

## NORWALK ARTS CENTER

### Coming Soon – A Restored and Improved Marquee!

Within the next year, the historic marquee of Norwalk Theater will once again light up Main Street. Work is scheduled to begin on restoration, as soon as weather permits.

"It's taken us more than two years, but we are finally set to actually start the marquee renovation and conversion to LED lights," said Dina Lukasko, Norwalk Arts Center president.

The Norwalk Theater marquee is the oldest of its kind in Ohio.

"We discovered in our preparation work that the damage was much more extensive than we realized," Lukasko said. "But we are determined to fix everything at our beloved theater properly rather than just put band-aids and a new coat of paint on it. The theater is truly a jewel and we want it to be a center for entertainment and the arts for generations to come," she said.

Contractors for the project met at the theater last week to discuss coordination and timing for the work. Wheeler Sheet Metal, of Norwalk; Brady Signs and Firelands Electric, of Sandusky; Gallagher Plumbing, of Huron; Damschroder Roofing, of Fremont; and Total Environmental Services, of Toledo; are the contractors for the project.

"Our meeting was very beneficial," she said. "We all have a better understanding of how important communication is going to be on this project." The contractors had the chance to discuss the timing for the various elements of the job, Kathleen Sigsworth, project manager and NAC Treasurer said.

The first step will be removing the existing neon, she said. This will prepare the marquee for lead testing which will determine if the paint will need to be removed or encapsulated. Then the contractors will coordinate the remaining work as needed.

The project is designed to replicate the historic charm of the marquee while updating it with more efficient technology. NAC's restoration team decided to keep using the historic metal lettering system rather than switching to a streaming electronic message system because that would completely change the look of the marquee. The new LED lights, however, will lower energy costs significantly for the marquee.

"This meeting was a tangible reminder of our motto of 'creating art, building community'. The various local tradespeople that will be involved in this project are amazing," said Vanessa Cook, NAC co-founder. "It's really about the community rebuilding and investing in this iconic Main Street anchor.

"It is important for even small communities to offer arts and cultural events to elevate the quality of life of its citizens, to attract young families and sustain its population," said Cook.

State Representative Richard Stein and State Senator Nathan Manning helped NAC secure the \$250,000 grant, which was originally intended to replace the theater's roof. With various delays at the state level, including COVID-19, NAC managed to pay for the roof with local donations so the grant can be used for the marquee.

"We've replaced the roof and the marquee is just the next step," Lukasko said. "Then we have the huge task of complete renovation for the theater's interior. That is a massive project, but our architects have drawn up fantastic plans and we will be moving forward on that in the near future." said Cook.



# NORWALK ARTS CENTER

## Arts Education Builds Community through Creativity

As a fundamental component of the Norwalk Art Center mission, the Arts Education Committee has been providing programming since the organization's earliest days. From instructional theatre productions to fun and inspiring events that allow people of all ages and abilities to "sample" the arts in bite-sized pieces, NAC arts education has been as diverse as the populations it serves. And now, there is even more programming than ever!

One very obvious obstacle (the pandemic) presented itself early on, but committee members developed creative ways to provide families with educational activities that would allow them to learn together about the four facets of the arts—visual arts, music, dance, and theatre—in a fun way around an engaging theme. For instance, "Arts, Naturally!" kits included a "mission" for each of the arts facets that challenged families to explore the outdoors and replicate the art they observed in nature. Participants were encouraged to share each mission they completed via email and were rewarded for their efforts.

Additionally, Norwalk Arts Center joined forces with Artists' Open Studio in June of 2021 to present the Artist's Evolution speaker series at 7 pm every third Wednesday of the month at AOS, 32 East Main Street. Featuring area artists of all kinds, the series focuses on the journey artists follow and the obstacles they encounter along the way, including addiction, mental illness and disabilities. Area organizations serving those who struggle with such obstacles have been encouraged to invite clientele to these inspiring presentations so everyone can learn about the healing power of the arts.

Recently, in an effort to reach out specifically to early adolescents, NAC arts educators took a fun arts activity to Sheri's Coffee House, where this population can often be found on Fridays after school. Manager Shayanna Bleile allowed the use of a side meeting room, where students could create beautiful mandala designs on spray-painted CDs using a variety of scratching tools.

Students in grades 1 through 4, continue to participate in the quarterly Arts Explorers Program. Entry level artists have the opportunity to explore the four facets of the arts in a one-day session. Fun themes are created for each session and activities build upon each other throughout the day. The next session is March 12, 2022, registration is required.

Arts Education Committee Chairperson Tiina Ruffing welcomes suggestions for future programming and community collaboration contact her at [NACArtsExplorers@gmail.com](mailto:NACArtsExplorers@gmail.com).



A.I.M. Program: Art Pop-Up at  
Sheri's Coffee House

1st through 4th graders  
are invited to party with  
Norwalk Arts Center

MARCH 12, 2022  
10 am-2 pm  
22 East Main Street  
Norwalk

"ROCK N' ROLE"  
WITH  
ARTS EXPLORERS

\$10.00 per student  
\$25.00 family cap  
Students bring own lunch

NOW REGISTERING AT  
WWW.NORWALKARTSCENTER.ORG

CREATING ART. BUILDING COMMUNITY.

