

On Wednesday, November 10, 2021, the first in-person meeting of the PA Legislative Arts & Culture Caucus took place in the PA Capitol since spring 2020. The following is a summary of the presentations given at the meeting:

Veteran Specific Therapeutic Arts Programming

Presenters Donna Gority and Mike Quinn provided insight into an upstart Veterans specific “art as therapy” program taking place in Altoona, PA (Blair County). With a high veteran population, the local arts center, ArtsAltoona, has spearheaded an effort to bring to life veteran specific programming.

The Comedy Boot Camp Program is managed by Mike Quinn, a retired combat veteran. The goal of this class is for participants to experience personal growth and self-confidence by making an investment in themselves. “We are much more than a classroom – we are an inclusive community that facilitates a safe space for veterans to make lasting connection.”

This program is designed for those who want to learn the art of stand-up comedy, as humor and laughter opens one’s mindset to invite positive social exchanges. Participants will gain confident public speaking skills, creativity, writing skills, resilience, a sense of purpose and a feeling of belonging. The John F. Gority Academy for Veterans does this through the restorative power of comedy, storytelling, and creative expression.

ARTSALTOONA PRESENTS

John F. Gority Academy for Veterans

**STAND-UP COMEDY
BOOTCAMP**



To learn more about this program, please visit the ArtsAltoona website:

www.artsaltoona.org/gority-academy-stand-up-comedy-bootcamp/

Art as Therapy – I’m Fine Project

Presenters and Co-curators of the I’m Fine Project, Carrie Breschi and Maureen Joyce, initiated *I’m fine.* in 2019 as a way to address the country’s mental health crisis.

“I’m fine.”, a phrase we often say when we are not fine, is a community-engaged project dedicated to sculpting mental health awareness, support, and healing through the visual arts.

I’m fine. consists of a series of workshops developed in communities across Pennsylvania. In the workshops, participants express their emotions by creating a ceramic mask to represent the mask they wear to overcome, portray or minimize their mental health struggles. The workshops culminate in each community with a series of public art installations and gallery exhibits. All installations showcase the masks and the meaningful stories of the participants. To date, more than 300 masks have been created and more than 20 workshops have been conducted.

The project made its debut in Carlisle, PA, and is currently being conducted in York, PA until May 2022. I’m fine. will continue to engage communities across Pennsylvania until 2024 when it will be shown in the state’s capitol of Harrisburg, bringing everyone together to engage in the mental health conversation.

To learn more about this program, please visit the “I’m Fine.” website:

www.imfineproject.com

Music Therapy

Presenters, and Co-chairs of the Pennsylvania State Task Force for Music Therapy, Michelle Muth, MT-BC & Nicole Hahna, Ph.D., MT-BC led a presentation sharing their current practices of music therapy throughout the Commonwealth, the extensive educational background needed to be a board-certified Music Therapist, and ways the legislature could support and actively advocate for access to music therapy services.

Minimum training for a Board-Certified Music Therapist (MT-BC) includes:

- 4 year undergraduate degree in music therapy (or equivalency)
- 6-9 month internship with 1200 clinical hours
- Passing a national board certification exam (www.cbmt.org) to earn credential MT-BC
- Following Code of Ethics & Standards of Clinical Practice
- Ongoing education credits to maintain board certification - 100 credits every 5 years, including ethics credits

Currently a group of 6-7 board certified music therapists volunteer on the Pennsylvania State Task Force for Music Therapy (PASTF) focusing on increasing access to qualified and safe music therapy services across the state. They seek state recognition for the music therapy profession and the MT-BC credential required for competent practice. Serve in role as state association for music therapy as there is not currently a music therapy state association. Their efforts have resulted in:

- Music Therapy being added to various waiver programs
- A collaboration with HAP (The Hospital and HealthSystem Association of Pennsylvania) on the Music Therapy Collaborative to bring music therapy to Health care Workers



To learn more about this program, please visit the PASTF website:

www.pamusictherapy.org

Sector Updates - President and CEO of the Carnegie Museums.

Steven Knapp

Presenter Steven Knapp provided an update on the recovery efforts of the Arts and Culture Sector. As the President and CEO of one of PA's largest museum collectives, Steven was able to share solid insight into both the operations of our culture assets, and the public's response to reopening efforts.

While all institutions took a significant financial hit during the pandemic, he felt there were also a lot of positive managerial take-aways. Both large and small institutions/ organizations managed to "pivot their practices and found creative ways to provide extensive and innovative online programming; and most continue to offer robust digital programming today!"

"The fact that we are able to move forward is due in no small measure to the support that kept us whole during the worst days of the pandemic." Perhaps the most crucial source being the support through the Cultural and Museum Preservation Grant Program. The Carnegie Museums were fortunate to be included among the beneficiaries of this program last year, and earnestly hope that the Commonwealth will resume the program this year, making a portion of Pennsylvania's share of the American Rescue Plan funding available to a wider range of institutions than was possible last year, including PCA grantees in addition to those previously eligible. "Such an action would provide invaluable aid to the institutions that play so vital a role as partners to schools; prominent tourist attractions; economic drivers; and cherished sources of inspiration, information, and respite for Pennsylvania's citizens and families."