

The background is a vibrant watercolor illustration. It features several large, overlapping leaves in shades of orange, red, yellow, and green. In the lower right, there is a white flower with pinkish petals. The overall style is soft and artistic, with visible brushstrokes and a slightly textured appearance.

Annual Report 2019

downriver
council
for the
Arts

The logo for the Downriver Council for the Arts is contained within a circular, glowing white gradient. It features the text "downriver council for the Arts" in a clean, sans-serif font, with "downriver" on the first line, "council" on the second, "for the" in a smaller font on the third, and "Arts" in a large, elegant script font on the fourth line.

downriver
council
for the
Arts

JAMES R.
DESANA
CENTER FOR
ARTS & CULTURE

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**EMILY KOKAY,
CHERYL ZEMKE &
MICHELE PORTER**
Fibril Illusions Exhibit, 2019



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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MELANIE FENTON
The Annunciation

100

ADULTS IN
CLASSES PER
QUARTER

Classes are facilitated by professional artists and include self-paced independent study programs and instructional lessons like painting, fiber arts and experiential media.



212

YOUTH SUMMER
ART CAMPS
REGISTRANTS

29 CAMPS IN 6 WEEKS!

Campers work with professional artists and teachers to explore diverse themes and art media, focus on creative process, and develop their imagination - all while learning collaboration, experimentation, critical thinking, and problem solving.

2

BY THE NUMBERS

5,000+

patrons

Who come through our doors annually seeking to expand their hearts and minds by engaging in classes, performances, and art exhibits.



13

RESIDENT
ARTISTS

Providing artists with an incubator space to create their art in a dynamic environment.



KASSANDRA RAMLOFF
Lily and Chaser

In 2019, the Board of Directors saw to updating the bylaws of our organization.

Going through an official process to review and revise them held the key to the majority of real reform opportunities for our board. You can view these on the DCA's website.

The Executive Director was accepted into the Arts Leaders as Cultural Innovators program, provided by EmcArts. It was a 14-month intensive process of seminars, coaching, virtual learning and practicums to increase capacity for adaptive change across cultural institutions. Erin continues to attend workshops and coaching as well as learning to facilitate adaptive leadership alongside other rising influencers in the Southeast Michigan arts and cultural community.

A \$30,000 grant over 3 years to the DCA was awarded on behalf of The Kresge Foundation's Detroit Program for general operating support through the Detroit Art Support (DAS) initiative.

A Creators of Culture grant, administered by Culture Source, was awarded to artist Emily Kokay, who plans to work with the DCA on constructing and installing outdoor sculptures in our region. The project, entitled Downriver's Art Motion, is set to have its first artwork in the city of Ecorse.

The Arts Center was a hosting location for the Kresge Artist Fellowship Info Sessions in 2019 and CultureSource MCACA mini-grant workshops for Region 10B from 2019-2020.

The DCA partnered with Art Road in 2019 to bring student art from two Ecorse elementary schools to exhibit in in our Community Gallery space in 2020 for the first time.

East River Folk Society, an organization with over 30 years of tradition, partnered with the DCA to host their monthly Open Mic night at the Arts Center.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

The continuation of two major yearly events: The Downriver Indie Art Fair in March, which features 50+ artisans selling quality handmade wares to over 1,500 attendees. The Chestnut Street Art Fair, held in conjunction with the Wyandotte Street Art Fair in July, providing access and opportunities to artists and communities for involvement in a vibrant non-traditional art fair which includes makers, street musicians and performers, and artists painting and creating all throughout the fair.

Continuing restoration movement on second floor auditorium. This work has made new programming possible like monthly ballroom dancing and more music oriented concerts and events. In 2019 we showcased the Chamber Artists of Southeast Michigan for an annual summer concert series, welcomed Mitch Ryder for a charity concert and held singing, yoga, meditation and movement sessions. We are continuing to make more improvements, which will help to draw more professional performing acts to the arts center.

Pose & Prose: The Art of Poetry, an art exhibit in our main gallery curated by member and instructor Adrienne Trupiano, is a celebration of the art of poetry during National Poetry Month. The work visually highlights the spoken and written word through creative inspiration, method and implementation. Events that were held at the Arts Center: Downriver Poets & Playwrights present their annual National Poetry Month Celebration, Found Poetry Creative Workshop, Pose & Prose Poetry Showcase - An Evening of Spoken Word + Open Mic.



