

A Chat with a Local Philanthropist—Wayne A. Lippert Jr.

Contributed by Melanie Derrick, Development Associate, ArtWorks



Wayne A. Lippert Jr.

ArtWorks, a Cincinnati based non-profit organization, connects artists of all ages with opportunities in the arts through inspiring apprenticeships, community partnerships and public art. Perhaps you've seen teens creating massive works of art on once-bare walls in your neighborhood, or remember a fiberglass pig or two from 2000's Big Pig Gig. Teens at work and public art in Cincinnati are what drew Wayne Lippert to the organization. Lippert, who currently serves as the Secretary and Treasurer of the ArtWorks Board, was originally drawn to the organization because of its mission: to provide meaningful employment and training in the arts to Greater Cincinnati area teens. It is his personal mission in his fundraising efforts on behalf of ArtWorks, that the organization be able to continue its 13-year legacy in the Cincinnati community.

ArtWorks Development Associate Melanie E. Derrick shared 15 minutes with Wayne Lippert to discuss his philanthropic involvement with the organization:

Q: Currently, you are serving as Secretary and Treasurer of the ArtWorks Board. How long have you been involved with ArtWorks?

A: I became an ArtWorks board member in 2005, but have been in my current role as Secretary/Treasurer for just two months.

Q: You got involved with ArtWorks through the Fine Arts Fund Business on Board Program. What was it about ArtWorks that made you want to be involved?

A: I was drawn to ArtWorks' mission of employing young people to create public works of art. In my view, the benefits are two-fold: we are helping to develop the artistic skills of teens, and the Greater Cincinnati community becomes more enlivened by the art that is created.

Q: What other organizations and/or initiatives have you been involved with?

A: While living in the New York City area, I became involved with the New York Big Brother/Big Sister program and served

as a mentor for a teen that lost his father. In Cincinnati, I have volunteered for events benefitting the Leukemia Society as well as various political campaigns and candidates.

Q: With so many organizations out there in need, how do you decide what organizations to give to?

A: I think you really need to believe in the mission of the organization, and focus your resources on where you can provide the greatest impact.

Q: How do you find a balance between your work and home lives and making time to give back?

A: Maintaining a balance between work, home and my time with non-profits is a big challenge, particularly with three young children. I've tried to become efficient by allocating my time in advance so I can avoid major conflicts. There are so many good causes and it's very easy to take on more than you can handle, so I tend to focus my efforts on one or two causes to support outside of my home and family.

Q: As an emerging philanthropist, what advice do you have for others who are considering giving?

A: Most think of philanthropy from a monetary standpoint, but giving your time is also vital to the success of non-profit organizations. At ArtWorks, I help interview the hundreds of teens that apply for a job in the summer arts program. ArtWorks has nearly 100 volunteers to help with interviews and without these volunteers, the organization would not be able to offer each applicant an interview and an equal opportunity to be hired. Your time working with non-profits is just as important as money.

Q: Currently you are assisting ArtWorks with sponsorship opportunities for their upcoming fundraiser, Secret ArtWorks. What is it about Secret ArtWorks that differentiates itself from other fundraisers?

A: Secret ArtWorks has become one of the premier non-profit events in the city. With the purchase of a ticket, attendees are given the opportunity to select a work of art created by a local, national or international artist whose identity is revealed only after it is chosen. So you may be able to obtain a valuable piece of art for just the price of a ticket! The event attracts a

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prestigious audience of over 500 individuals, including art collectors and business and community leaders. Last year's event was a huge success – it was awarded Best Fundraiser in 2007 by Cincinnati CityBeat readers. All proceeds go directly to ArtWorks programming including projects such as MuralWorks and The Outdoor Museum (TOM).

Q: ArtWorks is known for the creation of public art. Personally, what is your favorite ArtWorks project so far?

A: That's hard to say because there have been so many

fantastic projects. The Big Pig Gig immediately comes to mind and may be ArtWorks' best known endeavor, but I have been also impressed with MuralWorks and how it has brightened up communities.

As an ArtWorks ally, collaborating on each of the organization's major fundraising initiatives and sharing of his personal time and talents, Wayne makes an impact wherever he can, and is able to see that ArtWorks continues to fulfill its mission by employing more teens to create art in the City of Cincinnati.

From the Headlines

Senators Introduce Charitable Incentives Amendment

Contributed by Heidi B. Jark, Vice President and Manager, Fifth Third Bank

Charles Grassley (R-IA) joined by a bipartisan group of Senators introduced an amendment on Tuesday, June 24th, the Midwestern Disaster Tax Relief, to housing legislation (HR 3221 - the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008) that is pending in the Senate.

The amendment is designed to assist communities in nine Midwestern states (Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin) that have been affected by this year's floods, tornados and severe storms. Provisions of the amendment include several charitable giving incentives that would allow disaster victims to withdraw money from individual retirement plans without tax penalties, suspend limits on tax incentives for charitable contributions, increase the standard mileage for charitable use of vehicles and enhance the deduction for donations of food and book inventory, among other provisions. The amendment however, does not include donor-advised funds and supporting organizations. Visit the Council on Foundations Web site for our analysis of the amendment.

The underlying legislation, H.R. 3221, is significant as it is the most important response by Congress to the ongoing housing crisis. The measure includes a \$300 billion expansion of the Federal Housing Administration's insurance programs to back refinanced loans for struggling borrowers, a modernization of the FHA, regulatory overhaul of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and a \$14.5 billion package of housing-focused tax breaks.

However a result of contentious amendments, some of which are not directly related to housing issues, the bill may be stalled further. The Senate's consideration of the legislation is not expected to be resumed until after Congress returns from its Fourth of July recess.

Senator Grassley among other supporters of the Midwestern Disaster Tax Relief amendment issued a press release of the importance of tax relief to provide resources to help communities begin to recover and rebuild from the recent flooding of the Midwest. Grassley said "Tax relief has been important and helpful to tornado and hurricane victims in recent years, and it's just as important for people in Iowa and other Midwestern states this year who have been wiped out by flooding tornados".

It is important that donor-advised funds and supporting organizations are part of the charitable incentives included in the Disaster Tax Relief amendment. The Council will continue to request that Congress include these important components of the charitable sector. We will issue a call to action to community foundations to support this effort. For additional questions, please contact Luis Maldonado or Chatrane Birbal in our Public Policy and Research Department. You can reach Luis at Luis.Maldonado@cof.org or 703-879-0688 and Chatrane at Chatrane.Birbal@cof.org or 703-879-0689.