

Creative Aging Network-NC



2015 Annual Report

Oct. 1, 2014 – Sept. 30, 2015

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*(1924 – 2014)

The Arts & Aging Movement

by Lia Miller, Executive Director

Each year in May, Older Americans Month, we host a conference to bring together artists and healthcare professionals. Our 2015 Creative Aging **Symposium** “*Aging in a Diverse World*” featured keynote speaker Garrett Davis, a 1987 graduate of Fayetteville State University. Davis got his start in the entertainment industry while working with Donnie Harper and the New Jersey Mass Choir as road manager. His first play “Lord Why Me” toured the country for 5 years. Now 19 years later, 5 national tours and 20 plus produced, written and directed productions, Davis has penned one of his most compelling stories yet, “Mama’s Girls,” a show about 5 sisters who live in 5 different cities trying to figure out how they are going to take care of their aging mother. He also penned the award winning stage play “Forget Me Not,” a major part of the Forget Me Not Project that was designed to raise the awareness of Alzheimer’s disease in the African American community. Other morning speakers included Suzanne Merrill, Director of NC Division of Aging and Adult Services and Brad Allen, Executive Director of North Carolina Senior Games. These were followed by 9 breakout sessions throughout the afternoon. Seventy five attendees from the arts and healthcare professions participated in the Symposium which focused on understanding cultural differences, acknowledging the racial and ethnic make-up of our communities, opening our hearts to people who might have different views, beliefs, or lifestyles than our own, and embracing all that is different in each of us (including ability levels) to promote life-long learning through a variety of artistic methods.

In May, I was honored to serve as **keynote speaker** at the Queen City’s 1st Creative Aging Collaborative. In addition to my presentation, “*What is Creative Aging and Why it Matters*,” the morning’s schedule included presentations from The Charlotte Symphony, Charlotte Folk Society and PACE of the Southern Piedmont. The event was sponsored by Southminster and the Arts & Science Council.



A Connector

CAN-NC connects artists with healthcare professionals and offers resources for best practices and evidence-based program models.



A Convener

CAN-NC brings together local and national experts and leaders to strengthen and expand the arts and aging movement.



A Catalyst

CAN-NC provides programs for older adults as well as consulting and training services for both arts and healthcare organizations to promote healthy aging through the arts.

Creative Aging Network-NC is a 501(c)3 charitable nonprofit whose mission is to enhance the well-being of older people in North Carolina through creative arts programming, education, and training.

Statewide Program Excellence

Each year brings new challenges and new opportunities. As we continue to address the ever-growing needs of our older adult population, we know it's just as important to raise awareness about the positive health benefits which result from engaging in the arts. Ultimately, creative aging is all about using the power of creative self-expression to promote a longer, healthier, and happier life. We aim to do just that by reaching out to older people of all ability levels across the state and providing art classes in the spaces they live and gather. In 2015, we provided 138 creative classes for more than 200 older adults in disciplines such as memoir writing, paper and book-making, acrylic and watercolor painting, TimeSlips storytelling, wood sculpture, mosaics, polymer and hand-built clay, terrarium necklaces and much more.

Creative Programs for Older Adults

- Reduce falls, medication & doctor visits
- Challenge the mind
- Increase social connections
- Reduce stress
- Build self-confidence
- Provide meaning & purpose
- Honor skills & voices

The North Carolina Arts Council helped support an artist residency entitled *Where I've Been & Where I'm Going: Stories by Older Adults in the South*. The project was launched with 15 older adults at the Durham Center for Senior Life in January 2015. With instructor Howard Craft participants engaged in both individual and group writing exercises using themes related to personal life experiences. They learned about writing perspectives, structure, techniques, editing and recitation. Following Craft's series, Jan-Ru Wan conducted a fiber arts residency using old clothes and other fabric items brought in by the older adults to create new fashions utilizing the stories and poems from their work with Craft. They learned many new skills including a variety of stitches, screen printing, and stenciling. Participants also learned what it meant to create a "re-use" community.



