



CITY OF SURPRISE
Arts & Cultural Advisory Commission
16089 N Bullard Ave,
Surprise, AZ 85374
Monday, February 3, 2025 @ 6:00 PM
Surprise Regional Library

- A. Call To Order
B. Roll Call
C. Pledge of Allegiance
D. Staff Reports
E. Arts and Cultural Advisory Commission Agenda

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

INSTRUCTIONS: In order to address the Board\Commission, you will need to fill out a Call to the Public Form available at the front counter, and then turn it in to the Secretary before the meeting begins.

Note: A.R.S. 38-431.01(H) - During this time members of the public may address the Board\Commission only on issues within the jurisdiction of the Board\Commission which are not an item on the agenda. At the conclusion of the open call, the Board\Commission may respond to criticism, may ask staff to review the matter or may ask that the matter be put on a future agenda. No discussion or action shall take place on any item raised.

CONSENT AGENDA:

REGULAR AGENDA ITEM - NON-PUBLIC HEARING:

- 1. Citywide Consideration and action pertaining to the January 6, 2025 Arts & Cultural Advisory Commission meeting minutes. Arts, Culture & Library Department
2. Citywide Presentation by and general overview of the West Valley Arts Council. Arts, Culture & Library Department
3. Citywide Discussion of strategies to advance the SACAC's mission. Arts, Culture & Library Department
4. Citywide Discussion pertaining to the Commission cultural support calendar. Arts, Culture & Library Department

REGULAR AGENDA ITEM - PUBLIC HEARING:

- F. Other Business and Future Agenda Items
G. Current Events and Reports
H. Adjournment

KRISTI PASSARELLI, CITY CLERK

POSTED: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 @ 4:00 PM

SPECIAL NOTE: PERSONS WITH SPECIAL ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS, INCLUDING LARGE PRINT MATERIALS OR INTERPRETER, SHOULD CONTACT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE @ 623.222.1200 OR CLERK@SURPRISEAZ.GOV, BY NO LATER THAN 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING TIME.



**CITY OF SURPRISE**  
**Arts & Cultural Advisory Commission**

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Council Meeting Date: February 3, 2025      Contact Person:  
Submitting Department: Arts, Culture & Library      District: Citywide  
Department  
Staff Recommendations:

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Consent: No      Regular: Yes      Public Hearing: No      Report/Discussion: No

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**Agenda Wording:**

Consideration and action pertaining to the January 6, 2025 Arts & Cultural Advisory Commission meeting minutes.

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**Motion:**

I move to approve the January 6, 2025 Arts & Cultural Advisory Commission meeting minutes.

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**Background:**

N/A

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**Objective Analysis:**

N/A

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**Policy Compliant:**

N/A

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**Financial Impact:**

N/A

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**Budget Impact:**

N/A

**FTE Impact:**

N/A

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**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. 010625 SACAC Meeting Minutes\_DRAFT
-

**CITY OF SURPRISE**  
**Arts and Cultural Advisory Commission**  
**16089 N. Bullard Avenue**  
**Surprise, Arizona 85374**  
Monday, January 6, 2025 @ 6:00 PM  
Surprise Regional Library Conference Room  
**Meeting Minutes**

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call

Chair Pullins, Vice-Chair Kupper, Commission members Katherine Dunphy, Margaret Lieu, Steve Wallgren, Hassan Rasul, and Susan deJong.

Absent: None

Staff: Vice-Mayor – Chris Judd, Julie Akerly – Arts & Culture Manager, Alexandra Giambalvo – Arts & Culture Assistant

- C. Pledge of Allegiance
- D. Staff Reports

Ms. Akerly, Arts & Culture Manager, reported on the following items:

- City Hall Gallery Reception for Dysart Students on January 22, at 6pm. Volunteers needed from 5pm-7pm for this event.
- Surprise Community Resource Center groundbreaking event on January 15 at 9am next to Hollyhock Pool.

- E. Arts and Cultural Advisory Commission Agenda

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

None

**REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS – NON-PUBLIC HEARING:**

- 1. Consideration and action pertaining to the December 9, 2024 Arts & Cultural Advisory Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner Rasul moved to approve the December 9, 2024 Arts & Cultural Advisory Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Lieu 2<sup>nd</sup>. 7 Yes votes. Motion carried.

