2021 was full of excitement, new ideas, and energy for the Community Arts Extension Program. Our staff discovered innovative approaches to arts engagement and created more new programs than ever before. I hope you enjoy this year-in-review as we look forward to all we will accomplish in 2022.

Over the next year, we will launch new collaborations with the College of Fine Arts, Kentucky State University, USDA Rural Development, and Arts Extension programs across the country to engage citizens both in Kentucky and on a national level.

Kentucky Arts Extension is the most complex modern Arts Extension program in the nation. The commitment and passion from our staff, stakeholders, and volunteers allows us to serve you by doing what we love: community & economic development, community design & creative placemaking, and quality arts engagement and experiences for Kentucky communities.

Melissa G. Bond
MELISSA G. BOND
COMMUNITY ARTS EXTENSION PROGRAM LEADER
MISSION
The Kentucky Community Arts Extension Program improves the quality of life for communities and individuals in Kentucky through a multidisciplinary arts approach in education, research, and outreach.

GOAL
To provide community and economic development, quality arts engagement, and essential skill enhancement while creating a resilient arts ecosystem through the Cooperative Extension infrastructure and framework of Kentucky State University and University of Kentucky.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
Professionals in the Community Arts Program engage Kentucky residents through a multi-level approach, including at the county, regional, and state level. The Kentucky Community Arts Extension team, comprised of agents, program assistants, associates, specialists, and faculty provide arts leadership and curriculum development to communities and residents in the commonwealth to impact 3 core areas, referred to as the Community Arts Strategic Initiatives:

- Advancing the Creative Economy
- Artistic & Essential Skill Development
- Quality Arts Engagement & Experiences

MEASURES OF SUCCESS
We track qualitative and quantitative data through 60 collection measures. These include tracking the economic value, new partnerships created, number of individuals reporting increased knowledge, opinions, skills, and/or aspirations in several arts disciplines, and measuring leadership development and enhancement in community arts programs. This reporting structure provides robust data to measure the individual and collective impact of Kentucky Community Arts Extension personnel.
**FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

**Helping Rural Communities**
First Impressions is a featured program that focuses on advancing the creative economy by providing "secret shopper" style feedback to Kentucky communities. Since 2016, First Impressions has been conducted in 35 rural communities across Kentucky. After synthesizing all county assessment data, 3 key themes have emerged as opportunities for rural towns. First, communities should audit their web presence to repair broken links, increase online reviews for local businesses, and update tourism information to convey all the community has to offer. Next, communities can improve navigational signage and wayfinding to help draw visitors away from interstates, parkways, and by-passes and into downtown merchant areas. Communities can also organize downtown volunteer cleanups to wash buildings, pick up litter, and implement beautification efforts to make downtowns more welcoming to locals and visitors alike.

**Spotlight on the First Impressions program**
- 5 new county assessments completed
- 14 new community plans created
- 25 new partnerships formed
- Benton, Ky established new arts district
- Hickman County secured $45,000 for blighted building cleanup

**Outcomes of additional Advancing the Creative Economy Efforts**
- $12,496 dollars earned by artists participating in Extension programs
- 558 residents reported increased appreciation for local artists
- 111 sought assistance in arts business or financial development
Spark! Creativity with Extension Programming

The SPARK! Extension Creative Placemaking Toolkit was developed to expand creative placemaking through Extension programming from Arts Extension and Community Design programs and practices in Kentucky that can be applied nationally. This toolkit was developed to provide simple, practical ways to navigate creative placemaking efforts through the Cooperative Extension System. The activities were created from experiences and data from Kentucky to provide Extension educators with a working knowledge of arts and placemaking activities, evaluation indicators, scalable projects, and considerations for local policies such as infrastructure, health, and commerce.

This toolkit is a community-empowering arts and design-focused planning process to engage communities, capture dialogue, and express creativity. SPARK! presents eight activities focused on engaging an audience in an arts activity for community development and five activities that focus on engaging an audience in visioning and planning efforts. The activities can be delivered individually or combined.

