

New Arts Alliance Seeks to Provide a Creative Medium For Everyone

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Englewood Creative Arts, a new Arts Alliance, is excited to be a part of the Greater Englewood Area. This grassroots entity, Englewood Creative Arts, seeks to provide mentorship, education, and acceptance through foundational classes in all mediums of art. It's under the umbrella of the Englewood Community Coalition, which is funded by the CDC to combat alcohol and drug related consequences among community members. Englewood Creative Arts has similar goals, but through the creative arts and self-expression.

Director of Community Alliances, Jeff Dillon, along with Executive Director Kay Tvaroch, are enthusiastic to explain what ECA has planned, along with what they would like to see moving forward. "We're just beginning an explorative, motivational, and educational journey that will benefit the Greater Englewood Area," Dillon said. "Right now, it's about community awareness and engagement and building relationships."

ECA recently had a community outreach meeting at the Elsie Quirk Library in which community members could learn about Englewood Creative Arts and share ideas amongst the group. "We sent out invitations, and many people attended," he said. "The attendees were excited to be there and shared their personal stories and experiences with arts and how it shaped their lives."

What makes ECA unique is its focus on training, teaching, and creating programming rather than the presentation. "There will be performance opportunities as well," Dillon said. ECA wants to provide a professional program in which all community members can learn about and explore the arts. The format would focus on professional instruction and volunteer mentorship.

Englewood Creative Arts (ECA) will have a broad and specific instruction format, delving into Creative Dramatics, Adult and Children Improv classes, Visual and Fine Arts, Creative Writing and Play Writing, Traditional, Social, and Modern Dance, and Music Exploration and

Instruction. Professional Instructors, mentors and volunteers would help guide students through classes over a period of time. Options could range from summer programs to school-year programs. At the end of the classes, the students will have the option of presenting what they've learned.

"We want the programming to be accessible and affordable through scholarships for all financial demographics," Dillon said. "Englewood has a focus on retirement, so we want to broaden the horizons for artistic programming to include children, adults of all ages, and underserved demographics." "Kids and adults are welcome — there's no such thing as a bad idea," he said. "This is a safe and creative environment that will help develop foundational creative tools."

ECA also has a strong focus around collaboration and support with the other artistic entities in the Englewood area. Partnership is emphasized and encouraged. "We want to create and build relationships with the other alliances," he said. "We're here to help and support and work alongside, not compete with others."

With this ideology in mind, Dillon will be securing a partnership with the Englewood Arts Center, a branch of the Ringling College of Art and Design, for programming they are designing. The exhibit at EAC will be called "Bullets to Band-Aids," which will focus on combining the written stories of veterans with visual arts. ECA will then provide improv classes over the period of two to four weeks for the veterans. They hope to give the Improv class a performance opportunity and a talk-back circumstance to share personal stories and experiences. "We're really excited for this," Dillon said, "Both the improv and collaboration."

Dillon is seeking out partnerships, like the one with EAC, as his group begins to grow and develop. Volunteers, sponsorships, and scholarship support is a priority for the group. "We could use it all, space, time, donations of all kinds as we move forward; we are looking for sponsorship - both corporate and personal, philanthropy, grant funding and donations," he explains. "There's no limit to what we can do because it's just the beginning," he states. "The arts can really help gain confidence, provide a sense of awareness and connect the body with the mind."

Dillon, who grew up in the arts and has been doing theatre practically his whole life, knows the value of arts and arts education. "It broadens your

horizons and exposes the individual to all kinds of positive, creative and enlightening experiences.”

For more information about ECA, visit englewoodcreativearts.org or ccenglewood.com to learn how to help, donate or participate. Call 941-302-8783 for questions and information as well.

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