- 2. Presentation and update from Theatre DNA on Vista Center for the Arts Study.

Alex Hargis and Benton Delinger from Theatre DNA presented data collection on the following topics as part of the Vista Center for the Arts study:

- Market Analysis
- Community Survey Results
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Community Engagement
- Facility Inspections
- Future Stakeholder Roles
- Next Steps

Following the presentation, the Commissioners, Vice-Mayor Judd, and the presenters [TheatreDNA] held a discussion that included:

- Commissioners appreciated the depth of information, and use of data to validate assumptions and show what direction we need to move in.
- Commissioners like the idea of branding the production company and having mobility.
- Commissioners expressed a concern over shared partnership agreements, commitments, and responsibilities, and hope to see these addressed in future agreements. TheatreDNA shared that many of these concerns will be addressed in the study's final recommendations, and assured commissioners that leadership amongst all partners has moved in the direction of mutually beneficial support.
- TheatreDNA shared some creative approaches that could be implemented by the City to present local theater, and acknowledged the challenges of regularly presenting a traditional in-house community theater due to space limitations and availability.
- TheatreDNA shared recommended priorities for facility improvements that included exterior branding and production systems.
- The Commission discussed their role in the study as advocates to the community and advisors to the City.
- Vice-Mayor Judd shared that all stakeholders have been working together towards a shared goal of providing a community benefit and increased quality of life to Surprise residents and visitors.
- TheatreDNA plans to have the study completed study in March that will be ready for public presentation with stakeholder leadership and community members.

1. Report and discussion of HOLA West Valley panel review.

Ms. Akerly led a discussion with the Commission to discuss the upcoming selected iHOLA! artist for the temporary installation at Asante Library in Surprise. The following topics were addressed:

- Details about the iHOLA! program, including new multi-city initiatives, mentorship for artists, and sharing resources across 6 West Valley cities
- Commissioner deJong served as an iHOLA! panelist, and shares: "We all thought we wanted something very colorful. We had 22 applications, and in the end, we all agreed on our top choices as we wanted something bold and colorful. We are working with Tiesha Harrison – she's a storytelling visual artist. She believes that art creates community, dialogue, and stories. She believes that art heals. I hope Tiesha will work multiple times with us throughout the 2 years and talk about her art, installations, and other things because she likes storytelling and wants to create community."

2. Presentation and discussion regarding an annual arts and culture festival.

Ms. Akerly and Ms. Giambalvo led a discussion with the Commission and presented a potential theme for the 2026 City of Surprise annual arts and cultural festival. Topics included:

- Inspiration from other festivals
- Ideas for activities
- Partnerships
- Names

The Commission shared the following feedback:

- Support the ecology/nature theme
- Excited by activities involving native Arizona foods and plants
- Would like to see activities that build practical skills and not one-off crafts
- Advised for the festival to be inclusive and accessible to local artists
- Recommend incorporating performing arts and cultural groups in event
- Preferred the name: Roots of Creation: Surprise Arts and Nature Festival
- Recommend for the City to continue exploring more culturally-specific events

3. Discussion pertaining to the Commission cultural support calendar.

Ms. Akerly led a discussion with the Commission to follow up on monthly events selected by Commission members to attend and support.

- The entire commission will be attending the MLK Day of Service Event on January 18, 2025
- Vice-chair Kupper selected the following event for the February support event: Pops Orchestra - Sunday, 02/02/25 at 4:00pm at the Vista, bring items to the food pantry for entry fee.
- March: Commissioner Lieu's pick
- April: Commissioner DeJong's pick

F. Other Business and Future Agenda Items Steps

- Next meeting will take place on February 3, 2025.
- How can the SACAC support community that asks questions at events.

G. Current Events and Reports

- Commissioner Rasul went to the SciTech festival
- Commissioner deJong attended the following events: Lunchtime theatre, opening of the mural at the WVAC, retirement party for Mayor Skip Hall
- Vice-chair Kupper and Commissioner deJong received positive feedback about the new traffic boxes
- To be announced: Celebration party for the traffic box artists at Actors PLAYGround

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn at 7:58 p.m. – Commissioner deJong motioned. Vice-chair Kupper 2<sup>nd</sup>. 7 Yes votes. Motion Carried.

