



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Enrich. Energize Engage.

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OUR TEAM

Megan Charland

Artistic Programming Director

Jerrod Olsen

Director of Operations

Kailey Maher

Community Engagement
& Development Manager

Mollie Ward

Clay Studio Manager

Elsa Koop-Angelicola

Gallery & Events Coordinator

Winosha Steele

Education Coordinator
& Arts Educator

Ally Baker

Communications Coordinator

Angelika Morris

Welcome Center Team Member

Sommerleigh D'Elia

Welcome Center Team Member

Jamie Durivage

Theatre Production Manager
& Sound Engineer

Mercedes Johnson

Theatre Front of House Manager

LIGHTING DESIGN

Margaret Swick
Amanda Rice

FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF

Rebecca Dominy
Olivia Winterbottom

TECHNICAL STAFF

Chris Rabideau
Chris Urban
Nick Agoney

SAFETY TEAM

David Dwyer
Hazel Dwyer
Scott Recor

CONCESSIONS TEAM

Carissa Parot
Nicole Bullock
Alyssa Kern

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Allison Maggy



Letter from the Co-Directors

Dear Community,

As Co-Directors, it has been an absolute pleasure and honor to embark on this creative journey alongside each and every one of you. This year, we set out with a mission to bring a diverse slate of programming that reflects the richness and vibrancy of our community. Looking back, we are proud to say that together, we have achieved that and more. Building on the foundations of existing relationships, we've also had the opportunity to forge new relationships that have strengthened the bonds within our community. The magic of this year lies in our collective commitment to sustainable growth. It's been inspiring to witness the collaborative spirit that defines our community, enabling us to reach for the stars in our creative endeavors. The arts have a unique power to unite us, and this year has been a shining example of how, when we come together, we can create something truly extraordinary. As we reflect on the past year, we want to express our deepest gratitude to each artist, volunteer, supporter, and member of our community who has played a role in making the Strand Center for the Arts what it is today! Looking ahead, we are excited about the possibilities that the future holds. We aim to build on the successes of this year and explore new avenues of creativity and expression throughout 2024 and the years to come.

We're in this together!

Megan Charland
Artistic Programming Director

Jerrod Olsen
Director of Operations

State of the Organization: A Letter from the Board of Trustees

Founded more than 20 years ago with a simple vision to celebrate, promote, and support the arts in the North Country, I am proud to say that we, the Strand Center for the Arts, remain focused on this wildly vast goal. Following recent years of deliberate observation, discussion, and critical thought on where we have been and who we need to be for the community, our goal has been to focus operations toward the highest and best use of our unique assets. We are pleased to report, the results are positive: Over 20,000 patrons visited our campus in 2023, enjoying first-class live performances, innovative art classes and workshops, and diverse family-friendly events at both our historic Theatre and Arts Center.

None of this programming or remarkable organizational growth would be possible without the hard work of my fellow board members, many passionate volunteers, and most of all our immensely dedicated Co-Directors and their team. They are the Strand's engine, turning thoughts and goals into actions and events. For this enormous effort, we thank them and congratulate their successes as of late.

In the last five years the Strand has weathered a myriad of storms, from the global COVID-19 pandemic to the unique headwinds of our region. Throughout these challenges, we have worked hard to keep a keen focus on our mission, moving towards a sustainable future. We have diligently secured Federal pandemic relief funding, numerous grants through the New York State Council on the Arts, national and local foundations, as well as the support of a growing number of local business and personal sponsors.





Nationwide, we see many arts organizations in a precarious position, greatly reducing their offerings or shuttering altogether. By contrast, the Strand remains nimble and responsive, taking on each new challenge head on and exceeding expectations at every turn. I can confidently say, since its inception, that the Strand you see before you today is the best version yet. If your memories of The Strand are blurry, less than exceptional, or we simply haven't seen you in a while, we cordially invite you to re-engage and experience the results firsthand.

