



Friends of the Arts, Inc.
P.O. Box 506
Orange Beach , Alabama 36561

Kindly Deliver to:



ART LINES

2026 ANNUAL REPORT NEWSLETTER
OF THE FRIENDS OF THE ARTS OF ORANGE BEACH, AL
ISSUE DATE - JANUARY 29, 2026



PRESIDENT'S REPORTS

WOW 2025! What an amazing year for the Friends of the Arts and the Coastal Arts Center!

The Orange Beach Festival of Art was selected by USA Today Reader's Choice as the BEST Art Festival in the Nation! Our festival was also selected as "Event of the Year" by the Alabama Governor's Tourism Board.

Friends, your membership supports the Festival with funding, volunteers, hospitality for the artists, the Patron of the Arts program and participation on the steering committee. Congratulations to all of you, and a special congratulations to the Arts Center director, Desiree Hodge and the amazing staff of the Coastal Arts Center!

This past year we welcomed several new members to the Friends of the Arts and have welcomed three very talented members to our Board of Directors; including Janet Haenish, Colette Boehm and Clara Myers. We also said goodbye to our wonderful treasurer and longtime member Vivian Hanich. We wish her much joy in her "retirement" with her grands and sweet family.

We awarded \$9,000 in college scholarship funds to some very deserving local high school seniors! Thank you to Fran Drake, Tara Gifford and the scholarship committee for making this happen.

Other worthy endeavors we love to be a part of: We supported the children's summer camp here at the Coastal Arts Center. We provided prize money for the Best of the Vets artist awards and reception. We also helped host a portion of the Frank Brown Songwriters' Festival here at the Coastal Arts Center.

Our fundraising and other community events this year will include the Acoustic Arts series, in progress now and the Grand Event in April (This year's theme will be "Casino Royale"! In the fall, we'll help host the Arts Afire fall festival for kids of all ages (and dogs too) and the very special Light Up the Arts celebration at Christmastime. Susan Coyne and her committee have done a fabulous job providing the food and beverages for these events for 2025 and she's ready to go again for 2026! Thank you Susan for all you do to add such elegant hospitality to our events.

We've set a great pace for 2026 and we need your help! Our events all need volunteers, and we will be looking for an additional board member or two this year. Your membership dues and involvement support all our community events. If you're not yet a member, I invite you to join! If you are a member, I thank you so much for your membership and your willingness to participate. We cannot do this without you. Also, a special thank you to all the members of the Board of Directors. You've all done an amazing job this year. I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and look forward to working with you in 2026!



Mary Ellen Davis, President

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

OFFICERS

Mary Ellen Davis - President
Fred Armstrong - Vice President
Clara Myers - Treasurer
Robin Anderson - Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS

Colette Boehm	Frances Holk-Jones
Susan Coyne	Susie Leatherbury
Fran Drake	Dianne McElroy
Jeanne Fitzgibbons	Kristin Pierre
Tara Gifford	Patricia Riley
Janet Haenisch	

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

Steve & Dee Burrow	Allen McElroy
Jeanne Duffy	Tommy Werneth
Scott Hardee	

EX OFFICIO MEMBER

Desiree Hodge



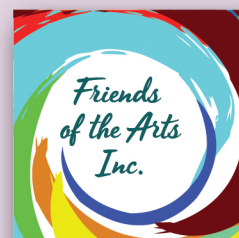
HOW TO JOIN

Head to our website
WWW.FRIENDSOFTHEARTSINC.ORG
for more information and to join us!

FRIENDS OF THE ARTS, INC.
P.O. BOX 506
ORANGE BEACH , ALABAMA 36561

CALL THE COASTAL ARTS CENTER
FOR MORE INFORMATION: 251-981-ARTS (2787)

If you'd like to donate anything to our scholarship fund, feel free to send a check back via the enclosed self-addressed envelope.



FESTIVAL OF ART

After a fantastic 51st show last year, we are looking forward to even more exciting things for our 2026 show. We are so proud to have been designated as the State "Event of the Year" by the Governor of Alabama and to be voted Best Art Festival in the nation by the readers of USA Today! Our success is due to two things: always concentrating on quality over quantity, and to the efforts of our staff and wonderful volunteers who offer true southern hospitality to our guests. Additionally, new components like the Children's Literary Arts tent featuring local authors and vibrant acts in the Performing Arts area keep things fresh and memorable. We will be concentrating the Performing Arts area in the center of the Festival on the grass area in front of the Clay Studio and Hot Shop so it is more accessible. Also, don't miss the Music Stage with a few new sounds along with our returning favorite bands. We expect over 15,000 guests for the weekend and we hope you will join us as a Patron or a Volunteer. Volunteer information is at:



The Patron of the Arts Program

The Patron of the Arts program supports the artists of the Orange Beach Festival of Art by providing dedicated funds to purchase artwork during the event, showcasing the community's commitment to both the festival and its artists. Patrons select a donation level, receive "Art Dollars" to use at the festival to choose their favorite pieces and help guarantee ongoing interest in the festival. This initiative not only benefits visual artists, but also directly supports performing and demonstrating artists through funds retained by Friends of the Arts. For more information and to access the 2026 Patron of the Arts invitation, please visit:

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS 2025

Our scholarship program is funded by our Grand Event. We are so thankful we get to contribute to Baldwin County Seniors' college dreams. Last year, we contributed \$9,000 to 5 local seniors going to college and we hope to do even more this year. Our 2025 scholarship recipients are as follows:

Orange Beach High
Cameron Wiles - Music/Theater Arts
Gulf Shores High
Gray Bias - Visual Arts
Robertsdale High
Samuel Glassford - Music Arts
Ryan Elizabeth McGilvray - Dance Arts
Foley High
Blakely Peterson - Dance Arts



Fran Drake & Cameron Wiles

For more information on our scholarship program, please reach out to Fran Drake at frandrake7@gmail.com.