	<hr/> Dr. Charlotte Pullins, Chair
<b>ATTEST:</b>	<hr/> Alexandra Giambalvo, Arts & Culture Assistant
<b>CERTIFICATION:</b> I, Julie Akerly, Arts & Culture Manager for the City of Surprise Arts, Culture & Library Department, Maricopa County, Arizona, do hereby verify that these are the true and correct minutes of the Arts and Cultural Advisory Commission meeting held on December 9, 2024.	
	<hr/> Julie Akerly, Arts & Culture Manager



**CITY OF SURPRISE**  
**Arts & Cultural Advisory Commission**

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Council Meeting Date: February 3, 2025      Contact Person:  
Submitting Department: Arts, Culture & Library      District: Citywide  
Department  
Staff Recommendations:

---

Consent: No      Regular: Yes      Public Hearing: No      Report/Discussion: No

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**Agenda Wording:**

Presentation by and general overview of the West Valley Arts Council.

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**Motion:**

None.

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**Background:**

The City of Surprise provided grant funding to 14 organizations in FY25. Organizations who received grant funding and are based in Surprise have been invited to present at a commission meeting to share information about the organization and their impact on Surprise.

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**Objective Analysis:**

A representative from West Valley Arts Council will present information about their organization and create space for questions from the commissioners.

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**Policy Compliant:**

Aligns with City Policy.

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**Financial Impact:**

None.

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**Budget Impact:**

None.

**FTE Impact:**

None.

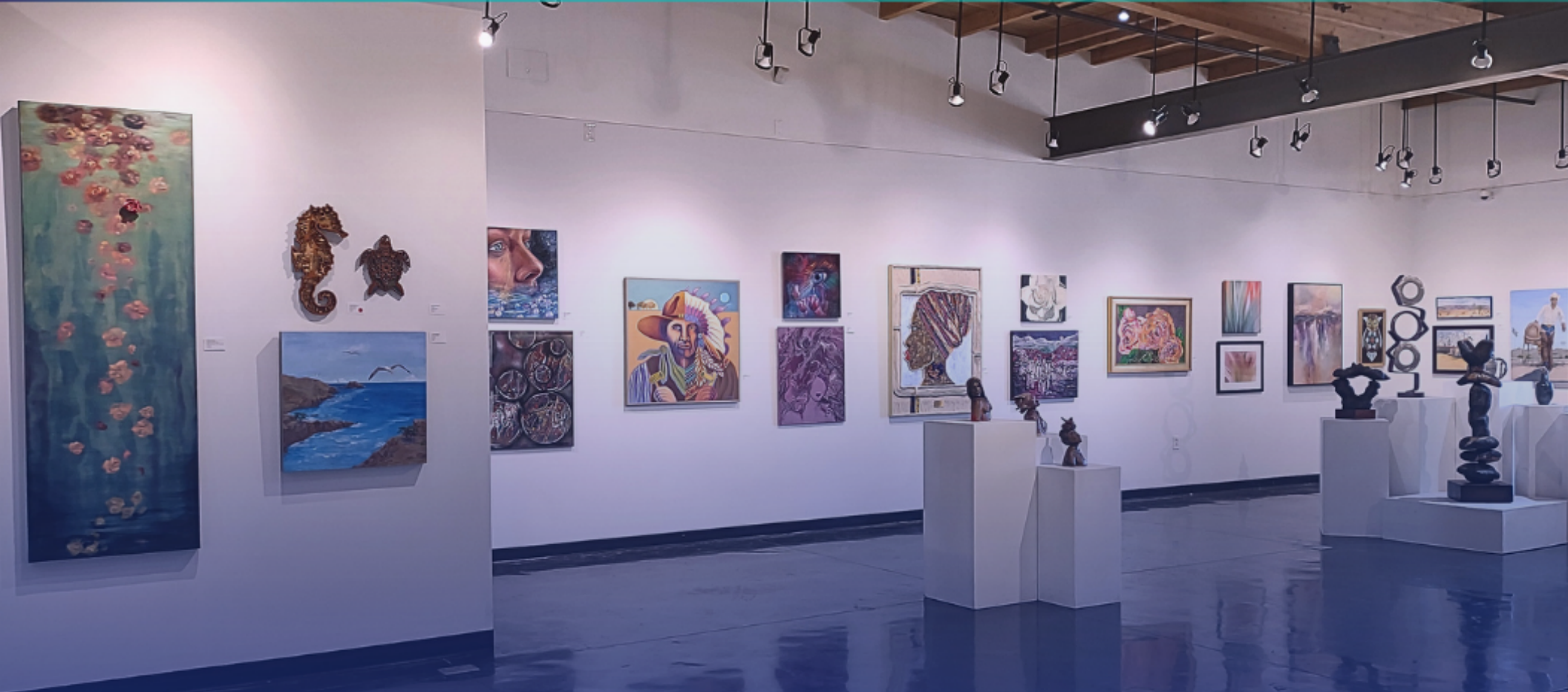
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**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. WVAC 2024 Annual Report
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# WEST VALLEY ARTS COUNCIL