The future of this regionally one-of-a-kind organization depends upon YOU – our community at large. By attending performances and artist salons, enrolling your children in after-school programs and summer camps, utilizing our unique studios, and becoming a member or sponsor, you ensure that the Strand Center for the Arts can continue to impact the lives of so many.

All of us here at the Strand are excitedly looking forward to the coming year of programming, performances, and celebrations. 2024 marks the Centennial Anniversary of our beloved Theatre at 25 Brinkerhoff Street and we can't wait to announce what fantastic events we have planned. Likewise, our Arts Center offerings continue to expand, with even more dynamic classes and workshops for all ages and abilities. There is truly something for everyone at The Strand.

From our team to you, we wish you a wonderful holiday season and new year. We look forward to seeing you in 2024.

On behalf of the Board,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom M".

Tom McNichols
President



OUR IMPACT

BY THE NUMBERS

- 15,000+** Theatre attendees
- 6,500+** Class attendees
- 336** Members
- 160+** Classes offered
- 50+** Free events
- 50** Scholarship recipients
- 30** Teaching Artists
- 24** Staff
- 20** Volunteers



Fire Reigns

Spring 2023 Strand Center for the Arts partnered with Smiling Dog Forge to bring a new series of classes to Plattsburgh: *Metalsmithing at the Strand: Handforged Knives*. This collaboration not only further expanded our educational offerings, but ignited our front lawn as a classroom space. Our inaugural season brought in 36 students from our community here in the North Country as well as Vermont and Massachusetts.

Throughout this weekend workshop students created their own handforged knives using anvils and forges we setup on our front lawn. Starting out with a 6" piece of high carbon steel they spent the first day forging it into a knife and learned about the heat treatment process. The second day students moved inside to our MakerSpace to complete the finishing process and put a handle on their handforged blade. These finished and handled knives are sharp and ready to use. Sam & Tom from Smiling Dog Forge recommend students stop at the grocery store on their way home and grab all the fixings for a salad to use their knife for the first time. These blades are perfect for chopping vegetables - and how gratifying to use a tool you just made yourself!

“

Given that this was our first year teaching at The Strand, we are incredibly happy with how well everything came together. The marketing work that the staff does is fantastic, and we really appreciated all of their help in promoting the classes so well. All of our students seemed very pleased with their finished knives. Here are some responses to the class that the students sent us:

"Thank you soooooo much! It was a wonderful experience. You both are amazing!"

-Steve Minchin

"Sam, you weren't kidding when you said this would work well on tomatoes. It dragged a little going through whole thick maters, due to the blade's thickness, but on anything thinner than an inch, omnomnomnom! In the voice of Inigo Montoya, "There will be salsa tonight!" I hope I'll be able to attend a class next year - I'm planning my next blade already :)"

-Charles R.

"Thanks for another amazing class! I really enjoy the process and working with you both. Definitely keep me posted about next year; extra especially if you end up offering a 200 level class!" -Peter Bruhn

"Thanks so much!! You guys were great teachers and made it so easy! Thanks again so so much!"

-Paul Miller

Megan, Jerrod, and Winosha have been great to work with and we look forward to the 2024 season at The Strand.

-Tom and Samantha, Smiling Dog Forge



Youth Programming

Since being founded in 2000 one of our organization's primary focuses has always been to provide children in the North Country with opportunities to experience the arts in all of its forms, including the visual and performing arts.

This past year we expanded FIRST® LEGO® League programming here at the Strand for ages 4-16! In teams, students focus on the fundamentals of engineering as they explore real-world problems, learn to design, and code, and create unique solutions made with LEGO bricks and powered by LEGO® Education WeDo 2.0.

Our Summer Camps included over 200 registrations for programs with topics including digital art, clay, 3D printing, painting, graphic design, theatre, and more!

This year we also expanded youth programming to include more 1-day classes and events like Creative Kids, a weekly drop-in style art class on Saturdays and Kids Art Night, a monthly night of art fun and games.



