Villages, with thirty more murals in the process. The Main Street Executive Director has been gracious to partner with us.

- Expanded the consignment program, providing artists with increased opportunities to sell their work.
- Visited Laguna and Acoma Pueblo feast days to promote the gallery and to “sign on” potential artists from these rich cultural heritages.

4. Operational Improvements:

- Streamlined internal processes to ensure smoother operations and better support for our artists and patrons. We implemented a “scheduling form” to describe potential events as well as what budget would entail and human resources that may be needed to host the event.
- Created job descriptions for the Gallery Manager Associate (Administrative) and Gallery Associate (Educational)
- Strengthened our Board to nine members with two more to be vetted in 2025. This initial base is made up of enthusiastic individuals dedicated to the arts and come from diverse backgrounds.
- Created an additional revenue stream through the offering of our gallery space for Celebrations of Life, Board Meetings, Civic Meetings, and others on a case-by-case basis.

Looking Ahead to 2025

As we turn the page to 2025, the Cibola Arts Council is committed to building on this momentum. Here are some of the potential priorities for the year ahead:

1. Expanding Programming:

- Introduce quarterly themed exhibitions to highlight specific cultural and artistic narratives to coincide with heritage and awareness months.
- Launch a series of hands-on workshops for all age groups, ranging from painting and sculpture to digital media and photography.
- Introduce new venues at the Gallery, to expand programming into Poetry readings, theatre and drama, dance, music, and other performances.
- A Christmas Gingerbread contest for the community and outlying areas for all age groups.

2. Community Festivals:

- Organize an annual Arts & Culture Festival that celebrates the rich heritage and talents of our region.
- Collaborate with local businesses and organizations to create city-wide events that draw visitors from across the state.
- Introduce a Dia de Los Muertos parade as is done in many parts of Mexico and Latin America to coincide with Dia de Los Muertos events at the Gallery.

3. Operational Growth:

- Continue to develop policies and procedures for every aspect of the Cibola Arts Council’s organization to ensure transparency and accountability.

- Developing a concise Board development plan to delineate duties and responsibilities of the board and the organization.
- Developing a strategic plan to reorganize the “Sculpture Garden” and create a performance space and true sculpture garden for the community.

Youth and Education Focus:

4. Develop an "Art After School" program to provide creative opportunities for young people.
 - Partner with local schools to integrate art into their curricula through guest artist visits and special projects.
 - Monthly contests for the community based on talent and age groups to include everyone from elementary to senior citizens.
5. **Sustainability and Growth:**
 - Expand our membership base and deepen relationships with artists, patrons, and potential donors.
 - Pursue new grants and fundraising opportunities to ensure long-term sustainability.
 - Expand our programs to the outlying Cibola County area.
 - Social media to be updated and maintained to expose our artists to the wider community.
 - Continue to re-tool the Arts Council and its programming to meet the needs of our artists and community.

Join Us in Shaping the Future

The achievements of 2024 and the exciting plans for 2025 would not be possible without your support. Whether you are an artist, a volunteer, a donor, or an admirer of the arts, you play a vital role in our success.

We invite you to join us in the coming year, attend our events, participate in our workshops, or consider contributing your time or resources to help us make an even greater impact. Together, we can ensure the arts continue to flourish in our community.

Thank you for being a part of our journey. Here is to a vibrant and creative 2025!

Warm regards,

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