



# SIMI VALLEY CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

## **SIMI VALLEY ARTS COMMISSION**

Wednesday, November 20, 2024, 3:30 p.m.

City Manager's Conference Room

City Hall, 2929 Tapo Canyon Road, CA 93063

### AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Welcome/Roll Call
2. Agenda Review
3. Approval of Minutes: September 18, 2024, and October 22, 2024
4. Public Statements  
This is the time allotted for statements or comments on matters within the subject matter and jurisdiction of the Arts Commission.  
  
Public comment is the opportunity for members of the public to participate in meetings by addressing the Arts Commission in connection with one or more agenda or non-agenda items.
5. Continued Business - None
6. New Business
  - a. Receipt of the Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Fiscal Year 2023-24 Operating Budget
  - b. Appointment of an Alternate Committee Member to Serve on the Ad Hoc Grant Review Committee for the Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Performing Arts Recovery Grant Program
  - c. Update on the Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Strategic Plan Progress
  - d. Update on the Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Young Artists Playground Arts Education Program

7. Reports

- a. Update on Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Foundation Activities
- b. General Manager's Report

8. Commissioner Comments

This is the time allotted for statements or comments from Arts Commissioners on matters within the subject matter and jurisdiction of the Arts Commission.

9. Adjournment

/s/

\_\_\_\_\_  
Anna M. Medina

Deputy Community Services Director

If any interested individual has a disability that may require accommodation to participate in this meeting, please contact the Assistant Community Services Manager, Sandee McGee, at (805) 583-7901. Upon advance notification of the need for accommodation, reasonable arrangements will be made to provide accessibility to the meeting.

## DRAFT MINUTES

### 1. Call to Order/Welcome/Roll Call

Council Member Litster called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m., welcomed Arts Commissioners, and verified that a quorum was present.

Present: Mayor Pro Tem Rocky Rhodes, Council Member Elaine Litster; Commissioners Lauren Hammersley, Janet Plant, Becky Savell, Burton Weinstein, Stephanie Wilson, and Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Foundation Representative Gina Truncale.

Staff Members: Deputy Community Services Director Anna Medina, Community Services Manager Fred Helsel, and Community Services Assistant Manager Sandee McGee.

### 2. Agenda Review

No changes were recommended.

### 3. Approval of Minutes: May 7, 2024

A motion to approve the May 7, 2024, minutes was made by Mayor Pro Tem Rhodes, with a second from Commissioner Savell. The motion passed unanimously.

### 4. Public Statements – None

### 5. Informational Presentation

#### a. City of Moorpark Arts Master Plan Development – Chris Ball, Senior Management Analyst, City of Moorpark

Chris Ball, Senior Management Analyst for the City of Moorpark, delivered an informative presentation on the development of Moorpark's Arts Master Plan. He provided an overview of the Moorpark Art in Public Places Program, explaining its background and evolution. Mr. Ball highlighted key motivations for creating an Arts Master Plan, including enhancing community engagement, and fostering cultural growth. He outlined the Request for Proposal process, detailing the Scope of Work, consultant selection criteria, and a projected timeline for project milestones.

During the presentation, Mr. Ball shared preliminary findings and recommendations drawn from community feedback and consultations. He

also spotlighted recent accomplishments and previewed upcoming activities aimed at enriching Moorpark's cultural landscape.

6. Continued Business - None

7. New Business

a. Update on the Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Performing Arts Recovery Grant Program

Community Services Manager Fred Helsel reported the Cultural Arts Center's (CAC) Performing Arts Recovery Grant Program has provided significant support to non-profit and arts organizations since being approved by City Council in March of 2022. From 2022 through 2024, a total of \$102,977.16 in subsidies has been awarded, assisting these groups to regain stability in the post-pandemic era. The breakdown is as follows:

- 2022: \$36,732.18 in subsidy was disbursed to non-profit and other arts organizations
- 2023: \$41,496.76 in subsidy was disbursed to non-profit and other arts organizations
- 2024 To Date: \$26,000.00 awarded, with \$24,748.22 disbursed so far.

The Performing Arts Recovery Grant Program provides financial support in the form of facility rental rate subsidies to local non-profits and arts and educational organizations by partially offsetting rental fees associated with presenting at the CAC, supporting a resurgence in community arts and engagement. Janet Plant has moved from alternate status to full member status on the Ad Hoc Grant Review Committee as of September 18, 2024, replacing John Dantona. The Arts Commission requested that staff agendaize the appointment of a new Alternate to serve on the Ad Hoc Grant Review Committee to be discussed at the next Arts Commission meeting on November 20, 2024.

b. Review and Consideration of the Draft Arts and Culture Master Plan Statement of Work

Deputy Community Services Director Anna Medina reported that at the May 7, 2024, meeting, the Arts Commission discussed the idea of developing the "Scope of Work" outlining the consultant's responsibilities before seeking funding approval during the budget process. The Commission agreed and recommended that staff prepare the "Scope of Work" with input

from an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Commissioners Plant, Weinstein, Wilson, and Foundation Representative Truncala.

The Ad Hoc Committee convened with staff on August 1, 2024, to review the Draft Arts and Culture Master Plan Statement of Work. During this meeting, the committee suggested revisions and endorsed presenting the draft plan at the upcoming Arts Commission meeting. The Arts and Culture Master Plan aims to establish a vision and roadmap for Simi Valley's cultural growth over the next decade, focusing on public art, community-driven arts and cultural events, and supporting artist communities.