Outcomes of Community Design & Creative Placemaking Efforts

- 32 artists engaged with 4 public art installations completed
- 6 inactive spaces transformed to active spaces
- 1,885 contacts with local stakeholders
- 585 volunteers with 15 assuming new leadership
- 390 reporting increased community pride through participation in Extension arts & design programming

SPARK! AN EXTENSION PLACEMAKING TOOLKIT
SKILL DEVELOPMENT BY THE NUMBERS

- 10 full-time Arts Extension staff
- 6,866 contacts with local stakeholders
- 195 volunteers engaged with 2,371 hours volunteered
- 87 skilled arts programs conducted by volunteers
- 3,738 individuals reporting increased knowledge, opinions, skills, and/or aspirations in the visual arts

% of programs by arts discipline:
- Visual: 86.3%
- Music: 5.1%
- Dance: 2.9%
- Literary: 5%
- Theatre: 0.6%
Meeting Needs in an Innovative Way

Kentucky Arts Extension created 3,500 take-home packets that included art supplies, art history lessons, step-by-step instructions, and contact information to allow residents to continue to develop artistic and essential skills at home during COVID-19.

By incorporating art games and skill development techniques in the packets, our staff discovered new, engaging ways to teach outside of the traditional Extension model. When asked about the experience, one participant said, “While doing the art packets with my daughter, we have been able to have ‘us time.’ We have become more open to different skill levels with the furnished art supplies. We would have never been able to learn the different art styles if it weren’t for the packets. We love the step by step directions...Any level person can create a masterpiece.”

This valuable feedback proves that Kentucky residents are never too old or young to meet their mental and emotional needs by receiving access to quality arts and artistic skill development through the Arts Extension program at University of Kentucky.

Outcomes of Quality Arts Engagement & Experiences Efforts

- 17,681 contacts with local stakeholders
- 400 volunteers engaged with 30 new teaching artists brought to Kentucky communities
- 265 artists showcasing their work through an Extension-led event
- 466 reporting a new artistic experience
- 511 involved in community art projects
You Help Our Programs Succeed

Our Volunteers are Valuable
Volunteers of the Community Arts Extension Program help to meet the needs of our Kentucky communities in vital ways. These volunteers serve in formal leadership such as teaching workshops, representing on county and state councils, recruiting new artists and assisting in selecting programs and engagement opportunities to bring to Kentucky counties. Volunteers also serve in informal leadership roles such as helping to set up for events, organizing and cleaning art supplies, assisting with transportation or tours for program participants, and assisting in public art murals, performances, or installations.

If you would like to learn more about the program or become a Community Arts Extension Volunteer, please contact us at https://cedik.ca.uky.edu/extension.

Outcomes of Volunteer Engagement in the Arts Efforts
- 20 cross sector partnerships formed on arts initiatives
- 31 arts extension volunteers served on community boards, agencies, or planning commissions
- 28 reported increased confidence in ability to deliver arts programming
- 318 reported increased ability to effectively engage with artists, art professionals, or arts entities
- 19 reported increased confidence in artistic community leadership
- 18 new relationships formed between arts & non-arts organizations
Expressive Arts Workshop Supports Kentuckians in Recovery

Community Arts Extension developed Mind.Art.Recovery.KY (MARK), a series of lessons using expressive arts to support individuals and communities recovering from Substance Use Disorder (SUD). One agent trained in program delivery reported, “I watched participants gain confidence […] they learned how art can be a great outlet and coping mechanism while gaining creativity and self-esteem.” Another stated “I witnessed emotional growth in phenomenal ways.” One program participant shared that she was excited to show her family her journal because it is a way to explain and help others understand what she was feeling during her recovery journey.

Participants reported they will continue using art methods learned as a coping mechanism, as well as help reconnect with children and families. One stated, “I am going to express myself through writing music.” Several participants shared they couldn’t wait to repeat the lessons at home with their children after they return from rehabilitation.

Key Partners
Community & Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky
Family & Consumer Sciences Extension
4-H Youth Development Extension
Recovery Centers of Kentucky

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MIND.ART.RECOVERY.KY