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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# KATHY KNECHT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*“When it comes to arts and culture, more is more.”*



If we've met in the last few months since I became the Executive Director of the West Valley Arts Council, you've probably heard my spiel: "When it comes to arts and culture, More is More."

It's more than a slogan; it's a philosophy - one that fuels our enthusiasm for growing and enhancing all aspects of the arts and culture ecosystem in the West Valley. Arts organizations like studios, schools, theaters and galleries are businesses, as are professional musicians, sculptors, dancers and painters. But unlike traditional businesses in which competition is a threat, in the arts, we see only synergies and opportunities for mutual growth.

## **We are a regional organization**

Part of this philosophy stems from our roots as a truly regional organization. We celebrate the arts and cultural amenities and successes in each of the West Valley cities we serve, and we understand that patrons and audiences aren't much concerned about what jurisdiction a show or gallery is located in as long as they exist relatively "close to home."

Unlike a tire store or a roofing company at which purchases are essentially "one and done," arts and cultural institutions continually draw ever bigger and hungrier audiences that support clusters of amenities.

Think of all the cities in the world, the US, and even in Arizona that are rich in arts and culture: Paris, London, New York, Santa Fe, Scottsdale... No one ever visited and said, "Whoa! too many galleries!" or "There are too many live theaters here." That's because people who flock to those communities want more and more. They want options and variety. They want vibrancy, creativity, beauty and entertainment. And the cities love it! Museums and shows mean thriving restaurants and retail. Come for a show, stay in a hotel, dine in an eatery, stay for a while.

## **Join us in enriching the West Valley**

That's why, in addition to working with the Arts and Culture departments in West Valley cities, we'll also be working with Economic Development departments. We strive to make our region a tourist destination, an arts and culture hot-spot and a place that businesses and residents alike want to call home. So, when it comes to arts and culture, what's good for one West Valley city or arts organization is good for all the rest; bring it on! More is more!

**Kathy Knecht, Executive Director**

# LEADERSHIP

## EXECUTIVE TEAM

**Kathy Knecht**  
*Executive Director*

**Daisy Brady**  
*Gallery Director*

**Jimmy Davis**  
*Director of Programs  
& Administration*

**Lanelle Horstmeier**  
*Communications &  
Marketing Director*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Jonathan Robles, Board Chair**  
*Associate VP, EMCC*

**Sandi J. Staehle, JD LL.M., Vice Chair**  
*Retired CFO, Business Director & Attorney*

**Amanda Sanchez, Secretary**  
*Change Management Lead, USAA*

**Ramona Arias, Treasurer**  
*Financial Educator*

**Susan DeJong, Board Member**  
*Retired Chef and Restaurateur*

**Catherine Locke, Board Member**  
*Executive Director, AZ Farm and Ranch*

**Jessica Perry, Board Member**  
*Public Affairs Manager, APS*

**Jim Rumpeltes, Board Member**  
*Retired City Manager*

**Donald Smith, Board Member**  
*Dept Chair, Performing Arts, GCC*

**Carmen Valiquette, Board Member**  
*VP, Financial Consultant, Charles Schwab*



**9** Rotating Exhibits

**4,623**  
Gallery Visitors



# HOW MANY IN 2024?

Like we always say, when it comes to art, more is more!