Due to time constraints from the Moorpark presentation, the Commission was unable to conduct a thorough review of the Scope of Work. Commissioner Weinstein recommended scheduling a special meeting to ensure a detailed review of the Scope of Work.

A motion to table the Review and Consideration of the Draft Arts and Culture Master Plan Statement of Work and call a Special Meeting was made by Commissioner Weinstein, with a second from Arts Commissioner Plant. The motion passed unanimously.

## 8. Reports

### a. Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Programming Report

Community Services Manager Fred Helsel shared that in keeping with the CAC's strategic plan, he programmed several events in the CAC DownStage Cabaret Theater with the goal to:

1. Make more people aware of our DownStage Theater.
2. Provide additional opportunities for programming that do not necessarily fit the Main Stage.
3. Expand our Thursday evening programming opportunities.
4. Create and/or promote original works.

The Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center (CAC) has had a successful season so far. *The Broadway and Beyond Cabaret: Hits & Misses* was a hit in the DownStage Theater, drawing solid audiences over a five-week run. Additionally, the CAC co-produced an original show, *The Fat Girls Guide to Life, Sex, and Everything In Between*, featuring Ariella Salinas Fiore, which explored her personal experiences as a plus sized, bisexual woman in the film/tv industry and society and her struggle with weight loss surgery and diabetes. The two-performance run sold 92 tickets, including 22 orders from first-time patrons.

Upcoming events include a community line dance, *Boot Scootin' Boogie*, on October 12, and a four-performance Holiday Cabaret planned for December 2024.

b. Update on Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Foundation Activities

Foundation Representative Gina Truncala provided an update on the Foundation's activities, highlighting several key initiatives and upcoming events. The Hispanic Heritage Festival is set to take place on Saturday, September 28, 2024, in partnership with the CAC. This festival promises to be a vibrant celebration of Hispanic culture, bringing together the community for a day of festivities. The Foundation has been proactive in seeking financial support through sponsorships, applying for, and receiving several grants, including from the Community Projects Grant through the City of Simi Valley, the Ventura County Arts and Culture Investment Fund, and US Bank Community Funds. These sponsorships and grants will help further the Foundation's mission and support its various programs. In addition, the Foundation in association with the CAC and the YMCA of Simi Valley is presenting a special community event on September 26, 2024, dedicated to the history and tradition of creating and decorating Day of the Dead sugar skulls taught by local artist and CSUN professor Diana Cabral. Additionally, the Foundation is presenting a Colors of India Event on November 15, 2024, at the CAC, offering another opportunity for the community to come together and experience diverse cultural expressions.

c. General Manager's Report

The CAC is in talks to host a segment for Extreme Home Makeover in October, spotlighting a local music conservatory couple. While recruitment for an open staff position continues, the CAC is also working with Dream Warrior Group on a new website and planning theater upgrades, including seating replacements and electrical renovations.

For 2025, the CAC season will feature the musicals like *Ragtime*, *The Wedding Singer*, *Shrek*, *Hairspray*, and *Elf*. Rights to *Mamma Mia!* were declined due to a national tour, but the CAC will try again for 2026. Tribute concerts, comedy nights, and two or more DownStage Cabaret events are also anticipated next season.

9. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Hammersley is excited to be part of the Simi Valley Arts Commission and to be at her first meeting.

Commissioner Weinstein congratulated Philip McBride on his role in the *Broadway and Beyond Cabaret series: Hits & Misses*.

Commissioner Plant commended Anna Medina on her work on the Statement of Work for the Arts and Culture Master Plan.

Mayor Pro Tem Rhodes acknowledged Anna Medina and praised her work on the Statement of Work for the Arts and Culture Master Plan.

Council Member Litster thanked Anna Medina for her excellent work on the Statement of Work for the Arts and Culture Master Plan.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:35 p.m.

## DRAFT MINUTES

### 1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call

Council Member Litster called the meeting to order at approximately 3:39 p.m., welcomed Arts Commissioners, and verified that a quorum was present.

Present: Mayor Pro Tem Rocky Rhodes, Council Member Elaine Litster; Commissioners Lauren Hammersley, Janet Plant, Becky Savell, Burton Weinstein, Stephanie Wilson, and Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Foundation Representative Gina Truncale.

Staff Members: Deputy Community Services Director Anna Medina and Community Services Manager Fred Helsel.

### 2. Agenda Review

No changes were recommended.

### 3. Approval of Minutes: None

### 4. Public Statements

Chase Williams stated he wanted to observe an Arts Commission meeting.

### 5. Continued Business

#### a. Review and Consideration of the Draft Arts and Culture Master Plan Statement of Work

Council Member Litster briefly discussed the potential for confusion in the current draft document in terms of the use of the word “culture”. After a brief discussion amongst the Arts Commission, it was determined that the use of the word “culture” in the proposed plan was both appropriate and inclusive of the performing, visual, and literary arts as well as broad enough to encompass any and all cultural events.

