

the Resilient Palette

BARNSTONE ART FOR KIDS E-NEWS

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Executive Director

Sean Halloran



For over a year, our Board has done an enormous amount of work toward creating our new Strategic Plan. This roadmap for our future reflects a thorough process that included our families, partners and peer organizations from around our region. Across the span of that work the theme of community connection kept making its way into the conversations. Why is Barnstone Art for Kids successful? Community connection. The important role played by our partners, neighbors, and friends was shown to be a high contributor to our success. This insight was captured in our new Mission statement, but is already integrated into our daily operations.

All of this is, of course, in service of our greater purpose in fostering the skills of resiliency in our children. We are in the business of creating healthy connections for kids. Just today, we were back at The Heart (a wonderful non-profit space made available through collaboration with Ann's Heart) and providing another art-making session with our smallest friends, the pre-schoolers from Mom's House. These wonderful 3- and 4-year-old kiddos enjoy active sessions with fun and creative art projects, spontaneous play with musical instruments and a project-related story reading. Hearing heaps of praise for their project, or their musical talents, the kids beam with pride. Making that happen requires many adult hands working together, but it is worth it!

Going forward, making new connections and nurturing our current partnerships has never been more important. We are seeing difficult times in the world and even here in our little part of it. We highlight some of the challenges we face with our children's mental health in this edition, and hope that you read on and join our call to action.

Yours in service,
Sean



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Barnstone Art For Kids

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Executive Director

Lisa Katarynick
Director of Programming

Board of Directors

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Mental Health

A Cohesive Community Leads to Better Mental Health Outcomes for Kids

Recent research around the mental health of adolescents since the onset of the pandemic evidences some alarming concerns. “One in three high schoolers experienced poor mental health, with 44.2 percent reporting persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness. Nearly 20 percent said they considered suicide, and 9 percent said they had attempted suicide during the previous year.” ([read full article here](#)) These findings point to increased stressors in the household, including higher rates of physical and emotional violence as contributing to the spike. Researchers say circumstances are most alarming for young women and those who identify as lesbian, bisexual, or bisexual. While these statistics are certainly correlated to the stressors around the pandemic, there is cause for hope. Research also shows that communities with higher social cohesion evidence fewer mental health concerns in their adolescents. “Greater neighborhood social cohesion appeared to buffer the effects of stressful life events on several domains of adolescent mental health. This potentially presents a target for public health intervention to improve adolescent mental health and behavioral outcomes.” ([read full article here](#)) These findings indicate that everyone in our community plays a potential role in helping our kids stay healthy. It’s as simple as saying hello, and engaging compassionately with the neighborhood around us. Here at Barnstone Art for Kids, we recognize the power of “the village” and work to bring these protective factors to our community. We invite you to join us in helping our kids to heal, cope and grow!



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Mentor Spotlight

Finnley Ward

In each Newsletter we are grateful to share a little information about one of our amazing volunteer Mentors. This edition is no different, and features a young man who has worked as an intern here for the past year. Finn has been a wonderful addition to our team, and our young artists have benefitted from his presence. I asked Finn, a trans man, to share his perspective on his work and on bringing his experience to our groups. The LGBTQ+ community has been “under fire” from some factions in our country lately, but I believe it is critical to show support to our children and our friends who might face oppression because of who they are. Barnstone Art for Kids is so grateful and lucky to have had Finn with us, and I think the feeling may have been mutual. Read on and listen to what he has to share...



“When I first came to Barnstone, I didn’t really know what to expect as an MSW student or as a transgender man. I was very open with my identity and, unsurprisingly, they were very supportive and open. They made me so comfortable and were very receptive to hearing about how they could become stronger allies! Throughout the last seven months I have seen our kiddos break out of their shells and absolutely thrive. This has also become a safe haven for our LGBTQ+ youth. I have watched every single one of them become more comfortable to openly be themselves. They feel safe enough to express themselves through their art and freely exist without worry of judgement from others. For some of our kids this is the only place that they can do this. This is why we strive to create a safe space for all of our youth. I would like to thank Sean and Lisa because they have been absolutely phenomenal throughout this whole process. It would not be Barnstone without them!”



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FINNLEY WARD

Barnstone Art For Kids Intern



Program Update

Barnstone Art for Kids staff and volunteers have been wonderfully busy these past months, with a full complement of programs. Our signature Power of Art and Emerging Voices are meeting weekly with 2 groups each! It has been wonderful to be meeting back in the barn, and in person again! We have also returned to hosting our alumni Beyond the Power kids on a monthly basis, and have expanded to include a teen Open Studio session as well. The opportunity for the kids and teens to return to the barn helps keep us connected while keeping the creativity

flowing! Barnstone staff has also returned to our HeART Room at The Heart in downtown Phoenixville. We absolutely love working with the pre-schoolers from Mom's House, and making incredible art projects with our littlest friends! As we look to Spring and Summer, we anticipate adding MORE On the Go programs. So keep an eye out for us on social media and our website! For parents and caregivers, our Summer program enrollment begins in April. Please visit us at www.barnstoneartforkids.org for more details!



Barnstone Art For Kids Awarded

PA Sharp Grant



Barnstone Art for Kids was fortunate to apply and be selected for a grant through the Pennsylvania Humanities Council. Barnstone's grant, under the PA SHARP program, will be used to support our work and bring trauma-informed art sessions to children in our region! Our award caught the eye of U.S. Representative Chrissy Houlahan, who visited us in February! Our friend Tamela Luce, President/CEO of PCHF and Mayor Peter Urscheler joined us in the barn welcoming Representative Houlahan and her staff. We had a brief, but meaningful conversation about childhood trauma, our region, and the work of Barnstone Art for Kids. Thanks to Tamela and Peter for helping make this a community conversation!



(Left to Right) Sean Halloran, Lisa Katarynick, Chrissy Houlahan, Peter Urscheler and Tamela Luce

Calendar

April - September 2022

APRIL 9
Barnstone LIVE! Art Spectacular Fundraiser
5:30-10:00 PM

APRIL 19
Spring Classes Begin
Barnstone Art For Kids

JUNE 21
Summer Classes Begin
Barnstone Art For Kids
barnstoneartforkids.org

AUGUST 29
Fall 2022 applications due

AUGUST 31
Volunteer Mentor Training
6:00-8:00 PM
Barnstone Art For Kids

SEPTEMBER 19
Fall Classes Begin
Barnstone Art For Kids