

# NAC NEWS

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## NORWALK ARTS CENTER

### BEHIND THE CURTAIN *of the Norwalk Arts Center*

**Who is NAC?** The Norwalk Arts Center (NAC) was founded in 2018 by two Norwalkian theater veterans Vanessa Cook and Theresa Barcus. With the support of their husbands and families, they formed Norwalk Arts Center, LLC as a registered 501c3 non-profit organization with the Ohio Secretary of State and IRS. The two continue to volunteer in growing the organization's programming and events. While the co-founders remain the visionaries of the project, the NAC Executive Board oversees all financial,

operational and renovation decisions and is fundamental in all areas of NAC operations. The board is made of local community leaders including; President Dina Lukasko, Vice President Peter Miragliotta, Sr, Treasurer Kathleen Sigsworth, and Secretary Jeffery Cook. Additionally, there are six committee chairs that serve the following areas: Marketing (Brooke Gfell), Fundraising (Dina Lukasko), Restoration (Kathleen Sigsworth & Vanessa Cook), Arts Education (Tiina Ruffing), Business Affairs (Lisa Bleile) and Grants (Theresa Barcus).



DINA, KATHLEEN, TIINA, THERESA, BROOKE, VANESSA & JEFF

**What is the purpose?** It is the mission of Norwalk Arts Center to celebrate and increase advocacy for the arts in the communities of Norwalk and greater Huron County. The co-founders saw a need for arts outreach and education in Norwalk and the surrounding area and now focus programming on the four facets of the arts; visual art, music, theatre and dance. Today, the Norwalk Arts Center is serving youth in the area through theatre productions, special events, and the *Arts Explorers* program. As a growing organization, NAC hopes to offer more arts education to teens and adults. NAC's future goal is to provide a dedicated location to serve the community for the special events and entertainment.

**Where is NAC located?** Currently, Norwalk Arts Center is offering programming at 22 E Main St (former antique mall/Woolworths). The space has been converted to include a small stage, audience seating, and work and rehearsal space. NAC hopes to return to in-house programming at that location after Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. Until then "take-out" projects are being offered. The future home of the Norwalk Arts Center is to be at 57 E Main, the former Norwalk Theater. This property was purchased by the Norwalk Arts Center in 2019. Since then, major work has been underway to restore the long-neglected vacant building. First and foremost was the replacement of the nearly 7, 000-square-foot flat roof. The roof had been patched and repaired over the last few decades but really needed a full replacement. The organization was able to raise nearly the total cost of \$272,000 for new decking and roof replacement. This money was raised through donations, fundraising events and programming.

We  Our Donors

**How is NAC funded?** As a grassroots organization, much of the financial growth to date has come from generous donors. Additionally, as a non-profit organization, NAC has applied for several grants and has been awarded several. The Ohio Arts Council granted monies twice for arts outreach programming, Norwalk City CAREs grant has helped to provide needed equipment for programming and facility upgrades, and the Huron County CAREs grant provided the necessary PPE to make sure the facilities at 22 E Main met the guidelines of CDC best practices for public facilities. With the help of Rep. Dick Stein and Sen. Nathan Manning, NAC will receive \$250,000 from the Ohio State capital improvements budget towards rehabilitation of 57 E Main. These funds have been earmarked for phase two of the restoration that includes Marquee restorations, electrical, and architects upgrades. With continued programming, fundraising, and generous donors, the future home of Norwalk Arts Center will become a reality.

## Arts Education Committee Focuses on Inclusion, Accessibility

Despite setbacks brought on by the pandemic, the NAC Arts Education committee has been a productive group since its inception in October of 2019. Formed with the goal of providing accessibility to all facets of the arts---visual art, music, dance, and theatre--to all ages and abilities, the committee geared its initial programming to the younger set.

The *Arts Explorers* program allows youth to sample each of the four arts facets by providing basic instruction for projects--or missions--that play into a theme. The first session, "Upcycle4Art," took place in December 2019 and featured projects that repurposed materials, genres, or techniques in new and creative ways. For instance, dance instruction fused hip-hop with classic ballet moves, while sculptures were created from wood scraps, wire hangers, and discarded pantyhose.