Deputy Community Services Director Anna Medina reviewed the history of how the Draft Arts and Culture Master Plan had been created and reviewed the purpose of the proposed plan. Ms. Medina then led the Arts Commission through the document step by step for discussion on any changes that they wished to make. Vigorous discussion led to a series of proposed changes that were voted on and unanimously approved.



A motion to approve the Draft Arts and Culture Master Plan with the recommended modifications was made by Mayor Pro Tem Rhodes, with a second from Commissioner Weinstein. The motion passed unanimously.

6. New Business - None

7. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Wilson stated the potential need for additional funding partners for the Arts and Culture Master Plan and suggested we reach out to the Chamber's Tourism board as a fiscal partner.

Commissioner Weinstein expressed his thanks to Anna Medina for the remarkable job in putting together this plan and being able to make sense of the Arts Commission's input.

Foundation Representative Truncala stated that this was a wonderful process to be a part of and encouraged Arts Commission members to support the SVCAC Foundation's upcoming The Colors of India cultural event at the CAC.

Commissioner Plant commended Anna Medina for doing a phenomenal job on such a challenging project.

Commissioner Hammersley stated she was excited to be included in the process.

Commissioner Savell stated that she was honored to be part of such an enthusiastic and knowledgeable group on this project and commended Anna Medina on her excellent work.

Mayor Pro Tem Rhodes stated he is looking forward to bringing the revised Arts and Culture Master Plan to Council for approval and funding with a potential recommendation to seek additional fiscal support from the Chamber of Commerce's Tourism committee. In addition, he congratulated the Arts Commission and staff for their outstanding job on wordsmithing this document and for providing exactly what the City Council needs to move this project forward.

Council Member Litster provided a brief update on the Amphitheater project.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:32 p.m.

# CITY OF SIMI VALLEY • MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** November 20, 2024

**TO:** Simi Valley Arts Commission

**FROM:** Anna M. Medina, Deputy Community Services Director

**SUBJECT:** RECEIPT OF THE SIMI VALLEY CULTURAL ARTS CENTER FISCAL YEAR 2023-24 OPERATING BUDGET

Attached for the Arts Commission's (Commission) review is the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center (CAC) Operating Budget Report.

## **Status of FY 2023-24 Operating Budget**

For FY 2023-24, the Cultural Arts Center had a Gross Income of \$656,410 with Total Expenses of \$600,481 for a total Net Income of \$55,929.

An analysis of the Center's annual income shows vigorous Box Office Income of \$489,919 due in large part to *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Addams Family*, *It's A Wonderful Life: On Air*, and *Annie*, and sold-out houses for several of the Tribute Concert Series.

The Cultural Arts Center had \$517,084 in Expenses (production related expenditures) and \$83,397 in Fixed Expenses for a total of \$600,481.

In the Expense category, Artists Fees and Contract Labor exceeded their budgeted estimates by nearly double. This reflects the unplanned necessity of hiring outside designers and contract labor to cover the duties of an unplanned vacancy in the Technical Coordinator position. In addition, there was an increase in stipends to directors, designers, and performers due to inflation and high gas prices. It also reflects an increase in YAP contract labor due to expanding the YAP Monday After School Program. The marked increase in Provider Payments directly reflects the increase in Box Office Income.

In the Fixed Operational Expenses Categories, Capital Replacement costs were \$31,507 and included the purchase of a digital replacement projector for the Mainstage as well as unplanned replacements of refrigerators for the CAC and the renovation of the DownStage Cabaret Theater. The Dues, Licenses and Permits budget line was under budget expectations by \$14,809 due to prepayment of *The Prom* royalties in FY 2022-23 and no royalties being charged on the CAC original productions of the DownStage Cabarets and *It's A Wonderful Life: On Air*. Lastly, Office Expenses exceeded anticipated budget projections at \$5,125 due to the need to purchase office furniture and supplies for the new Technical Coordinator as well as the costly purchase of Covid Tests for weekly testing for all CAC productions during rehearsals and performances for cast and crew.

The Contingency/Performance Fund Account balance remains at \$38,802 on June 30, 2024. The Contingency/Performance Fund Account is a separate restricted account accessed only for 1) financial emergencies, and expenditures beyond the financial capability of the operational reserves or 2) funds utilized to expand programming through co-sponsorship, seed funding, or more expensive higher risk ventures previously inaccessible to the CAC. Pursuant to Simi Valley Arts Commission policy adopted on March 5, 2003, the Commission will be informed of any expenditure from the Contingency fund and will review the account during the annual budget closeout to determine if it should be augmented in order to maintain a healthy emergency cash reserve. Expenditures from the Performance Fund are to be approved by the Commission in advance.

The following alternatives are available to the Commission:

1. Receive the Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Fiscal Year 2023-24 Operating Budget Report;
2. Provide staff alternative direction.

Staff recommends Alternatives 1.

#### Recommended Motion

I move to receive the Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Fiscal Year 2023-24 Operating Budget Report.

