

Annual Report

Vicksburg Arts Moving Forward

2025 
VICKSBURG
ARTS

Vicksburg Arts

Annual Report 2025

Vicksburg Arts Moving Forward

In 2025, Vicksburg Arts marked its 10th anniversary while stepping into a new phase of growth and clarity.

What began in 2015 as an art and placemaking initiative of the Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority has become an independent regional anchor—earning 501(c)(3) status in 2018 and completing the transition to Board-led governance in 2019.

2025 reaffirmed the practical rural reality that shaped us from the start: arts and cultural experiences need to be available close to home. Our “art without walls” model continued to deliver inclusive, high-quality programming where people already gather—festivals, farmers’ markets, parks, schools, senior centers, libraries, and partner sites—and it’s producing measurable results. Participation has accelerated, with attendance tripling over the last two years, and in 2025 we reached more than 10,500 participants across southern Kalamazoo County.

Another highlight of 2025 is the expansion of the breadth of our programming and the strength of our pipeline across ages: Tournament of Writers, Art of Nature youth summer camps with pay-what-you-can access, teen skill-building that supports our Youth Advisory Committee, adult workshops, Make-and-Takes, and year-round senior arts and music programming in partnership with the South County Senior Center. Just as importantly, we continued integrating public art and free artmaking into seasonal downtown events and street festivals—turning everyday

community life into a place where creativity is expected, visible, and shared.

To guide this momentum, Vicksburg Arts adopted a new strategic plan—Moving Forward (2025–2028)—shaped by broad community input. With the hiring of Executive Director Eltine DeYoung in 2025, the organization entered an intentional phase of professionalization: strengthening inclusive programming, expanding sustainable revenue, investing in staff and artist capacity, tightening operational systems, and building a consistent regional brand.

This year’s accomplishments reflect both careful investment in our mission and the collective effort of volunteers, artists, donors, grantors, sponsors, and community partners who help make this work possible. Thank you for your continuing support!

As we close 2025, one thing is clear: the appetite for arts connection in rural southern Kalamazoo County is real, and Vicksburg Arts is meeting it with creativity, consistency, and care—building not just programs, but a stronger, more connected community for the decade ahead.