ERIN DAVIS
Tigers

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

In 1978, the Downriver Community Conference (DCC) was established in an effort to encourage and promote the economic growth of the Downriver communities. Just a few months later, the Downriver Council for the Arts (DCA) was established. The motivation to form this arts council was to improve the quality of life and enhance the image of the 15 communities that belonged to the Downriver Community Conference. Because arts activities were recognized as an important factor in Downriver's quality of life and its economic development, the Downriver Council for the Arts began as a department of the Downriver Community Conference.

The original mission of the DCA was to encourage the development of an aesthetically satisfying environment among the cities and townships that comprise the Downriver Community Conference area.

In 1989, the DCA left the DCC to become an independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization. This major change greatly enhanced the independence of DCA's decision making and provided many new opportunities for funding. For two years, the DCA was located in Southgate. From 1992 to 2000, the DCA was located at the Historic Marx Home, an "annex" of the Wyandotte Historical Society. In 2000, moved from the Marx Home to a freshly remodeled and reconstructed old farmhouse on the property of Wayne County Community College Downriver Campus in Taylor, Michigan. The move afforded the organization ample room for giving Downriver arts organizations space for meetings, as well as provided room for art exhibitions and an arts library.

The year 2010, brought the official grand opening of the DCA in its current location. The DCA now operates out of the James R. DeSana Center for Arts and Culture (the Arts Center), a three-story, nearly 20,000 SF historic building located at 81 Chestnut Street in downtown Wyandotte. The architecture of the building, constructed in 1911, represents the splendor of a different era: a time



when Wyandotte exemplified our region's entrance into America's industrial boom. The structure was built by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, an internationally recognized fraternal service organization. In 1943, the building was bought by the Fraternal Order of Free and Accepted Masons. The Masons remained in the building for over 50 years, continuing the Odd Fellows' tradition of community service and good fellowship. The building was purchased by the City of Wyandotte in 2008 under the tenure of then Mayor James R. DeSana (now serving on the DCA Board of Directors). The intention was to preserve its rich history and redevelop it as a cultural facility. The Center became the home of the DCA in 2010 through a partnership with the City and the DDA. In late 2016, the City of Wyandotte and DDA extended our lease for a 10-year commitment. We feel this partnership helped solidify our place and home as a regional arts and cultural center.

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

Our goal for the James R. DeSana Center for Arts and Culture is to be a multi-use, multi-generational, and multi-cultural destination arts facility that contributes to the expansion of the area's economic development initiatives and provides educational opportunities for the communities into the future. The Center serves the community in three ways - it creates opportunities for community artists to showcase their skills, it serves as a cultural resource for the community, and it serves as an educational facility. A significant goal in the DCA's strategic plan is to relate the arts and design programming of the Center to regional economic development, not only through the creation of a destination attraction, but also by acting as a magnet for career and educational opportunities by building partnerships with educational institutions and corporations.

Today, the Downriver Council for the Arts (DCA) is a regional non-profit 501(c)(3) arts and cultural organization that proudly serves nearly 400,000 residents in 21 Downriver communities. Downriver is the area in Michigan comprised of cities south of Detroit. The Downriver area is generally known to consist of communities that rest along the Detroit River south and west of Detroit and including communities as far west as those surrounding the Detroit metropolitan airport and south to Monroe County. In historic times, these cities were accessible by traveling down the Detroit River. Downriver overall is known as a suburban Detroit region with working-class residential neighborhoods. These cities were mainly populated with workers who were employed by the dozens of auto factories, manufacturing suppliers, ship builders, steel mills and chemical plants in the area. Recreational opportunities are often centered around the waterways. The low cost of living, down to earth mentality and good work

ethic in the communities make for a good place for artists to call home. The Downriver area also provides a cheaper cost of living alternative to the immensely growing Downtown Detroit.

Today the DCA's mission is to enrich the quality of life in the Downriver communities by advocating and promoting the arts and providing opportunities for involvement and participation in arts and cultural activities. We actively support local artists and performers through artistic outreach programs and special promotional opportunities. The DCA also creates regional partnerships with other cultural organizations, schools and service clubs to promote artistic, cultural and special events throughout Southeast Michigan. We hold these activities in our Arts Center and by operating in the various cities we serve.



