



Staff Report

City Council

Item No. {{section.number}}.A

Meeting Date: October 9, 2024

From: Anne V. Ambrose, Assistant City Manager

Title: Approve Public Arts Commission's Recommendations for Awarding Funding through the Community Grant Program

RECOMMENDATION:

To approve the Public Arts Commission's recommendations for awarding funding through the Community Grant Program.

BACKGROUND:

The City Council approved a new grant program to be administered through the Public Arts Commission to fund arts-related programming. The application period was opened on July 30, 2024 and closed August 30, 2024. Staff received twenty applications by the deadline and one application that came in after the deadline. The total funding requested through all of the applications was \$173,659.66.

DISCUSSION:

The Public Arts Commission held a special meeting on October 2 to review the applications and to select applications to recommend to the City Council for funding. The Commissioners carefully reviewed all of the applications and had thorough dialogue about each application's merits and their potential outreach. One of the main challenges the Commissioners had in their review was having a considerable pool of applications with limited funding to support all requests. The Commissioners did try to honor meeting the full funding needs submitted in the applications. While not an intended priority, many of the proposed grant awards in this first round will engage Cathedral City's youth.

The Public Arts Commission voted unanimously to forward the following applications to the City Council for review with the recommendation of approval:

- Cathedral City Peace Initiative - \$2,500. Funding will be used to produce five peace poles, one for each elementary school in Cathedral City. The C.C.P.I. is a partnership with Palm Springs Unified School District and the SCRAP Gallery and will actively involve students and artists at each school site in creating these peace poles, which will serve as a visual reminder of our shared commitment to
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peace. A peace pole is a handcrafted monument that symbolizes peace and serves as a reminder to pray for world peace. The powerful message "May Peace Prevail on Earth" is inscribed on each side of the pole, usually in the country's language and several other languages. This message, penned in 1955 by Masahisa Goi of Japan, who was deeply affected by the destruction of World War II and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, symbolizes the unity of humanity, the desire for a peaceful world, and the need to act in a spirit of peace and harmony. A peace pole will be approximately 4" x 4" x 5'.

- Cathedral City Senior Center - \$4,000 – The funds will be used to deliver seven specific arts and culture programs to Cathedral City through the creation of an Arts, Culture and Humanities series. Programs include:
 - Yve Evans Presents – The incomparable Yve Evans will present two jazz/blues concerts at Cathedral City Senior Center: a Holiday 2024 performance and a Spring 2025 performance. Yve puts together a group of well-known jazz and blues musicians that create memorable, sometimes standing-room-only performances. These events are open to the public and they provide access to world-class musicians for people who might not otherwise be able to experience them. The Yve Evans Presents series have become very popular and are promoted widely through the City's Newsletter and other communication vehicles.
 - International Jazz Day – On February 22, 2025 we will partner with The Roost Lounge where Yve Evans will assemble a group of well-known Jazz Musicians for a Jam Session. This is similar to the Jam session held this year following the photo shoot for the Great Day for Jazz and Blues in Coachella Valley. This Jam session will be videotaped and submitted to jazzday.com, a partnership between the Herbie Hancock Institute and UNESCO. The video will be included in the April 30, 2025 International Jazz Day performances worldwide. Cathedral City has been featured prominently in the past during International Jazz Day. This performance will be seen worldwide, again putting Cathedral City on the world jazz stage.
 - Love Letters (by A.R. Gurney) – In the Winter of 2025, we will present Love Letters, by A.R. Gurney. This is a reading of a play that needs no theater, rehearsal or special set. It is designed to be read aloud by two actors sitting in two chairs. This event is free and open to the public.
 - Senior Center Book Festival – Starlite Pulp, a publishing company, will invite authors to read sections of their short stories or novels to an audience at Cathedral City Public Library. This event will take place shortly after the 29 Palms Book Festival held in November 2024. It is intended to give community members access to local and nationally recognized authors of different genres and inspire people to tap into their own creativity and interests.
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- Book Club @ Cathedral City Senior Center – We will establish a Book Club for community members to come together to read two books this year: *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Of Mice and Men*, both of which have been banned in several communities. The book club will provide an opportunity to create community and end the isolation that is so prevalent among seniors and many others in our community.
 - Senior Art Show – Our Senior Art Show has become very popular. In the Spring of 2025, the Senior Center will hold another Senior Art Show and Exhibit featuring 8 senior artists. The exhibit will run for two days, and the senior artists will keep 100% of the proceeds from the sale of their art. Cathedral City Senior Center has many vibrant art programs and several of the senior artists featured in past art shows have created their work right here at the senior center. Some of our artists are blind and many speak Spanish. Cathedral City and the Public Arts Commission has been active in helping promote the Senior Art Show and we've helped many senior artists build the confidence to tap into their creativity and, more importantly, to put their art on public display for others to enjoy.
 - Cinco de Mayo Cultural Celebration – Back by popular demand is the annual Cinco de Mayo Cultural Celebration, in partnership with Cathedral City High School. This is a cultural celebration with dinner, dance and performances by the Cathedral City High School students. This event brings together seniors, students, and families of Cathedral City to celebrate Hispanic cultural heritage providing a fun, educational day. It will be held on Sunday, May 4, 2025 in the Main room at Cathedral City Senior Center.
 - Coachella Valley Classical Voices - \$9,950 Coachella Valley Classical Voices (CVCV), a vibrant new addition to the cultural landscape here in Cathedral City and beyond, is dedicated to bringing the timeless art of opera and Broadway to a broader audience. With a mission to make quality classical singing accessible to everyone and with the support of Cathedral City's Community Arts Grant program, CVCV will stage at least four performances of an adapted version of the charming children's opera *Hansel and Gretel*. Based on the well-known Brothers Grimm fairy tale and composed by Engelbert Humperdinck, the story follows the adventures of two siblings, Hansel and Gretel, who get lost in the woods and encounter a wicked witch with a house made of candy. With themes of bravery, love, and the triumph of good over evil, this opera is both enchanting and educational, offering valuable lessons about teamwork, resilience, and the importance of family. The value of *Hansel and Gretel* lies in its ability to introduce young and old alike to the world of opera in an accessible and engaging way. The music is both beautiful and memorable, with folk-inspired melodies that are easy for all audiences to enjoy. The relatable characters and magical storyline captivate the audience's imagination while subtly conveying
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these positive messages. Overall, this opera fosters both cultural enrichment and personal growth.