**190**  
Featured Exhibit Artists

**81**  
Gift Shop Artists



**19**  
Live performances

**2,664**  
Event attendees

**100+**  
Seniors served through Creative Aging



**100%**  
of the art created, and shared with the community is local, meaningful and unique!

# EXCITING UNVEILINGS

Avondale



"CULTIVATING COMMUNITY"  
and  
"LEGACY OF THE LAND"  
This work is a collaborative effort by the artists and the community of Avondale. It is a celebration of the rich cultural heritage and the legacy of the land. The sculpture is a testament to the power of art to bring people together and create a sense of community.

Surprise



Peoria



VISTANCIA FRY'S MURAL  
By Issac Caruso

UNIFYING CULTURES  
By Garrett Etsitty



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

# HEAR IT FROM HER: Arleth

"Gallery 37, as a program, allowed us students to grow as both individuals and artists. It taught us how to utilize new skills and techniques and incorporate it into our work, whilst also providing us with new life long bonds with such talented folks whose hearts are as beautiful as their art.

I'm truly honored to have been a part of this program, and if given the chance, I would do it all over again with these amazing people.

We faced many challenges when working on this perceptual art piece, both big and small. But no matter how big the struggle, we carried on and supported each other throughout it all. We encouraged one another, fixed mistakes together, and most importantly, had fun."

**Arleth Garcia, G37 Graduate**

**Special thanks to our partner, Estrella Mountain Community College**



**Highschool Student  
Ela Chachulski  
designed the shirts for  
her team as they  
worked on their piece  
for EMCC**



**The amazing junior and  
senior graduates of the  
'23-'24 Gallery 37 Program**

## With Gratitude

West Valley Arts Council is grateful for the generous support of our donors. We recognize individuals, corporations, and grantors who have made single or multiple donations in 2024.



Home of our  
Office and the  
Arts HQ Gallery

# 2024 SUPPORTERS



## THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS



John Sperling Foundation



## THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS INDIVIDUAL DONORS

**Betty Shults**

**Sandra Staehle Alicia Sterna**

**James Biundo Kathleen Crowley Jaye Herr Jess Legaspi Neil Terry Linda Wheatbrook**

**Kelly Abraham Tina Borkin Karyl Brandvold Anne Burris  
Diana Creighton Judy Greene Roxanne Kane Kathy Knecht**

**Carol Bergers Barbara Dittman Cynthia Gerber Cupid Grays Richard Gross  
Betty Kennedy George Kyle Carol Levin Susan Luce J Carter Marsden  
Kim and Fred Olsen Daniel Ortega Charlene Romanos Amanda Sanchez  
Marie Sanfilippo Becky Saylor Suzanne Thompson Judith Visker**



# The extraordinary gift of Stu Wilkening

The West Valley Arts Council is humbled to recognize Stu Wilkening for his generous legacy gift to WVAC in 2024, and for the gift of his time and talents for many years prior.

Stu volunteered with the West Valley Arts Council as President of the board for one term and Treasurer for nine years. He was committed to growing the arts in the West Valley, especially in his hometown, Litchfield Park.

Stu's generous gift helps ensure that we can continue to inspire, engage, and enrich our community for years to come. His donation will play a pivotal role in advancing our programs, fostering local talent, and providing access to the arts for all. Stu's legacy will not only strengthen the cultural fabric of the West Valley but will also leave an enduring impact on generations of artists and art enthusiasts.



# SERVING

The West Valley Region



CITY OF  
Litchfield Park



**City of Phoenix**



**Town of Wickenburg**



# Upcoming EXHIBITS FOR 2025

Coming soon...



**IMPRINT**

African Americans  
in the Arts

Jan 10 - Feb 13

Coming soon...

**Fantasma**  
Pop-art Exhibit



FEB 21 - MAR 27

Coming soon...



**Sustainable**

APR 4 - MAY 8

Coming soon...

**Art  
Under  
Fire**

MAY 16 - JUNE 19

Coming soon...



**IMPRINT**

Native American  
Stories

JUNE 27 - JULY 31

Coming soon...



**Wanderlust**

AUG 8 - SEPT 11

Coming soon...