More information and activities can be found by viewing the DCA online.

We have quite active social channels, so please visit those as well.

Website: www.downriverarts.org

Facebook / Instagram: @dc4arts

Pinterest / LinkedIn:

Downriver Council for the Arts

After school youth art sessions, has grown from averaging about 10 students each session in 2017 to 18 students each session in 2018. Each class in these sessions touches on a different core skill. We have added new classes such as Anime (huge hit with 11-13 year olds) and Creative Arts Workshops (one time workshops geared toward homeschoolers). We are receiving positive feedback with all of these youth programs.

"CREATIVITY IS GOLDEN" Festival of Trees 2019



MYSTICAL FOREST SUMMER CAMP CLASS



DOWNRIVER DETROIT STUDENT FILM CONSORTIUM



JOE KIDD & SHEILA BURKE
 DOWNRIVER CELEBRATES
 WOODSTOCK: 50 YEARS OF
 PEACE AND MUSIC



**ERIN
 SUESS**

Executive Director
 esuess@downriverarts.org

Erin is a lifelong Downriver resident, and earning an Associate's Degree in art from Henry Ford Community College and a Bachelor's Degree in art from Wayne State University. She worked for design agencies and the Detroit News and Free Press and later as an art director with a Dearborn agency. Erin served on the Board of Directors for the Downriver Council for the Arts (DCA) for 6 years and volunteered services for their website design and upkeep, graphic design and social communication. She now has acted as Executive Director with the DCA since 2016. She uses her board experience to take a more proactive role in maintaining the mission of the DCA. Personal experience has taught her that nurturing communities through arts and culture is vital. In 2018, Erin was accepted into the Arts Leaders as Cultural Innovators program, provided by EmcArts. She attends workshops as well as learning to facilitate Adaptive Leadership alongside other rising influencers in the Southeast Michigan arts and culture community.



**LYNN
 CAMPBELL**

Office Manager
 lcampbell@downriverarts.org

Lynn is a retired Executive Assistant with years of office management experience working for high-level senior management in the chemical and automotive industries. Her role as recording secretary for the board of directors' executive board meetings and general membership meetings simply begins to set the stage for the invaluable services she provides to the DCA. Lynn leads by coordinating, managing and facilitating membership in classes, programs, and camps, and the DCA general membership. She acts as the organization's primary liaison with the public in matters of building maintenance and reporting information to the city. In addition to coordinating the rental of our artist studios and event spaces, she manages the Artisan Gift Shop inventory, sales and display. Lynn also has a creative side, helping to create flyers, decorating for events, and donating and creating raffle baskets for fundraisers. Her hours of donated time, talent and money to assist the DCA help to round out her involvement.

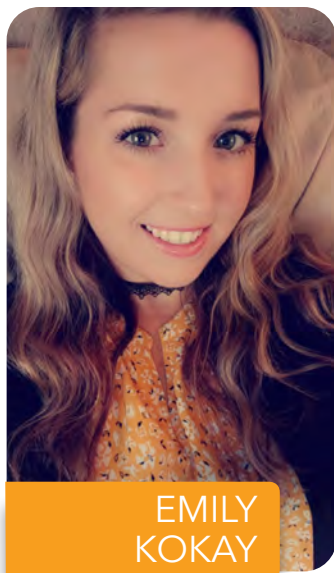
MEET OUR TEAM



ERIN
DAVIS

Visual Designer
hello@artfullyerin.com

Erin is a local graphic artist and earned her Bachelor's Degree from Grand Valley State University. While in college, she interned at the Downriver Council for the Arts (DCA) and various branding agencies in Grand Rapids. Once completing her degree, she has become a Graphic Designer for The Envelope Printery Inc. and serves the DCA in various ways such as graphic design and coordination with the DCA Gallery Committee. She has helped clients such as Children's Literacy Network, US Jaycees Foundation, and has been featured by various publications globally. Erin stresses the importance of creative programs and solutions in our society. She claims that everyone is creative, it is just a matter of exercising it. She informs people of this necessity, while using her work and ways of thinking as a way to help others.