- **Coachella Valley Repertory - \$3,550.** Partial funding will go towards the production of The Bully Plays and Theatre for Young Audiences.
 - The Bully Plays are Youth Outreach Productions centered around the issue of bullying. It is a life-changing initiative to foster awareness, empathy, and actionable change among local youth through professional oversight and collaboration. City of Cathedral City funding supports the next production, Before the Bell, a riveting drama about a bullying incident on a high school campus. A 60-minute production, Before the Bell was written for high school-age actors by award-winning playwright Kerry Kazmierowicztrimm. This play follows the success of the last Bully Play in 2023, Ophelia Lives!, where student actors representing four area High Schools took the region by storm with performances that splashed across local TV news with rave reviews. Bully Play Program Components: The Bully Plays will be entirely produced and performed by high school students under the mentorship of CVRep professionals who will work alongside student actors This immersive experience empowers young participants to explore and interpret themes of bullying through their artistic talents alongside their peers. Invitations will extend to over 18 local high schools providing students with free access to engage with the production's themes and messages, highlighting the factors contributing to school violence and the pivotal role of student witnesses. Following each performance, Executive Artistic Director, Adam Karsten, will lead a Q&A session with the cast and audience members. This interactive discussion aims to deepen understanding and provoke ongoing conversations about bullying prevention and intervention strategies. Each attending student will receive a program containing valuable information on school safety services, including platforms like SPRIGEO and PSSTWorld where students can anonymously report bullying. Additionally, resources from SafeHouse of the Desert will be included to support students in navigating and addressing bullying incidents effectively.
 - Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) is an annual production hosted by CVRep's Conservatory, dedicated to enriching the cultural landscape for young children and their families. Our TYA initiative uniquely serves the Valley as the sole professional theater offering which is designed specifically for young audiences. This year, we proudly presented Snow White by Greg Banks, a captivating performance brought to life by two versatile actors portraying over 70 characters.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Public Arts Commission recommended awarding the full \$20,000 available in the

Community Arts Grant budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25. All funds will need to be spent by June 30, 2025. The next round of funding will be advertised in the early part of 2025 for award before June 30, 2025 for Fiscal Year 2025-26.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal F: Embracing, Inclusive Community

Objective: Cathedral City is valued and respected as a community that welcomes and embraces diversity, has an abundance of high-quality and affordable housing options and vibrant businesses. Our neighborhoods are attractive, well-maintained, and issues surrounding homelessness have been compassionately addressed through thoughtful, coordinated, and collaborative programs.

F-3 Promote additional community events and celebrations.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Grant Award Summary
2. Applications – Proposed for Award
3. Applications – Not Awarded