Attachment

**SIMI VALLEY CULTURAL ARTS CENTER  
FY 2023-24 OPERATING BUDGET REPORT**

ORDINARY THEATER INCOME/EXPENSE	ANNUAL BUDGET	ACTUAL	DIFFERENCE
<b>INCOME</b>			
4000 Box Office	\$383,500	\$489,919	106,419
4050 Camps and Classes Tuition	\$12,000	\$41,996	29,996
4200 Contributions/Fundraising	\$50,650	\$45,002	(5,648)
4400 Grants	\$53,500	\$8,606	(44,894)
4500 Rental	\$34,250	\$30,497	(3,753)
4600 Concessions	\$11,800	\$12,544	744
4700 Advertising Income	\$3,000	\$0	(3,000)
4800 Reimbursed Technical Costs	\$43,200	\$27,821	(15,379)
4900 Interest Income	\$300	\$25	(275)
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$592,200</b>	<b>\$656,410</b>	<b>\$64,210</b>
<b>EXPENSE COSTS</b>			
5000 Special Events (DownStage Cabaret, Galas, etc.)	\$5,000	\$6,329	(\$1,329)
5100 Artist Fees	\$50,000	\$102,719	(\$52,719)
5300 Concession Supplies	\$4,200	\$4,707	(\$507)
5400 Supplies	\$35,900	\$33,542	\$2,358
5500 Provider Payments (Total Box Rec)	\$200,000	\$230,046	(\$30,046)
5600 Advertising/Marketing	\$17,400	\$10,789	\$6,611
5700 Contract Labor	\$60,000	\$103,573	(\$43,573)
5800 Performing Arts Recovery Payout	\$75,000	\$25,379	\$49,621
<b>SUBTOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$447,500</b>	<b>\$517,084</b>	<b>(\$69,584)</b>
<b>TOTAL GROSS PROFIT</b>	<b>\$144,700</b>	<b>\$139,326</b>	<b>(\$5,374)</b>
<b>FIXED EXPENSES</b>			
6100 Capital Replacement	\$42,000	\$31,507	\$10,493
6300 Credit Card Service Fees	\$27,700	\$29,574	(\$1,874)
6400 Dues/Licenses/Permits	\$32,000	\$17,191	\$14,809
6600 Office Expenses	\$3,000	\$5,125	(\$2,125)
<b>TOTAL FIXED EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$104,700</b>	<b>\$83,397</b>	<b>\$21,303</b>
<b>NET PROFIT</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$55,929</b>	<b>\$15,929</b>
	<b>Balance July 1, 2022</b>	<b>Credits/(Debits)</b>	<b>Balance June 30, 2023</b>
<b>CONTINGENCY / PERFORMANCE FUND</b>	\$38,802	\$0	\$38,802

NOTES

BN1

BN2

BN3

BN4

BN5

BN6

BN7

BN6

BN8

BN9

BN10

## **Budget Reference Notes Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24**

BN1 - The extreme popularity of *Beauty and The Beast*, *The Addams Family*, *Annie*, and *It's A Wonderful Life* as well as several sold out tribute concerts boosted box office sales.

BN2 - Camps and Classes Tuition tracks income from Young Artists Playground (YAP) Camps, Monday After School programs, and Workshop events. Summer camp was very successful this year, and the CAC tripled the number of Monday After School sessions, thus increasing the tuition income potential.

BN3 - When the grant budget was created, several grant opportunities were anticipated that did not come to fruition. In addition, the California Arts Council readjusted the granting period for the Creative Development Grant, making the CAC ineligible to reapply during the FY 2023-24 as had anticipated.

BN4 - Did not offer paid advertising opportunities this fiscal year.

BN5 -Due to not having a Technical Coordinator for the first half of FY 2023-24, the CAC did not charge several of our rentals for reimbursed technical staffing as we relied on their technical staff to cover the run of the productions.

BN6 - Artists Fees and Contract Labor increases reflect the unplanned necessity of hiring outside designers and contractors to cover the duties of a vacant Technical Coordinator position for half of FY 2023-24 as well as an increase in stipends to directors, designers and performers due to inflation and high gas prices. It also reflects an increase in YAP contract labor due to expanding the YAP Monday After School Program.

BN7 - Increase in Provider Payments are directly linked to Box Office Income for rental events such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Addams Family* and *Annie*.

BN8 - The CAC had fewer community arts organizations apply for the Performing Arts Recovery Grant than anticipated in FY 2023-24. Some of the decrease was due to our facility no longer being large enough for their recital needs.

BN9 - The rights to *The Prom* were paid in the third Quarter of FY 2022-23 but the majority of box office income from *The Prom* was in Quarter 1 of FY 2023-24. In addition, there were no royalties paid for the *Broadway & Beyond Cabarets* or *It's A Wonderful Life* as they are original productions.

BN10 - Reflects purchase of office equipment (furniture and supplies) for new Technical Coordinator. This category also includes the costly purchase of Covid tests for weekly testing for all CAC productions during rehearsals and performances for cast and crew.

## CITY OF SIMI VALLEY • MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** November 20, 2024

**TO:** Simi Valley Arts Commission

**FROM:** Anna M. Medina, Deputy Community Services Director

**SUBJECT:** APPOINTMENT OF AN ALTERNATE COMMITTEE MEMBER TO SERVE ON THE AD HOC GRANT REVIEW COMMITTEE FOR THE SIMI VALLEY CULTURAL ARTS CENTER PERFORMING ARTS RECOVERY GRANT PROGRAM

At the November 17, 2021, Arts Commission meeting, the Arts Commissioners approved the Performing Arts Recovery Grant Program and recommended it for approval by the City Council. The City Council approved the Grant Program at its March 21, 2022 meeting. The grant program was established to provide financial support in the form of facility rental rate subsidies to local non-profits and arts and educational organizations by partially offsetting rental fees during 2022 and extending into 2024.