ARTIST'S  
EVOLUTION  
SPEAKER SERIES

Third Wednesday of each month at 7:00

## **NACtors 2022 season to kick off with tribute to Broadway legend Stephen Sondheim**

The Norwalk Arts Center invites you to celebrate the late Broadway icon Stephen Sondheim with their production of Side by Side by Sondheim on Friday, March 18 and Saturday, March 19 beginning at 7:00pm at the FOE 711 Norwalk Eagles, Club, 151 Cline Street, Norwalk, Ohio. Tickets are \$20 each and include hors d'ouvres. A cash bar will be available.

Join the adult community theatre group the NACtors and Get ready to laugh, cry and fall in love with lyrics that are heartbreakingly true and music that captures soaring emotions with Side by Side by Sondheim. Simple and unpretentious, this Tony Award-winning musical is a perfect introduction to the work of a contemporary master and a must for die-hard fans.

Side by Side by Sondheim is directed by Izzy Ballard and Rylie Mullen, who will also star in the production. The cast features David Barcus Jr., Theresa Barcus, Jeff Cook, Vanessa Cook, Ric Hills, Jen Libertowski, Tom Stoll, Pennigan Ott, Heidi Sarvis-Sapp, and Anthony Robustellini.



## **Comedy Night Packs the House**

NAC hosted its first comedy night at Milestone event Center on February 12th. The fundraiser saw a full house, as nearly 200 guests enjoyed a night of laughs. The evening showcased three College (BGSU, Heidelberg and Tiffin University) improv troupes and Nick Dlouhy prior to the headliner Steve Szabo. "The event was well attended and allowed people to enjoy a night out for a great cause, Norwalk Arts Center" said Vanessa Cook, Co-founder.

Many NAC volunteers and the local Jaycees made the event a success. Raffle prizes, carnival games and 50/50 drawings rounded out the event. Concessions were sold and cash bar was open for guests.

"I think the crowd really had a fun evening. Steve drew much laughter from those in attendance commenting on life's everyday struggles and challenges. Hosting a standup comedian is something you don't typically find in our area for entertainment. You would normally have to travel to Toledo or Cleveland for a night like this. NAC is proud to offer many forms of entertainment. It was a great way to raise money to rebuild our theater and provide a fun evening out for our community." Said Kathleen Sigsworth, NAC treasurer. Szabo's brand of comedy was just what guests need to beat the winter blues.

## **Support Continues Through Annual Appeal**

Once again NAC has been humbled by the ongoing financial support we have from the community. The 2021-22 Annual appeal kicked off November 15, 2021 and concluded January 31, 2022.

Thanks to our generous donors we raised funds to put toward the renovation of the historic Norwalk Theater, our future home.

# **\$73,805**

*We  Our Donors*

**Congratulations to MARK WALTON, winner of the Marios International Spa getaway for two. Thanks to all who bought tickets for this raffle!**

## **Save the Dates:**

**Roll It Forward Rummage Sale:** Feb. 26- 27 Avery, OH  
**Arts Explorers** (Gr 1-4) March 12, May 14, Oct 1, Dec 10, each session is 10-2pm

**A.I.M. Program** (Gr 5-8) March 18, April 8, May 13 Art Pop-Up at Sheri's Coffee House 3:00 pm

**A.R.T. Club Meetings** (Gr 9-12) Saturdays: Apr 9. May, June from 10 am-1 pm

**Discover Your NAC** (Adults) Photography Classes with Sherri Nutter begin April 2022

**Theater Summer Camp** (Gr 2-6) June 13-17, (Gr 7-12) June 20-24

**Monthly BINGO (18 +):** Second Thurs., 5-9 pm @ Milestone Event Center (11 S Prospect)

**Artist's Evolution Speaker Series:** Third Weds. 7pm Artists' Open Studio (32 E Main)

**NAC Teen Theatre:** Open Auditions (3/28-29) 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee open to student entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> 2022/23 school year

**Ladies Teacup Auction:** April 24

**NACtors:** Open Auditions (5/27-28) Last Dance of Dr. Disco Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre open to actors 18+

**Matilda Jr** (Gr 2-8) Weekly classes begin Aug 29 for 11 weeks, performances Nov 18-20

## ***Our generous benefactors:***



### **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

**Our restoration committee is looking for interior pictures of the Norwalk Theater from days gone by from any decade! If you have any pictures, please share them with us!**

Email: [NorwalkArtsCenter@gmail.com](mailto:NorwalkArtsCenter@gmail.com)

**Or drop them in the mail. Photos mailed will be returned by request only.**

**Norwalk Arts Center**  
PO Box 656  
Norwalk, OH 44857

**[NorwalkArtsCenter@gmail.com](mailto:NorwalkArtsCenter@gmail.com)**



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It is the mission of Norwalk Arts Center to celebrate and increase advocacy for the arts in North Central Ohio by providing education, experiences and environments for artistic growth.

**Creating Art. Building Community.**