



Jersey County Arts Council Reflects On Successful 2023, Plans For 2024

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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JERSEYVILLE - The [Jersey County Arts Council \(JCAC\)](#) has had an incredible year over the course of 2023. From hosting several community art events to their involvement in many prominent art projects, the organization has even more plans in store for 2024.

Sherry Droste, volunteer director for JCAC, said on [a recent episode of Our Daily Show! on Riverbender.com](#) that the council began nearly two years ago with a meeting of about 35 people, which convinced her the community would support such an organization. It has since grown in its size, reach, and offerings to the community.

“We have a track record that I’m really proud of,” Droste said. “Right now, just shy of two years, we’ve interacted with over 7,000 people.”

She added that “Jersey County is a great place,” having moved there 40 years ago from Godfrey. She noted the Jersey 100 School District’s reputation for great fine arts programs, but said local artists “didn’t really have other outlets.”

“Our mission is very simply, ‘Provide creative arts opportunities for folks in our county and the surrounding areas,’ because we have Calhoun, Greene, Macoupin - all small counties, all limited resources ... so we just said, ‘Hey, we’re going to look at whatever’s out there. If we can make it available to folks, put on a field trip, whatever it is, let’s do it,’” she said.

Droste said the Arts Council has hosted several successful events in the past. Parents and grandparents have attended painting classes with their children and grandchildren.

Last fall, JCAC took a bus full of people on a field trip to the nighttime Chihuly in the Garden exhibit at the Missouri Botanical Garden. They also recently took a group to Ruby Ren to attend a charcuterie class.

She added the organization has funds set aside for events like these, with even more events slated for the future, including an authentic German pretzel making class coming up sometime in early January (Droste said an official date has not been finalized yet). On June 1, 2024, the Arts Council is also hosting an Art Block Party at City Center Plaza in Jerseyville. The event will feature a kids' zone, adult art activities, face painting, vendors, and more.

The Arts Council has also been involved in several art projects around Jerseyville and Jersey County this past year. They recently funded the [towering crocheted “granny square” Christmas Tree](#) which came to fruition in Jerseyville thanks to contributions from local high school students and even out-of-state granny square contributors.

This past fall, JCAC was the group behind the several scarecrows that lined State Street, each made as part of a “Scarecrow Challenge.” The organization also facilitated the many Halloween-themed window murals painted on local storefronts. Last summer, several local businesses painted wooden cows which the JCAC featured in their “Cow Parade” float for the [2023 Jersey County Fair Parade](#), with many businesses prominently displaying their painted cows for days after the parade. Droste said the Cow Parade will be returning in 2024.

Droste added that you don't have to be a Jersey County resident to join the Arts Council and participate in their events; in fact, their field trip to the Chihuly exhibit included attendees from Alton, Wood River, and Hillsboro.

“We mostly have Jersey County folks, but you know, if you hear about it and it sounds interesting to you, then nobody is excluded,” she said.

To find out more about the Jersey County Arts Council and their upcoming events, visit their [Facebook page](#) or check out the full interview with Droste at the top of this story or on [Riverbender.com/video](#).