The Arts Commission also appointed an ad hoc grant review committee with the authority to approve grant applications. The Committee reviews incoming grant applications and rates them according to the grant guidelines. Those receiving a score of 75 or higher are approved for funding.

The Ad Hoc Grant Review Committee was comprised of Commissioners John Dantona, Stephanie Wilson, and Becky Savell with Commissioner Janet Plant serving as an alternate. Commissioner Dantona's term on the Arts Commission concluded, and as a result, Commissioner Plant transitioned to the vacated position. Therefore, it is recommended that one Arts Commissioner be appointed to fill the vacancy of Alternate Ad Hoc Committee Member.

The following alternatives are available to the Commission:

1. Nominate and approve one Alternate Committee Member to serve on the Performing Arts Recovery Grant Ad Hoc Committee.
2. Provide staff alternative direction.

Staff recommends Alternative 1.

Recommended Motion:

I move to appoint (Arts Commissioner Name) to serve as the alternate on the Performing Arts Recovery Grant Ad Hoc Committee.

Prepared by: Fred Helsel, Community Services Manager/CAC

# CITY OF SIMI VALLEY • MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** November 20, 2024

**TO:** Simi Valley Arts Commission

**FROM:** Anna M. Medina, Deputy Community Services Director

**SUBJECT:** UPDATE ON THE SIMI VALLEY CULTURAL ARTS CENTER STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS

At the July 26, 2021, City Council meeting, the City Council approved the Strategic Plan for the Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center (CAC) which had been presented previously to the Arts Commission. As part of the evaluation and reporting structure of the Strategic Plan, an update on the Strategic Plan accomplishments is an annual agenda item at Arts Commission meetings to monitor progress of the plan.

At the March 26, 2024 Arts Commission meeting, the Arts Commission voted to transition the Strategic Plan Updates and the Young Artist Playground Report to occur on an annual basis with the items scheduled for the November meeting. This modification of the agenda allows the Arts Commission to focus discussions and to accomplish the five (5) top priorities of the newly adopted bylaws.

The six strategic priorities identified in the plan are:

1. Quality of Life
2. Sustainability
3. Programming
4. Marketing, Outreach, and Community Partnerships
5. Facility and Experience
6. Arts Leadership and Advocacy

Between December 2023 and November 2024, progress has been made in the following areas:

## **Quality of Life:**

- Goal 1: Attract new artists, arts organizations, and audiences to ensure facility use and attendance figures better match Simi Valley demographics by 2025.

*Progress:* Between December and November, the CAC successfully engaged multiple new artists, organizations, and audience demographics, marking significant progress toward this goal. A local non-profit, The Organic Mind, presented a wellness education conference on the Mainstage centering on the Hindu traditions of mindfulness, yoga, music, and Ayurveda. The event attracted a large audience new to the CAC and promoted holistic wellness practices within the community. Music Rx Org., another non-profit dedicated to enhancing the lives of chronically ill and clinically depressed individuals through live musical

experiences, presented a Keith Borden Concert at the CAC. Their mission to provide free tickets to concerts, musical theater, and symphonies created a night of healing and inspiration for recipients, bringing even more fresh faces to the CAC. The CAC's production of *In The Heights* featuring a predominantly Latino cast and artistic team demonstrated the center's dedication to empowering diverse voices. The CAC showcased a powerful one-woman show, *The Fat Girl's Guide to Life, Sex, and Everything In Between*, written, directed, and performed by Queer Latina artist Ariella Fiore. This three-day DownStage performance attracted an entirely new audience to the CAC and included a unique talkback session, encouraging meaningful dialogue and audience engagement following each show. On June 1, 2024, CAC hosted CraftFest featuring 63 small business arts and crafts vendors, including nonprofits such as Kindling Studios, Adam's Forge, and the Simi Valley Art Association. The event also included community line dancing, drawing approximately 500 people for a day of art, culture, and celebration. On September 28, 2024, the CAC collaborated with the Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Foundation (Foundation) to produce and host the Hispanic Heritage Festival, which brought in an array of new performers, including Danza Azteca Xoshipilli, Mariachi Zapopan, Danzas Peruanas, and Teatro Aztlan – CSUN. The festival welcomed approximately 1000 visitors and showcased 58 small Latino-owned businesses and nonprofits featuring art, crafts, and food, all of whom were first-time CAC vendors. These events and more introduced fresh perspectives, new audiences, and a wide range of voices to the CAC, embodying its mission to be a vibrant, inclusive cultural center for the community.

- Goal 2: Include the arts in more aspects of life in Simi Valley, reaching beyond the walls of the CAC, seeing an increase of opportunities for all Simi Valley residents.