THE GRAND EVENT

Join us for an evening where glamour meets high stakes! Fred Armstrong, chair of this year's Friends of the Arts Grand Event, cordially invites you to an unforgettable Casino Royale-themed soiree on April 30, 2026. This dazzling night of chance, charm, and sophistication will help raise vital funds to support local artists, inspiring art projects, and scholarships for graduating high school seniors in Baldwin County.

Step onto the casino floor and immerse yourself in an atmosphere of elegance and excitement as you try your luck, enjoy spirited competition, and mingle with fellow supporters of the arts. With every hand dealt and every wager placed, you'll be helping ensure a winning future for creativity in our community.

Place your bets, dress to impress, and get ready for a night you won't want to miss - because in this game, the arts always win.

Mark Your Calendar

The Grand Event is scheduled for Thursday, April 30, 2026!

Tickets will go on sale in March!



UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

2/5: A Musical Odyssey through Time & Genres - Della Grigsby
Coastal Arts Center • 6 PM • \$20/person

2/13: "Lovenotes" - Four A Change
Coastal Arts Center • 6 PM • \$20/person

2/28: Orange Beach Seafood Festival
The Wharf • 10 AM - 4PM • FREE

3/6-3/8, 3/13-3/15: Frozen - The Musical
Performing Arts Center • Fri. & Sat.: 7 PM, Sun.: 2 PM • \$15/person

3/14-3/15: Orange Beach Festival of Art
Coastal Arts Center • Sat.: 10 AM - 5 PM, Sun.: 10 AM - 4 PM • FREE

4/30: Friends of the Arts Grand Event
Coastal Arts Center • 6PM - 9PM • \$100/person

7/17: Theatre Camp Musical
Performing Arts Center • Timing TBD

8/15: Classics in Wood and Ivory Cello and Piano Concert
Coastal Arts Center • 6PM • \$20/person

8/27-8/30: Dream On Tribute
Performing Arts Center • Timing TBD

!!! 2025 EVENTS

2025 was an outstanding year in Orange Beach, filled with events that celebrated our community and its vibrant arts scene. We were proud to support and participate in experiences that showcased the creativity and spirit of our town.

- The year opened with the **Acoustic Arts Series** in January and February, featuring intimate performances by local musicians, complete with beer and wine bars hosted by the Friends. In March, the **Festival of Art** returned with an impressive collection of works from artists across the U.S., where we enjoyed volunteering and promoting the **Patron of the Arts** program.
- The Grand Event** followed, bringing residents and visitors together to support arts education and provide scholarships for Baldwin County seniors. During the summer, we also contributed funding for **children's art camps**, helping young artists explore their creativity in a fun and supportive environment. In August, we attended and supported the special **Wood & Ivory concert**, providing a **wine and beer donation bar** while enjoying an intimate evening of beautiful music with our community.
- In October, **Arts Afire** delighted families with a colorful, child-focused fall festival full of interactive activities and Halloween fun. The **Frank Brown International Songwriters' Festival** welcomed talented songwriters from around the country in November, and we were thankful to attend and host a wine and beer bar. **Best of the Vets** celebrated veteran artists, and we were grateful to help host their special reception.
- As the holidays approached, **Visions of Christmas** filled the Performing Arts Center with festive cheer and we were happy to contribute funds for the performers, and the year concluded with **Light Up The Arts**, a beloved signature event spreading light, creativity, and community spirit throughout Orange Beach.



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

During 2025 we saw more members getting involved in activities and events that the Friends support. We appreciate those who have stepped up to help. It makes it easier to accomplish our mission but also adds a lot of fun and excitement as we get to know new friends. During the year we added 13 new members. Of those, we had 1 Joint Life, 1 Individual Life and 2 new Corporate/Community Partners. Our current breakdown is:

24 Joint Life

8 Individual Life

8 Corporate/Community Partners

72 Annual Members

As we move into 2026, the annual membership billing is in progress. All memberships are now on an annual basis which makes it easier to track but also to credit membership. We appreciate all those who have already renewed and look forward to receiving all payments soon. Your membership dollars mean a lot. We encourage you to promote the Friends of the Arts to your friends and let them know the wonderful work that we are doing to promote the arts in our community. For information on how to become more involved, don't hesitate to reach out to me at jeannemaria9513@gmail.com.



Jeanne Fitzgibbons
Membership Chair

12/10: Light Up The Arts
Coastal Arts Center • 5:30PM-7:30PM • FREE

9/19-9/20: Orange Beach Freedom Festival
The Wharf • Timing TBD

10/11: Baldwin Pops
Coastal Arts Center • 5 PM • FREE

10/22: Arts Afire Fall Festival
Coastal Arts Center • 5PM-7 PM • FREE

11/11: Frank Brown International Songwriters' Festival
Coastal Arts Center • 6PM • \$15/person

11/14: Locals Art Day
Coastal Arts Center • 10AM-3PM • FREE

12/3-12/6: Visions of Christmas
Performing Arts Center • Timing TBD • \$5/person