EMILY
KOKAY

*Community
Arts Associate*
emilykate96@hotmail.com

Emily Kokay is an artist, figure skater, dancer and community-service based arts advocate in the Downriver Michigan area. She is a graduate from the University of Toledo with a Bachelors of Arts in Visual Arts, Magna Cum Laude. Her personal works revolve around expressions of the Earth's complex processes while demonstrating the human impact through an emotional perception. The concept is to understand the visions of the natural world while exploring what art can do for people, society and Culture. As the DCA Community Arts Associate, Emily utilizes the visual arts to engage and collaborate with community groups to foster opportunities of creativity and possible healing to benefit the livelihood of the community. She is a recipient of the 2019 CultureSource Creators of Culture grant, in which she is leading a project to provide the City of Ecorse with an outdoor public art sculpture.



CHEYENNE
VANHOOSER

Program Director
cvanhooser@gmail.com

Cheyenne VanHooser is a ceramicist that was born and raised in Downriver to a big family with too many siblings. Art has always been her passion, and even when she was set to go into the science field during college, art always managed to wrangle her back in. She attends Wayne State University and is working towards a Bachelors of Fine Arts in ceramics with a minor in design. In 2019, she was pointed towards the DCA and has been interning ever since, using this experience to do anything from administration, to grant writing, to special projects. As an artist and student, she is ecstatic to be able to work at the DCA and is hoping to use it as an opportunity to learn more about the art world at large, and to be able to interact with various organizations and individuals that make up the local arts nonprofit sector.



In 2019, a large-scale collaborative installation was erected in the center of the Main Floor Gallery of the DCA as a featured piece for the Fibril Illusions: Fiber and Fashion Art Exhibition. The piece, which took 3 months to construct and 13 hours to install, when coupled with the Yarn Bomb of our historic facility, became the visual-art buzz of the region online, in print media, public access tv, and drew hundreds of viewers over the 4 weeks of the show.

MEET OUR BOARD MEMBERS

JAN DUNBAR

*President
Artist /
Acanthus
Art Society*

DALE COOK

*Past President
Vice President
PNC Bank,
Allen Park*

LINDA SOULES

*Treasurer
President, Seaway
Chorale &
Orchestra*

AYANA KING

*Secretary,
Owner/Operator
Maximum
Communications,
LLC*

JAMES DESANA

*Member at large
Past Mayor, City
of Wyandotte, MI
Past State Senator*

PHILLIPA MATAKAS

*Member at Large
Self Employed Real
Estate Development*

Rob Bovitz

*President Bovitz CPA
PC. & Bovitz Mgmt.
Services, Inc.*

Anthony Harrison

*Prevention Field
Supervisor,
The Guidance
Center*

Waltraud Prechter

*Founder, Heinz C.
Prechter Bipolar
Research Fund*

Travis Reiff

*Special Education
Teacher, Wyandotte
Public Schools*

Michele Porter

*Academic Service
Officer III Art
Dept., Wayne State
University*

Steve Wildern

*Theatre Operations
Dean, WCCCD*

Scott Galeski

*Truant Officer,
Wyandotte Schools
/ Retired Downriver
Detroit Police
Detective*

OUR MISSION

To enrich the quality of life in the Downriver communities by advocating and promoting the arts and providing opportunities for involvement and participation in arts and cultural activities.



SARA WILKINS

Community Yarn Bomb 2019



MIKE
MULLEN

Mike completed a BFA from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan where he focused on skills in drawing and printmaking. His craft today is realized through the relief process in printmaking where it is printed from an 1891 Chandler & Price letterpress custom restored himself. He works as a freelance art director and in addition to his graphic and fine art work, Mike is a musician playing guitar, mountain dulcimer and Celtic harp. Mike's love for traditional American music is an influence on his printmaking and can be seen on his website at michaelmullencollection.com.



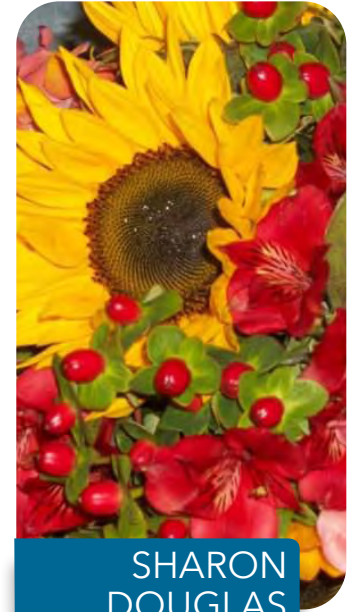
SCOTT
GALESKI

Scott is an award winning independent filmmaker and a retired police detective from Downriver Detroit, Michigan. A coach and mentor to at-risk and disadvantaged youth, in combination with his law enforcement career, has given him a unique insight into filmmaking. In 2009 Galeski founded Ring of Fire Entertainment which has produced over 30 independent films and music videos that have screened throughout the world. He founded the Downriver Detroit Student Film Consortium diversely consisting of students from Detroit and Downriver area schools.