Progress: The CAC has made considerable strides in expanding its reach and integrating the arts into the broader community through partnerships, public events, and collaborations. The CAC collaborated with the Ventura County Arts Council to host *Poetry Out Loud*, a national recitation program supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, with sponsorship from the California Arts Council. This event provided young participants a public platform to share their voices and connect with the art of poetry. Additionally, the CAC hosted the inauguration of 2024 Ventura Youth Poet Laureate Anya Shah, highlighting the role of young female leaders in local arts. Expanding beyond its own venue, the CAC collaborated once again with Moorpark Community College's Photography Department to feature student work at the Simi Valley Public Library. The CAC coordinated an artist panel discussion and opening reception, fostering a broader dialogue between student artists and the community while offering a public space for local talent to be celebrated. The CAC actively participated in several major community events to further engage Simi Valley residents in the arts. These included the Fall Simi Valley Street Fair at the Simi Valley Town Center, the Volunteer Fair at the Boys and Girls Club of Simi Valley, and the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District's Snowfest. Through these events, the CAC reached residents who might not typically visit the center, bringing the arts directly into the heart of the community. These initiatives have allowed the CAC to extend its impact beyond its own venue, offering more accessible arts experiences to a wider range of residents and creating a stronger connection between the arts and everyday life in Simi Valley.



## Sustainability:

- Goal 1: Safely reopen the CAC to full operational capacity, restoring revenue and facility use figures to at least 2019-20 projections by June 30, 2023.

*Progress:* The CAC has made encouraging progress in re-establishing its operational capacity and attendance levels. From January to November, audience turnout for *Annie*, *In The Heights*, and other musical performances remained robust. This steady increase in attendance suggests a strong audience engagement and a promising recovery toward pre-pandemic attendance and revenue figures. Staff is optimistic that this positive trend will carry forward into the 2025 season, reinforcing CAC's community presence.

- Goal 2: Ensure transparent, accountable, and sustainable operation of the CAC while achieving a cost recovery rate of at least 10% to the General Fund.

*Progress:* The CAC has implemented several strategic measures to enhance financial efficiency, transparency, and accessibility. The CAC transitioned from Stripe to Heartland Payment Systems, reducing credit card processing fees and upgrading to a more integrated point-of-sale system for both online and in-person transactions. This change not only lowers operating costs but also streamlines purchasing of tickets and concessions for patrons. The CAC selected Dream Warrior Group as the design team to lead a rebranding initiative and develop a new website. The redesigned site will prioritize visitor experience, ADA compliance for accessibility, and tailored aesthetics and functionality that reflect the CAC's unique identity and community mission. The required 10% reimbursement to the City's General Fund has been waived by the City Council through Fiscal Year 2027-28. This waiver provides the CAC with the flexibility to focus on strengthening existing revenue streams and achieving long-term cost recovery goals. These initiatives reflect the CAC's commitment to operational efficiency and financial sustainability.

- Goal 3: Develop collaborative fundraising initiatives with the Foundation to increase the size of the endowment on an annual basis.

*Progress:* The CAC and City staff have worked proactively with the Foundation to establish a range of fundraising events aimed at both growing the endowment and increasing community awareness of both the Foundation and of the CAC. Collaborative efforts have included the Spotlight Gala Awards, the Hispanic Heritage Festival, and the Colors of India fundraising event. Each event attracted new supporters and generated revenue, contributing to the Foundation's support and presence while engaging diverse segments of the community. The CAC has extended an open invitation for the Foundation's involvement in annual events, including CraftFest and the Winter Art Market, to create additional fundraising opportunities. These ongoing events provide consistent revenue channels that support both CAC programming and the endowment's long-term goals. These partnerships have strengthened the CAC's financial foundation, creating sustainable support for future programming and ensuring ongoing community engagement through a variety of cultural and fundraising events.

## Programming:

- Goal 1: Ensure the CAC provides overarching program choices and arts experiences that represent the tastes of all Simi Valley residents, increasing new audience attendance by at least 10% every year.

*Progress:* As part of its mission to diversify programming, the CAC presented a DownStage Cabaret production of *Broadway and Beyond: Ms. Cast*, featuring an all-female or non-binary cast, and introduced dynamic shows like *In The Heights* and *The Fat Girl's Guide to Life, Sex, and Everything In Between*, a diversified tribute concert series featuring tributes to The Coasters and The Drifters, a Ray Charles Tribute, a Selena Tribute, and the Hispanic Heritage Festival. The CAC also expanded community accessibility to the arts by offering more free events, including Poetry Out Loud, CraftFest, Hispanic Heritage Festival, and the Environments Exhibit Event, which featured visual art, live music, spoken word performances, and a gallery reception. The Tesoro Art Exhibit further highlighted cultural diversity by celebrating the works of nine Chicano and Indigenous artists as part of the Hispanic Heritage Festival. This exhibition, along with the Festival's programming, aligns with the CAC's vision for inclusive representation and fosters community pride. By focusing on inclusivity and accessibility, the CAC has not only diversified its programming but also successfully drawn larger and more varied audiences, putting the organization on a promising path to achieve the 10% yearly audience growth target.

- Goal 2: Increase Tuesday – Thursday facility use levels through the development of low risk, high engagement arts experiences.

*Progress:* The CAC is enhancing its programming by scheduling more events on weekday evenings, including art exhibit openings, artist talks, poetry events, Foundation fundraising initiatives, weeknight concerts, and the Broadway and Beyond Series. In addition to these offerings, the CAC continues to provide rental opportunities for individual community members, fostering a space for community engagement with initiatives like the State of the City and Neighborhood Councils. As a cherished community hub, the CAC remains open six days a week, welcoming all to experience the arts and connect with one another.