**Our 2023-2024 Season of
FIRST® LEGO® League is
generously underwritten
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For the second year in a row we hosted the 24-hour 3D printing challenge ADK Coast 3D Print Sprint. Students, in teams of 2-4, were presented with a challenge to complete in 24hrs while locked in the arts center. The ADK Coast 3D Print Sprint is co-produced by Strand Center for the Arts and Plattsburgh Robotics and is open to students in 8th grade through college.

The very first Adirondack Coast 3D Print Sprint event was held in spring 2016 at the Champlain Valley Transportation Museum. In 2022 the event moved to Strand Center for the Arts. Between our growing MakerSpace programming and our ongoing commitment to supporting youth in our community, hosting this event was an easy choice. As co-producers of the event our education team has assisted the event organizers in expanding the event to also celebrate the creativity of these students. We like to say we put the Art in STEAM programming.

“

Since moving to the Strand, the 3D Print Sprint has flourished. We are seeing more participants and excitement for the event. Being able to focus on the core of the event rather than where to host it each year has given us the opportunity to provide a more complete experience and focus on growth and reach. **-Justin Collins, Event Co-Organizer & Co-Owner of Bit Sized Builds**

“

I have had the pleasure of being on-site the past two years for this event and it truly is incredible to see the creativity and ingenuity of these students. I'm proud we're able to host such a unique event for our region here at the Strand and my biggest goal for 2024 is to be able to sponsor a Strand team of students to participate. **-Megan Charland, Artistic Programming Director**

We Danced, We Laughed, We Cried

A Record-Breaking Year of Programming in the Theatre

In 2023, the Strand Center for the Arts Theatre experienced remarkable growth, showcasing a diverse array of captivating performances that left audiences enthralled. The year unfolded as a testament to the center's commitment to enriching the cultural landscape, with a dynamic range of shows spanning comedy to community theater. The expansion of programming not only demonstrated the theatre's versatility but also solidified its status as a hub for artistic expression and community engagement. As the curtains rose on each production, the Strand Center for the Arts Theatre became a vibrant stage where creativity flourished, fostering a sense of connection and shared experiences among its patrons. As 2023 comes to a close we begin to reflect on a significant chapter in the theatre's history, showcasing its dedication to providing a platform for diverse voices and fostering a deep appreciation for the performing arts within the community since December of 1924.



“

Branching out and trying something new has been/was very scary for us. We aren't accustomed to such large productions, and everyone at the Strand made us feel so comfortable and that it was a true arts partnership. I loved our unified goal of putting on a quality show, getting as many people as possible in the seats, and that we all understood that this production was not only for us but for our community. I have loved every minute of our partnership. Here's to many more collaborations!!!

**-Derrick Hopkins, Founder,
Artistry Community Theatre**

“

The team at the Strand Center for the Arts are absolutely 100% THE BEST! We love working with them because they are extremely professional, thoughtful, go above and beyond and have become just like family to us. They are a world-class team. They squeeze every ounce of creativity they can get out of a beautiful historic facility. We love coming to Plattsburgh to visit our family at the Strand Center for the Arts.

-Illusionist Leon Etienne, Magic Rocks!





Adirondack Regional Theatre

The Strand Center for the Arts is thrilled to announce funding from the Charles R. Wood Foundation and Adirondack Regional Theatre for our Theatre Lighting Project. This generous support will facilitate crucial upgrades to our theater lighting capabilities, marking a significant milestone in our commitment to providing an enriched and cutting-edge artistic experience for our community.

The funding will be instrumental in the implementation of several key improvements, including the upgrade of our lighting console, the purchase of a short-throw projector, and the initiation of a transition to energy-efficient LED theatrical lights. These enhancements are poised to elevate the overall quality of our productions, creating a more immersive and visually stunning environment for our audiences.