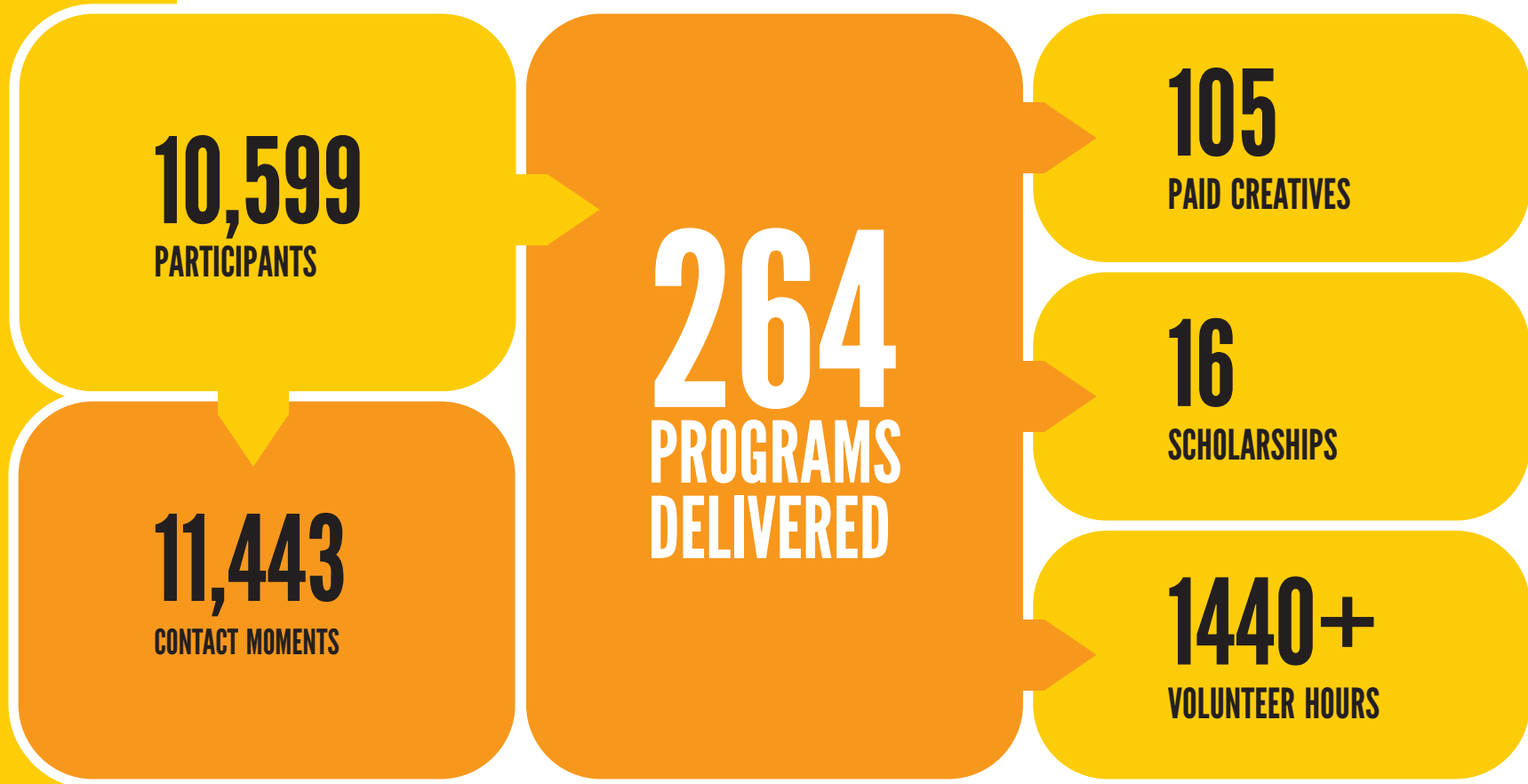
Gina Szpak
Board President

*Vicksburg Arts' mission
is to enrich the quality of
life by providing cultural
and artistic experiences
that inspire, engage, and
creatively connect our
community.*

Impact at a Glance

Vicksburg Arts Moving Forward

What we built, who we reached.



- Signature events and pop-up programming expanded community arts presence.
- Senior & Youth Arts Programs, such as writing, fiber arts, and painting demonstrate investment in skill-building.
- Published 2025-2028 Strategic Plan to guide growth, ensure access, capacity and sustainability.
- Vicksburg Village Hall Exhibition Program showcases regional artists year round.
- Established *For Teens by Teens*, Youth Advisory Committee: identify interests, shape programming while building volunteer pathways for teens.
- Small Art Exhibits & Gatherings keep art visible everyday while encouraging community and social exchange.
- Work with Kalamazoo Valley Community College students enrolled in the Design Crew course.

Our People Count

Vicksburg Arts strengthens the cultural life of southern Kalamazoo County. We have grown into a vital community resource that expands access to the arts, supports talent, and helps make creativity a visible part of everyday life. In a rural community, providing these experiences close to home matters—it creates opportunities for connection, learning, pride of place, and belonging that might otherwise be limited by distance, cost, or lack of access.

Vicksburg Arts Moving Forward

**OUTREACH & COMMUNITY
EVENTS**

8,208
PARTICIPANTS

BURG DAYS, FESTIVALS,
SCHOOLS, VILLAGE HALL
AND MORE

**TOURNAMENT OF
WRITERS**

233
WRITERS & AUDIENCE

CELEBRATION EVENT BROUGHT
YOUTH AND ADULT WRITERS
ALONG WITH AUDIENCE

**ART OF NATURE SUMMER
CAMP**

109
CAMPERS

13 SCHOLARSHIPS REMOVING
BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

SENIOR PROGRAMS

230
PARTICIPANTS

SENIOR ART CLASSES AND
SENIOR MUSIC PROGRAMS

ADULT PROGRAMS

670
PARTICIPANTS

EXHIBITIONS, EVENTS, SOCIAL
GATHERINGS, AND WORKSHOPS

Senior programs in collaboration with South County Senior Center

Strong financial stewardship and growing community support allowed Vicksburg Arts to expand programs, strengthen partnerships, and deepen its impact across the region. This year's accomplishments reflect both careful investment in our mission and the collective effort of volunteers, artists, donors, grantors, sponsors, and community partners who help make this work possible.