- Goal 3: Establish the CAC as the foremost arts education resource in Simi Valley, increasing the amount of arts education and emerging artist programs.

*Progress:* The CAC is dedicated to strengthening its Youth Arts Education programs through the Young Artists Playground (YAP) curriculum and is working to expand its Youth Arts Education initiatives into local schools and become a preferred vendor for various Homeschooler organizations. The CAC is broadening its offerings for youth with the continuation of YAP's Monday After-School Program. Additionally, CAC Youth Arts Education Coordinator Stephanie Lesh-Farrell and Arts Education Coach Peggy Burt are developing the *YAP in the Classroom* Theater Arts Education pilot program, specifically designed for second-grade students, and aligning with K-5 theater curriculum standards. Additionally, the CAC's YAP program is collaborating with local arts non-profit Adam's Forge to host a family workshop aimed at providing families with shared arts engagement

opportunities and enriching the community's artistic experience.

### **Marketing, Outreach, and Community Partnerships:**

- Goal 1: Develop and execute a marketing and outreach strategy to ensure that 100% of Simi Valley residents have participated in a CAC activity by 2025.

*Progress:* The CAC continues to actively engage with the Simi Valley community through various outreach efforts, including participation in the Fall Simi Valley Street Fair at the Simi Valley Town Center and the Volunteer Fair at the Boys and Girls Club of Simi Valley. The CAC's YAP program also took part in the Rancho Simi Recreation and Parks District's Snowfest Event, further enhancing its presence in the community. To increase visibility, the CAC is focusing on collaborating and strengthening community partnerships through innovative and inclusive programming as well as expanding our social media presence. With over 6,400 Facebook followers, 11,400 Instagram followers, and 26,500 TikTok followers, the CAC continues to provide a strong presence on social media. Additionally, the CAC increased marketing with paid advertising and articles in the Simi Valley Acorn promoting upcoming events at the CAC and inviting more residents to experience the arts.

- Goal 2: Increase formal (small and large-scale) relationships with Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, Simi Valley Unified School District, the Ventura County Arts Council, and local arts organizations.

*Progress:* The CAC collaborated with the Ventura County Arts Council and the California Arts Council to host the Poetry Out Loud competition and Youth Poet Laureate Ceremony. Over the past year, the CAC has collaborated closely on multiple events with Moorpark Community College, the Simi Valley Public Library, Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, the Foundation, Art Trek of Newbury Park, Adam's Forge, and various local arts education businesses. These partnerships have been instrumental in bringing creative programs to the community and enhancing the visibility of the arts. Additionally, the open application period for renting the CAC during Season 2025 has attracted interest from several new potential renters from local arts organizations across Ventura and Los Angeles Counties, signaling a growing engagement with the arts in our region.

### **Facility and Experience:**

- Goal 1: Create a Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center Experience, compatible with Simi Valley's small town feel, where audience members report a 100% satisfaction rate.

*Progress:* The CAC staff is committed to continuing to provide a friendly, welcoming environment for patrons through a well-supported volunteer Ambassador program, keeping the facility in excellent condition, and providing outstanding customer service. The CAC is constantly recruiting new volunteers to become Ambassadors through our community outreach events and through encouraging our current Ambassadors to introduce friends to the CAC. Several times this year, the CAC has provided our Ambassadors with a complimentary

guest ticket to an event as a way to introduce friends to the Center. The dedicated community members of our volunteer Ambassadors are often the first faces visitors see, offering warm smiles and a helpful presence that bring a special small-town charm to each event. The dedication of our volunteers to ensuring patron satisfaction is evident, with every performance and gathering drawing heartfelt verbal and written compliments. This positive feedback is a testament to the CAC's commitment to going above and beyond in making every visitor feel cared for and valued. In addition, our post-event surveys continually praise how clean and orderly the CAC is how friendly the staff in the box office and front of house is.

- Goal 2: Ensure the facility stays in prime condition to maximize public use and accomplish the mission of the CAC.

*Progress:* The CAC staff, along with City Maintenance, work diligently each day to ensure a clean and inviting environment for every event. With events often scheduled back-to-back in a single day, the staff must remain organized and effectively coordinate with City Maintenance and Public Works to promptly report any necessary maintenance issues and/or repairs. Their commitment to maintaining the facility's appearance and functionality is essential to providing a positive experience for all visitors.

### **Arts Leadership and Advocacy:**

- Goal 1: Reinforce the arts as a vital, integral, and necessary component of life in Simi Valley by strengthening local artists, arts organizations, and cultural groups through increased consideration and presence of the arts in policy decisions and legislation.

*Progress:* The CAC has established new and ongoing partnerships with the County of Ventura and the Ventura County Arts Council. On April 27, 2024, CAC staff participated in the inaugural ReFrame Ventura County Arts Summit, a groundbreaking event that highlights arts and culture as key drivers of creative and economic growth in our region. During the summit, CAC staff engaged in relationship building and contributed to a regional conversation focused on arts advocacy, specifically in developing a cohesive language for policy and legislation. A Ventura County arts coalition is forming, and the CAC is committed to continued participation with the County of Ventura and fellow Ventura County arts organizations. The CAC aspires to serve as a venue or meeting space for this coalition, enhancing its leadership role within the community of arts organizations and is working with the Ventura County Arts Council and the County of Ventura's Arts and Culture Manager to host grant writing and strategic planning workshops for the county's arts and non-profit community. The CAC staff has also recently served as grants panelists as part of Special Oversight Committee reviews for the Ventura County Arts and Culture Investment Fund. In addition, the CAC management team participated in a three-day national arts management virtual conference presented by the American Association of Community Theaters where they engaged with other arts professionals throughout the United States about arts advocacy and current issues facing non-profit and small arts organizations.