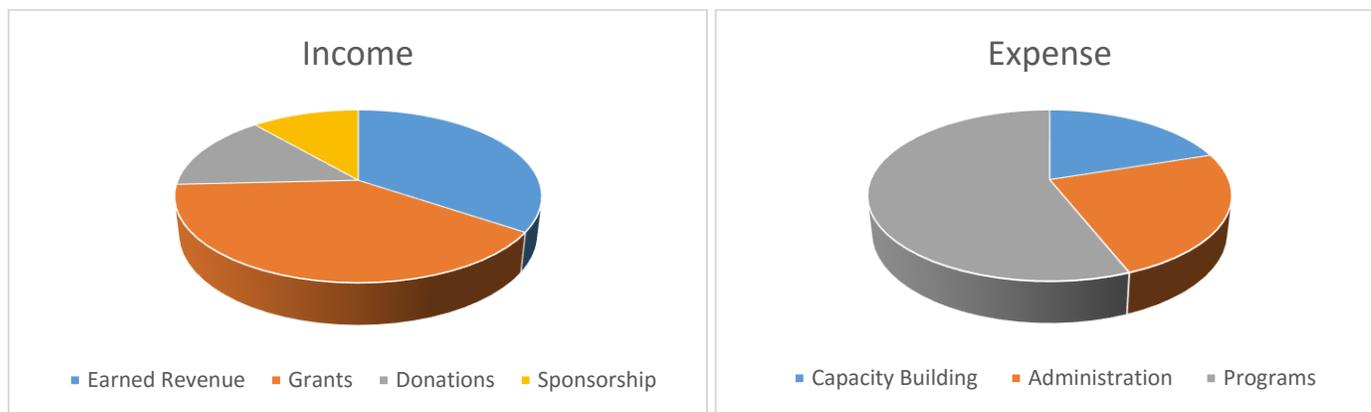
With support from ArtsGreensboro, CAN-NC Teaching Artist Betsy Renfrew conducted an artist residency to promote life-long learning and cultural understanding in Greensboro. Twenty female Montagnard and American elders participated in classes at Smith Senior Center and Caldcleugh Multicultural Center. They used a variety of natural plant materials such as okra, mulberry tree bast and bamboo combined with recycled paper to create new paper and book covers. Materials from nature were used to prompt discussion, memories and stories. Many talked of their time "on the farm" growing up, doing chores, and caring for siblings as well as for farm animals. We know that through this project, which was offered free to all those who participated, we increased access to the arts for low income and refugee elders. All said they enjoyed the project and felt more confident in their creative abilities.



The efforts of CAN-NC to advance mission-related programs would not be possible without our state-wide network of caring and concerned individuals, partners, funders, and organizations. We thank you for your support!

Financial Sustainability

In FY 2015, expenses were well-managed with more than 75% devoted to programmatic activities and capacity building. To advance progress we invested in strategic planning and board development.



Sustainability is a concern for any non-profit, especially one of our age and size. To ensure a diverse funding stream, we have focused on a variety of ways to generate revenue. Not only do we provide grant funded residencies to older adults where they live and gather, we also provide short term projects for the community such as the Art in the Park project supported Action Greensboro. We provide consultation to aging service providers throughout the state and participate in conferences by presenting interactive workshops for attendees in both the arts and healthcare fields.

Additionally, we schedule fundraising events such as an Art Auction at Ambleside Gallery, art exhibition and receptions for older artists and their families and Wine & Design type of events – teaching people of all ages to paint for a small fee. This structure has evolved out of our signature **Art Parties** which bring together community members to engage in art making and learn about the valuable role the arts play in the health and wellness of older North Carolinians.

We are honored and grateful that our participants and donors respect our stewardship, embrace our mission, and are a vital part of promoting the arts and aging movement in North Carolina.