The Charles R. Wood Foundation and Adirondack Regional Theatre's dedication to the arts and local community has been a driving force behind this project's success. Their support not only reflects a belief in the transformative power of the arts but also exemplifies a commitment to fostering a vibrant and technologically advanced cultural landscape.

Their investment in our vision for a modernized theater space will have a lasting impact on the cultural experiences we provide for our community. We look forward to unveiling the results of this project and continuing to create memorable moments for our community in 2024.



Adirondack Regional Theatre and its Board of Directors admire the work the Strand Center for the Arts does in the community and its diligent efforts to improve the world around us. You can be assured that your efforts are greatly appreciated not only by ART but by most members of this community. We look forward to seeing the continued progress you will make in the near future. **-Tom Lavin, Executive Director, Adirondack Regional Theatre**



Community in Clay

Updates from the Clay Studio

“

We had a year full of creativity and growth in the Clay Studio! Offering a wide variety of classes brought many new people into the studio. Many of those folks joined as studio members and our monthly membership more than doubled! In December 2022 we revived the Merry Mugs fundraiser, raising over \$2000 which allowed us to buy a new, good quality wheel. Another exciting upgrade is our large Skutt kiln, which will allow students and members to make bigger work and I can fire more pieces during our busy seasons! Overall it's been gratifying to see the studio grow and to watch our little clay community flourish! **-Mollie Ward, Clay Studio Manager**



“

Last spring, after my daughters thoroughly enjoyed “Try it on the wheel”, I decided to try my hand at ceramics. I started by taking the Wheel 101 class, and enjoyed Richelle’s teaching style so much that I booked another Wheel 101 class with her. After that class I decided to continue honing my skills and became a member of the clay studio. The Strand Clay Studio has fostered a tight-knit community that makes ceramic arts even more fun and engaging. We often share in the wins and occasional failures after a kiln unloading; sharing glaze recipes, tips and tricks. Furthermore, the depth of expertise we gain from Mollie’s presence in the studio, the Strand Clay Studio has been the perfect place for me to grow and foster a new hobby and artistic outlet.

-Dan Wagoner, Clay Studio, Artist Member





Kailey Maher Promoted to New Role

Kailey Maher joined the Strand Team in May 2022 as the Membership Engagement Coordinator. A 2022 graduate of the State University of New York College at Plattsburgh, Kailey earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a focus in ceramics and sculpture.

September 2023 Kailey was promoted to her new role of Community Engagement & Development Manager, where she is responsible for further building on her work strategically growing our membership and sponsorship programs focusing on donor acquisition, stewardship, and retention.

“

Kailey was my first hire when I was brought in as the new Artistic Programming Director in Spring 2022. I recognized in her the same passion for community and contemporary art that drives me to do the work I do. In her initial role as Membership Engagement Coordinator she not only grew our membership, but initiated programming to directly support our members including the Salons at the Strand series and Studio Socials. Kailey sees the potential - and impact to the community - here at Strand Center for the Arts and I'm proud to have her part of my team. **-Megan Charland, Artistic Programming Director**



“

Inspiring involvement in the arts is all-important to creating a flourishing and vibrant community. As a visual artist and mother, I am very passionate about creating opportunities that enrich and engage arts within the community. Art engagement is paramount to the sustainability of not only artists, like myself, it allows an outlet for arts resources and community collaboration that inspires creative thinking and positive change.

Without the guidance and support of those who showed me how, I would not be where I am today. Art is a gift that should always be passed on. With the support of our members and our community, the Strand Center for the Arts will ensure the gift and love of art is passed on for generations to come.

The beauty of art is all around us. It is in the hands of our neighbor, who in the moonlight paints with poignant conviction. It is in the eyes of a child who reminds us that yellow is not merely just yellow but encompasses shades of gold. It is within our own heart, the inherent need to lift our voices, move our bodies and shape a world we dream to believe in. **-Kailey Maher, Community Engagement & Development Manager**



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