## CITY OF SIMI VALLEY • MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** November 20, 2024

**TO:** Simi Valley Arts Commission

**FROM:** Fred Helsel, Community Services Manager CAC

**SUBJECT:** UPDATE ON THE SIMI VALLEY CULTURAL ARTS CENTER YOUNG ARTISTS PLAYGROUND ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The 2021 Strategic Plan for the Cultural Arts Center (CAC) identified several goals to help foster the mission and vision for the CAC. One of the Programming Goals outlined was to “Establish the CAC as the foremost arts education resource in Simi Valley, increasing the amount of arts education programming as well as programs to support emerging artists.” In an effort to complement the current arts educational programming available in the community, the CAC was tasked with developing a youth education program that would provide unique arts education opportunities that were missing from the current programs being offered. The CAC contracted with 20-year veteran youth arts education camp specialists Stephanie Lesh Farrell and Eric Stuart and together with CAC General Manager, developed and launched the Young Artists Playground (YAP) Arts Education Program at the CAC.

The CAC Young Artists Playground Arts Education Program features interactive arts workshops and camps for youth ages 6 - 14 years old. YAP is dedicated to enriching the lives of local youth through quality arts education and performance-based programs. YAP builds visual and performing arts skills through programs that foster social and emotional learning, confidence, compassion, and resilience in students of all abilities and offers opportunities for youth to develop and share their creative voices.

In its inaugural year in 2022, YAP launched with a six-week summer camp program and a series of fall workshops. These workshops featured guest artists leading Saturday classes in specialized arts experiences across theater, dance, and visual arts. While participation was modest, with six summer campers and a total of eleven workshop attendees, the program laid an important foundation for youth arts education in Simi Valley.

Recognizing the need to gradually build a following for YAP, the CAC pursued additional funding to supplement tuition and manage program costs. This effort was rewarded with a two-year, \$36,000 Creative Youth Development Grant from the California Arts Council, securing essential support for YAP’s growth.

In 2023, YAP expanded its programming with a one-week Winter Break Camp, a six-week Summer Theater Camp, spring and fall Saturday workshops, and a newly

developed Monday After School program. This expanded lineup drove a significant increase in enrollment, with Summer Theater Camp attendance growing by 450% to 33 participants. The year also saw 18 participants in the Saturday Workshops and Winter Camp, alongside 18 students in the Monday After School program. Additionally, YAP offered 10 partial scholarships and discounted registration for siblings and early bird sign-ups, supporting accessible arts education.

In 2024, YAP's Summer Theater Camp retained robust enrollment with 30 participants, a slight decrease of 13% from the previous year. Due to lower demand, the one-week Winter Break Camp was discontinued. This shift allowed the Monday After School Program to expand its offerings across winter, spring, and fall, establishing consistent programming and enabling YAP to focus on its core mission. Concurrently, YAP initiated curriculum development for the YAP in the Classroom Theater Arts Education pilot program which aligns with K-5 theater standards and is designed specifically for second-grade students.

In its 2024 programs to date, the Monday After School Program has maintained an average of 16 enrolled participants, while Summer Theater Camp engaged 30 students. This year's scholarships, totaling \$6,185, were funded through the California Arts Council's Creative Youth Development Grant, the Parker Foundation Grant, and the CAC's Share the Arts program. These initiatives reflect CAC's commitment to accessibility, breaking down financial barriers and fostering inclusivity within the community.

From inception of the Young Artists Playground program in 2022 through October 31, 2024, Gross Income for YAP programs are \$142,997 which includes tuition, grants, box office sales from YAP productions and Share the Arts scholarship reimbursements. Costs for the same period for YAP programs is \$112,884 thereby showing a Net Profit of \$30,113. A breakdown of Income and Expenses is included in the attached YAP Profit and Loss Report.

Staff is available to answer any questions the Arts Commission may have regarding the YAP program.

**SIMI VALLEY CULTURAL ARTS CENTER**  
**Young Artists Playground Arts Education Program**  
**January 1, 2022 - October 31, 2024**

ORDINARY THEATER INCOME/EXPENSE	ACTUAL
<b>INCOME</b>	
4000 Box Office Income	\$2,276
4050 Camps and Classes Tuition*	\$48,371
4200 Contributions/Fundraising	\$850
4400 Grants	\$91,500
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$142,997</b>
<b>EXPENSE COSTS</b>	
5100 Artists Fees	\$1,000
5400 Supplies	\$4,272
5600 Advertising & Marketing	\$1,279
5700 Contract Labor	\$106,333
<b>SUBTOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$112,884</b>
<b>NET PROFIT</b>	<b>\$30,113</b>

\*\$6,185 in this category is scholarship reimbursements funded through the California Arts Council's Creative Youth Development Grant, the Parker Foundation Grant and the CAC's Share the Arts program