By
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Numbers

Funds Raised

\$174,589 Grants
through 2025 and 2026

\$10,983 Private Donors

\$50,000 Vicksburg Arts
Fund Kalamazoo Community
Foundation

\$50,100 Volunteer Value

**Vicksburg Arts - Fiscal Sponsor of
South County Fiber Arts**

DONORS 2025

Richard & Kay Anderson
David & Kristina Powers Aubry
Sydney Bastos
Lisa & Brad Beams
Courtney Bartnick
James & Patricia Bird
Jeffrey & Lorraine Caron
Larry Campbell & Bobbe Kelley
Susan Chapman
Kelly & John Christiansen
Anna Daly
Bobbe Luce & Bruce Dannenhauer
Brian & Maureen Dobbie
Terry Drafta
Wendy French
Jodie Gerard
William & Margaret Gray
Kathryn Grossman
Deborah Harsha
Kim Hardy
Kathryn Horton
Shannon Huneryager
Bob Ike
Katherin Jackson
Holly Jensen
Dan & Susan Kallewaard
John Kern
Bob & Jo Ramsdell
Mary Ann Kudary
Melissa Kohler
Jackie Koney
Kimberly Klein
Cynthia & Charles Krill
Ross Landers
Warren Lawrence
Nancy McKenzie

Margaret McGlilnshey
Karla Meeks
John & Phyllis Martens
Travis & Kara Morse
Doris Ravotas
Gail Reisterer
Braelen Richards
Aurelia & Vern Reed
David & Paula Schriemer
Marilyn Schutter
Leeanne Seaver – In honor of
Mary Ann Hayward
Gary Sherman
Deanna & Jamie Shefler
Paul & Mary Selden
Daniel & Vanessa Stahl
Carl & Ruth Stahly
Michael & Lisa Phillips
Lynn Pruitt-Timko
Patricia Quiroz
Nancy Wolf
Donald & Maureen Wiertella
Donald & Cheryl Ulsh

2025 Scholarship Fund in memory of Sharon Cummings:

Armstrong International
Brad & Lisa Beams
Syd Bastos
Terry & Maria Connel
Brent & Allison Cummings
Rex & Renae Cummings
Terri Cummings
Jerome & Deb Norland

FOUNDATIONS

Irving S. Gilmore Foundation
Kalamazoo Community
Foundation
Arts Council of Greater
Kalamazoo
Vicksburg Foundation
Suzanne U. D. Parish
Foundation
Dorothy U. Dalton Foundation
Michigan Arts and Culture
Council

SPONSORS

Jumping Dog Design
Kalamazoo Community
Foundation – Celebration
Sponsor
Meijer
Mullins Business
Prairie Ronde Artist Residency
and Gallery
Rotary Club of Vicksburg
South County Community
Services & South County
Senior Center
Steward Sutherland
The Mill at Vicksburg
Vicksburg Chamber of
Commerce
Village of Vicksburg
Zhang Financial – Gold
Sponsor

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Launch of Vicksburg Arts Fund
with Kalamazoo Community
Foundation

Our vision: Vicksburg Arts is a leading force in a vibrant community where everyone can experience the joy of the arts, creativity is nurtured, the arts are accessible to all, and artistic expression connects people in meaningful ways.

Our Goals

1. Inclusive programming reflects the diversity of the South Kalamazoo County region and promotes universal access to the arts
2. Sustainable funding supports organizational growth and long-term financial stability
3. A well-structured and committed workforce of staff, volunteers, and board members to strengthen internal capacity and ensure organizational resilience
4. A strong, consistent, and inclusive brand identity drives regional awareness, engagement, and support
5. Comprehensive operational policies and procedures providing a transparent, consistent, and accountable framework that supports the organization's mission

Our Board

Gina Szpak - President
Derek Menchinger - Treasurer
Susan Kallewaard - Secretary
Meghan Adams
Katelyn Huntington
Mike Phillips

Our Youth Advisory Committee

Susan Kallewaard - Chair
Daniel Dinea - Treasurer
Camille Carter - Secretary
Sophia Browe
Miah Gannon
Maddy Klenoski
Hannah Moyer

Moving Forward

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers whose
generosity and spirit make it all possible.

Contact Information



VICKSBURG
ARTS

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Executive Director

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VicksburgArts.org

Vicksburg Arts • Moving Forward