Since then, *Arts Explorers* have developed their creativity with themes like "Arts, Naturally," "Pattern Palooza," "Masked Mayhem," and "Wrapped in Warmth." When in-person sessions could not be held due to Covid restrictions, family mission kits were made available and participants were encouraged to share their creations with NAC via email. Families that shared were then eligible for a drawing for a family activities basket raffled at the end of the session.



UPCYCLE 4 ART, 2019



MASKED MAYHEM 2020

The Arts Education Committee also produced the first NAC youth theatre production of *Elf the Musical, Jr.* in December 2019. Two casts each performed two shows to delighted audiences at the newly-created black box theater at NAC's satellite building at 22 East Main Street. Talent assessments were held and cast members chosen for a spring production of "*Peter Pan, Jr.*," as well. That show is on hold until live performances can be held safely again.

*Discover Your NAC* is a new program being developed for adults to explore the arts. Sessions will be more in-depth, possibly taking place in 90-minute weekly sessions over the course of a month to better suit working adults' schedules. Instruction in jewelry making, ceramics, creative writing,

drumming, dance and other areas are being considered.

Finally, the Arts Education committee is also considering community outreach projects in collaboration with other area organizations as well as programming for differently-abled members of the community. Inclusion and diversity will be benchmarks as the committee looks to the future.

### SPOTLIGHT:

As chairperson of the Arts Education Committee, Tiina Ruffing combines her love of the arts with her background in education to develop arts programming for all ages and abilities. As a pianist, she makes up one third of Last Call Trio with fellow board members Dina Lukasko and Kathleen Sigsworth. She plays for several area churches, including St. Paul Church, where she co-directs the Contemporary Praise and Worship group. She also accompanies area high school choirs and plays in the pit for high school musicals and NAC productions.

After having completed both her undergraduate and graduate work in communications at Bowling Green State University, she gravitated towards positions that allowed her to use her communication skills to train and educate others, including mother of four boys, Director of Marketing Communications at Norwalk Furniture, character and jobs skills educator for HCJFS, Cub Scout den leader, substitute teacher, and currently Library/Media instructor at Norwalk Catholic School.



## Raising the Roof at the Norwalk Theater

Just 20 short months ago the Norwalk Theater was purchased by Norwalk Arts Center, LLC (NAC). The Board members of NAC knew what their first large project was going to be. Anyone who owns a home or business knows the importance of a good, solid foundation and a well-maintained roof. Fortunately, the foundation of the building at 57 E. Main Street is very solid. After decades of patching and short-term fixes, the theater finally has a new roof. The largest span of the roof now has 20-gauge steel decking. All roof sections now have a variation of Poly-ISO insulation. On top of the insulation is white .060 A-Peel Versico TPO over the entire roof decking, including encapsulating the parapet walls, new roof drains, domes, pitch pockets and scuppers. This is over 10,000 square feet of roofing that is brand new! "Damschroder Roofing and Tusing Builders & Roofing Services handled the roof project for us and did an outstanding job!" said Kathleen Sigsworth, Restoration Co-Chair.



Prior to Damschroder and Tusing installing the new roof, the ceiling of the theater was in such disrepair NAC contracted Erie Environmental to remove the plaster ceiling and metal grid from the ceiling. Tusing Builders followed through after Erie Environmental by removing all dilapidated roof decking (a lot) and the HVAC ductwork. Tusing worked simultaneously with Damschroder Roofing as they worked on the new roof. So much work has been done in a short amount of time! The total cost of the roof replacement with all the contractors totals \$272,000. The community, as well as local and surrounding businesses, have donated *all* of the funds up to this point! We have been overwhelmed by this generosity! We have only **\$53,000** to raise to pay this phase in full...with no grants, loans or notes payable! If you haven't donated yet and would like to help us finish our goal, please go to [norwalkartscenter.org](http://norwalkartscenter.org) and look for the "donate" button that will appear on the screen.