JAMIE
LEBOUF

Born and raised in Lincoln Park, Michigan, Jamie creates hand-crafted, artisan chocolates and confections in the kitchen at the Art Center and distributes them throughout Southeast Michigan. As a Muslim-American woman, she spent nearly 20 years abroad perfecting her craft and opened her first boutique chocolate production facility and group of retail stores in Beirut, Lebanon. Recently she has been selling her product every weekend at Eastern Market in Detroit. See more on Instagram @ [jpatricechocolatestudio](https://www.instagram.com/jpatricechocolatestudio).



SHARON
DOUGLAS

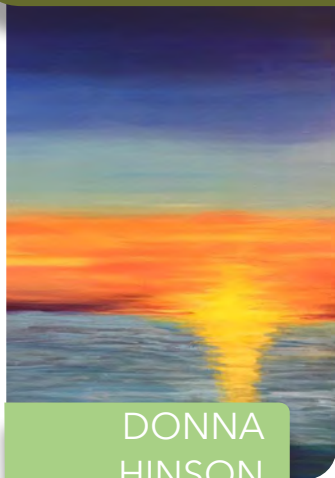
Sharon is an independent fresh floral designer from the Downriver area joining the DCA resident artists in 2019. She has been a resident of Wyandotte for many years, and has worked with fresh flowers for various events for more than forty years. She is drawn to creating with flowers because they are natural elements that can be used to bring happiness to people by their form and color. She particularly likes working with tropicals due to their interesting variations in shape. Events are markers in our lives...whether they be as joyous as a wedding or as emotional as a funeral. Sharon loves being part of those markers, and bringing beauty to those events with her flowers.

MEET OUR RESIDENT ARTISTS



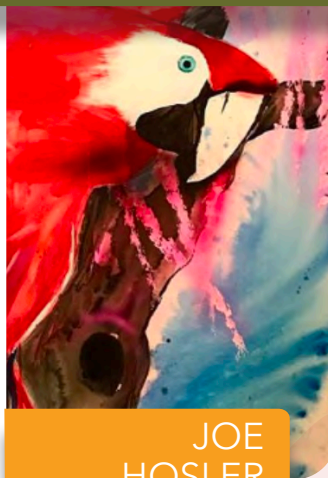
MARTINE
MACDONALD

Martine is an accomplished artist and Adjunct Professor at Wayne County Community College. She explores notions of place and time, refined through life experiences, dreams and memories into a visual essence. She strives to move her work towards a spirituality that reconciles issues of mothering, home, place and identity. Her work can be seen on her website at martinemacdonald.com.



DONNA
HINSON

Donna teaches classes through the DCA for children and adults, including the DCA's Youth Art classes and the DCA's Youth Summer Art Camps. Previously Donna was the owner/operator of a gallery and studio on Grosse Ile, and now focuses her paintings on relationships between people, self and the larger society. She is interested in what makes us who we are and how we interact with one another, how the larger world influences us and how we influence the world. Many of her pieces rely on nuanced balance and simplicity, and can be described best as intimate looks at ideas and feelings. View her art at her Facebook page at Donna Boisseau Hinson Studio.



JOE
HOSLER

Joe is an artist who has spent the last 5 years creating artworks that deliver an impact and have a story to tell. He works in various mediums and is not limited to aerosol paints, airbrush, acrylics, pencil, and ink. As he is growing in popularity, he has been commissioned to create various murals in the Downriver community. His work can be seen on Instagram @hoss_designs.

"Every child is an artist, the problem is staying an artist when you grow up."

