



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 9, 2020

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www.kalamazooarts.org

ACGK announces programming changes in the wake of COVID-19

Kalamazoo, MI – After a great deal of consideration for the state of our communities and states during this time of the pandemic, the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo has made the difficult decision to cancel Art on the Mall 2020. “We have been in discussions and working closely with other arts organizations and event planners in Kalamazoo to ensure we are doing what’s best for local artists as well as our community members,” says Executive Director Kristen Chesak. “August is right around the corner and unfortunately the COVID-19 numbers are still on the rise nationwide and we did not want to put anyone at risk with Art on the Mall.”

Typically taking place the first full weekend in June the event was initially moved to mid-August with the hope the curve would be flattened by then. “Even with all of the safety measures in place such as social distancing and requiring masks, we had to make the decision to cancel the event for the safety of the entire community,” says Chesak. Art on the Mall (and other events in the Kalamazoo area taking place on the same weekend) draws thousands of people into the downtown area each year. One of the primary considerations in canceling Art on the Mall is the significant challenge posed by the nature of the event itself. “It takes place on the Kalamazoo Mall and people walk around from booth to booth purchasing various pieces of art.” Chesak says not being able to safely socially distance with thousands of people as well as an inability to control the environment were both major factors in the decision to cancel Art on the Mall.

While some programs have been canceled, others will continue with safety guidelines in place including social distancing and mask requirements. “We feel confident that Concerts in the Park, which takes place in Bronson Park, will be a safe event,” says Chesak. “Concerts are different in that people are typically staying in one place throughout the event.” Chesak says the stationary nature of the audience for Concerts in the Park provides a safer, more controllable environment for people in attendance. Concerts in the Park kicks off on July 19.

The Arts Council has made programming changes in other areas as well. Since the beginning of the pandemic and throughout the quarantine the Art Hop has become a virtual event taking place on Facebook. In July, the Arts Council will debut the Art Hop Spotlight Series. “We are so excited about this opportunity to get a closer look at our local artists and understand what drives their creativity and their work,” says Programs Director Bianca Washington Ciungan. The series kicks off on the ACGK’s Facebook



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Page (@acgk359) from 5-6:30 pm on July 10 and will feature artwork curated by Soul Artistry LLC. The event will also take place July 17 and 24.

“The Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo exists to support local artists and arts organizations and we will continue to do so,” says Chesak. “While this is a challenging time it is also a time that encourages all of us to get really creative about how to stay connected with the arts and with each other.”

In addition to the Arts Council’s outdoor concert series, Concerts in the Park, its community concert series, Summertime Live, will also take place at various venues throughout the summer. For the most up to date information about any of the Arts Council’s programs please visit KalamazooArts.org.

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