Our contract with Damschroder and Tusing includes the marquee roof as well. The marquee restoration is the next phase of our theater renovation. This will include stabilizing the interior structure of the marquee, removing and replacing the deteriorated sheet metal, converting the incandescent and neon lighting to LED lighting, and applying fresh paint after the marquee roof is replaced. This will be a fantastic view for everyone to see when we light up **THE LARGEST MARQUEE OF ITS KIND IN THE STATE OF OHIO!**

Now, let's have a little fun! Rooftops are very important, not only to keep a building dry and protected, but there are several classic rooftop scenes that are iconic in musical theatre and cinema that draw in the audience, allowing viewers to experience emotions from love and romance to suspense and action! If you can match all of these correctly and email the answers to [norwalkartscenter@gmail.com](mailto:norwalkartscenter@gmail.com), you will be entered into a drawing for \$25.00 worth of NAC merchandise from our NAC store at 22 E. Main Street, Norwalk. See how good you are!



Match the titles below to the scenes pictured above:

1. Mama Mia (2008), 2. The Shawshank Redemption (1994), 3. Vertigo (1958), 4. The Aristocats (1970) ,5. Ghostbusters (1984),
6. West Side Story (1961), 7. Almost Famous (2000), 8. On the Waterfront (1954), 9. Aladdin (2019), 10. Mary Poppins (1964)
11. Sleepless in Seattle (1993), 12. Skyfall (2012), 13. The Matrix (1999), 14. Now You See Me (2013), 15. Ratatouille (2007)



**SAVE THE DATE\***

**March 31:** Wrap up for "Raise the Roof"

**April 8 and 9:** Arts Explorers

**May 2:** Spring Artisan Event

**June 3:** Norwalk Theater 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party

\* Covid 19 restrictions may affect dates





**We'd love to hear from you!**

**NAC Contact Information:**  
**Email:**  
 NorwalkArtsCenter@gmail.com

**Website:**  
 NorwalkArtsCenter.org

**Call:**  
 567-743-9343 **NEW NUMBER!**

**Mail:**  
 Norwalk Arts Center  
 PO Box 656  
 Norwalk, Oh 44857


*In Memoriam*

**Peter Miragliotta, Jr. 1980-2021**

It is with great sadness that we announce the loss of an amazing team member to COVID-19. Pete Miragliotta, Jr. passed away on January 9, 2021. Pete was an amazing human and an instant friend to everyone he met. Pete's zest for life, dedication, interest and ideas have been vital in the growth of the Norwalk Arts Center.

He not only served as an advisory board member for NAC, but he was a valued volunteer as well. Additionally, he served on the board of Mira Family Charity, was a member of the National Heisey Glass Collectors Club and, was a Founding Member of Shalom and Tranquility Community Garden in Brooklyn Centre. He leaves behind beloved spouse, Julie, and his five fur babies. Pete's presence will be greatly missed. A scholarship fund in his name for NAC's children's theatre program is being established in his memory.

**Thank You for your Support!**

Special thanks to Rep. Dick Stein and Sen. Nathan Manning for their support and interest in the Norwalk Arts Center. Thank you for seeing our vision. Their efforts have secured \$250,000 of the State Capital Improvement budget towards the restoration of the Norwalk Theater. Pictured here with Co-Founder Theresa Barcus, Board President Dina Lukasko and Treasurer, Kathleen Sigsworth.



Norwalk Arts Center  
 PO Box 656  
 Norwalk, OH 44857



Return Service Requested

**Norwalk Arts Center**

**Executive Board of Directors**

President: *Dina Lukasko*  
 Vice President: *Pete Miragliotta, Sr*  
 Treasurer: *Kathleen Sigsworth*  
 Secretary: *Jeffery Cook*



Marketing Chair: *Brooke Gfell*  
 Fundraising Chair: *Dina Lukasko*  
 Arts/Education Chair: *Tiina Ruffing*  
 Business Affairs Chair: *Lisa Bleile*  
 Restoration: Chairs: *Vanessa Cook & Kathleen Sigsworth*  
 Grants Chair: *Theresa Barcus*

**NAC Co-founders:** Theresa Barcus & Vanessa Cook

**Advisory Board:** *Al Lesch, Mollie Wetherill, Laura Hengle, Julie Miragliotta, John Wasiniak, Jennifer Evans, Ron Dee, Daniel Ruffing, Justin Brown, Jeanette Roth*

**NAC Mission**

It is the mission of Norwalk Arts Center to celebrate and increase advocacy for the arts in the communities of Norwalk and greater Huron County.

**Creating Art. Building Community.**