**IMPRINT**

Viva La Cultura

SEPT 19 - OCT 30

Coming soon...

**Members  
Salon**



NOV 7 - DEC 18



VISIT THE ARTS HQ GALLERY IN SURPRISE

16126 N Civic Center Plaza  
Surprise, AZ 85374

# WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

## VOLUNTEER

Volunteering is a rewarding way to get involved in your community and support our mission to grow arts and culture in the West Valley.

As a volunteer, you'll have the opportunity to engage with local artists, assist with cultural events, and help bring creative initiatives to life. Your time and energy directly contribute to fostering a vibrant arts scene that enriches lives and connects people through shared artistic experiences.



Scan me

## DONATE

Donating to the West Valley Arts Council is a powerful way to support and elevate arts and culture in your community. Your contribution helps fund local artists, cultural events, and educational programs that enrich lives and foster creativity. By supporting the West Valley Arts Council, you help ensure that the arts remain a vibrant, accessible, and essential part of our community's identity, shaping the future of the West Valley for years to come.



Scan me

## LEGACY GIFT

Leaving a legacy gift is a meaningful way to make a lasting impact on the cultural future of our community. Your gift ensures that the arts continue to thrive and evolve, providing future generations with opportunities to experience and participate in creative expression. By choosing to support the arts in this way, you are helping preserve and expand the rich artistic landscape of the West Valley, creating a legacy that will enrich the lives of many for generations.

**Contact Kathy Knecht  
for More Information**

623-826-2074  
kathy@westvalleyarts.org



**WEST VALLEY**  
**ARTS COUNCIL**  
**2024 ANNUAL REPORT**



**CITY OF SURPRISE**  
**Arts & Cultural Advisory Commission**

---

Council Meeting Date: February 3, 2025      Contact Person:  
Submitting Department: Arts, Culture & Library      District: Citywide  
Department  
Staff Recommendations:

---

Consent: No      Regular: Yes      Public Hearing: No      Report/Discussion: No

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**Agenda Wording:**

Discussion of strategies to advance the SACAC's mission.

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**Motion:**

None.

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**Background:**

The SACAC's mission is to encourage arts and cultural growth through education and advocacy, and promote the development of related opportunities and resources, as well as the creative, social, and community benefits they provide.

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**Objective Analysis:**

The SACAC will discuss and brainstorm strategies to actively fulfill their mission, powers, duties, and responsibilities.

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**Policy Compliant:**

Aligns with City Policy.

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**Financial Impact:**

None.

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**Budget Impact:**

None.

**FTE Impact:**

None.

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**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. SACAC Mission Discussion
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# SACAC MISSION STRATEGIES

— Discussion —

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# Mission

To encourage arts and cultural growth through education and advocacy, and promote the development of related opportunities and resources, as well as the creative, social, and community benefits they provide.

# Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities

- **Advocate for the support and growth of arts and culture in Surprise to residents, stakeholders, the city staff, and the city council.**
- Serve as a liaison for the community by passing on citizens' recommendations and opinions to Arts & Culture leadership.
- Provide suggestions and/or make recommendations pertaining to short-term and long-term plans as prepared by Arts & Culture leadership.
- Advise Arts & Culture leadership on general policy relating to arts and culture operations. The recommendations of the commission shall be advisory only and shall not be binding upon City staff or City Council.

## Discussion Prompt:

What are some ways the SACAC can *encourage arts and cultural growth through education and advocacy?*



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**Arts & Cultural Advisory Commission**

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Department  
Staff Recommendations:

---

Consent: No      Regular: Yes      Public Hearing: No      Report/Discussion: No

---

**Agenda Wording:**

Discussion pertaining to the Commission cultural support calendar.

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**Motion:**

None.

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**Background:**

The commission previously discussed ways they could fulfill their mission of advocacy and education for arts and culture in Surprise. The commission agreed to select one arts and culture event to attend each month to support and learn about organizations and programs in Surprise.

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**Objective Analysis:**

The SACAC will share upcoming arts and culture events in Surprise and discuss at least one event each month to attend as a commission.

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**Policy Compliant:**

Aligns with City Policy.

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**Financial Impact:**

None.

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**Budget Impact:**

None.

**FTE Impact:**

None.

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**ATTACHMENTS:**

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