

Pella Community Art Center

The Pella Community Art Center is a program of the City of Pella Community Services Department. Opened by the Community Center Board in 1990, the Art Center provides a variety of educational yearly programs for students of all ages including an interdisciplinary after school program for students K-12, community outreach projects for service groups, schools, library, parks, and other agencies. It also organizes exhibitions of local, regional and national artists for the Community Center's Joan Kuyper Farver Art Gallery.

Started by the Community Center Board in 1990, the Art Center initially served 40 students two days per week with an after school program. The Art Center has expanded into a multifaceted venture providing a wide range of educational, visual, and performing arts programs to more than 15,000 Pella residents annually. The Art Center Programs has grown exponentially, providing children, teens, families, adults and senior citizens an invaluable experience that leads to a lifetime appreciation of the arts.

Art Center programs place an emphasis on encouraging students to explore the process of creativity rather than the formulaic production of products. We strive to provide students the opportunity to address their individual creative needs, encourage students to define their own projects, and provide the necessary knowledge, encouragement, inspiration, materials, and equipment to help students meet their individual goals.

Through classes, performances, exhibits, workshops and community projects, the Art Center programs serve rural and small-town/suburban residents, many of whom participate continuously from kindergarten through 12th grade, and even go on to major in an arts discipline in college. "Graduates" of the Art Center program have opened art studios and galleries and become art teachers.

The process of learning is as important as the creation of a product while partnerships and community support are the keys to the Art Center's success. Art Education students at Central College get hands-on training working with students or side-by-side with veteran teachers. Since 1990 the Art Center and its programs have involved cooperation and partnerships with Central College, The Carnegie Vierson Library, Pella Community and Christian Schools, the Pella Opera House and the Pella Historical Society.

It is the Art Center's policy that the programs be inclusive and available to the community without economic stigma. The Art Center is able to do this by using a combination of user fees, city funds, grants, cooperative programming with Central College, as well as corporate and private donations. Parents and community members offer support by volunteering and by donating materials and supplies.

The Art Center programs are featured as a model program in a Report to the Governor and General Assembly on the Status of Out-of School Arts Programming for youth. The report was published in December 2006 by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs in conjunction with the Iowa After School Alliance.

Andrea Mitchel, Cultural Affairs Manager
Kevin Vos, Community Services Director

For additional information, please visit www.cityofpella.com