Pablo Picasso



MARK
MESSER

Mark H. Messer is photographer and director of All Tech Visual Services, a commercial photography and video production studio in Wyandotte. Interested and involved in photography at a young age, Mark continued to make it a lifelong career. He studied photography at Red Rocks College, CO and worked for a number of years as a photography assistant with several commercial studios. In 1986 he began work as a staff photographer for Ford Motor Co, where he stayed for 22 years. Mark currently volunteers as a photography instructor with the Downriver Detroit Student Film Consortium, and as a photographer/video producer with the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance.



NICOLE GILLIES
& SHARON
LESPERANCE

Sharon and Nicole, a mother/daughter traditional-crafts team herald from Trenton, Michigan. Sharon worked for nearly 20 years as a craftswoman specializing in textiles, ceramics and tinwork at Greenfield Village located on the grounds of The Henry Ford. Nicole, a fiber artist specializing in 2-D and 3-D felted pieces, wearable art and decorative elements with natural textures/floral elements, teaches classes/workshops through the DCA in felting and surface design in textiles. Instagram is www.instagram.com/rovingeyetextiles



BE WELL MY
FRIENDS

Be Well My Friends is a non-profit fundraising organization founded and administered by Brian Webb of Riverview and Michael Balcom of Wyandotte. Their primary mission is to become the helping hands to those in need in the Downriver Community. Their 8 year history of charitable work began with the first Annual Wyandotte Zombie Pub Crawl which, to date, has raised over \$60k for the Yes Ma'am free mammogram program through Wyandotte Henry Ford Hospital. Currently they are working with local restaurants and online fundraising to provide free lunches to front-line workers at the Wyandotte Henry Ford Hospital throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic.

"Curiosity about life in all of its aspects, I think, is still the secret of great creative people."

Leo Burnett

MEET OUR RESIDENT ARTISTS



JEN
BALCOLM

Jen is a healing arts advocate administering massage therapy as a licensed massage therapist in the state of Michigan since 2008. She also creates a broad range of craft pieces ranging from cross stitch to jewelry to epoxy tumblers. She has been a frequent exhibitor through local artist fairs including the Downriver Indie Art Fair. Jen also works closely with her artist, musician and charity-fundraising organizer husband, Michael Balcom, at raising their two busy boys. More information can be found here. <http://www.detroitchairmassage.net>



PORTER
MCKEENN &
MICHELE
PORTER

Husband and wife team of artists, they are active members with the DCA. Porter helps out with the DCA Youth Arts Council and social media content. Working with both digital and traditional mediums, his work is greatly influenced by a pop culture, contemporary illustration, and modern design. Please visit McKeenn.com for more of his work. Michele, DCA Board Member and art advisor at a local university, is a photographer and fiber artist.



DAN
MCAFFEE

Dan is a fine art painter concentrating in Christian-based religious iconology.

**" I paint
flowers
so they
will not
die."**

Frida Khalo

INCOME STATEMENT 2018

HOW THE DCA IS FUNDED

Memberships, grants, foundation support, corporate support, sponsorships, fundraisers and special events, gallery sales, an annual giving campaign, classes, workshop fees and donations



PROGRAMMING
\$68,398



MEMBERSHIPS
\$10,990



FUNDRAISERS
\$11,828



DONATIONS
\$53,863



TOTAL INCOME
\$145,079



TOTAL EXPENSES
\$145,034



Thank you for your donations

The State of Michigan Council for
the Arts and Cultural Affairs: \$17,500

Hezekiah Zeiber Trust: \$6,000

Karen Smithbauer-Wilson: \$3,500

World Heritage Foundation -
Prechter Family Fund: \$3,000

The State of Michigan Council for
the Arts and Cultural Affairs New Leader:
\$1,470

Walt & Shelia Carter: \$1,000

BASF: \$1,000

American Indian Services: \$800

Congratulations to the DCA Garden Club for Winning two Beautification awards: one from the city of Wyandotte, and one from Keep Michigan Beautiful. It's a work in progress, but much has been done already. We are proud of our accomplishments and the beauty it has brought to the DCA.



THANK YOU FOR AN AMAZING ART CENTER

A LOT OF HARD WORK HAS GONE INTO MAKING THIS ART CENTER GREAT, AND WE ARE EXCITED TO SEE HOW FAR WE'VE COME!



WWW.DOWNRIVERARTS.ORG

Designed by
Erin Davis
Graphic Designer

*Produced with a generous donation
from the DCA Board of Directors*

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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for the *Arts*