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Press Release
May 10, 2021

ACES Kids in the Arts Program

The Arts Centre for Edson Society would like to officially announce their newest initiative called Kids in the Arts.

The Kids in the Arts Program's purpose is to foster an early involvement and continuation in the arts by providing bursaries to children from families facing financial barriers. The program will provide bursaries to children up to 50% of the cost of the arts and culture program or activity.

"This was an idea that we have talked about for some time," says ACES President Peter Taylor. "Over the last few months, due to the downturn in the economy from the COVID-19 pandemic, we knew this would be an important program to start soon." Taylor added that the volunteer group of ACES worked together doing research on how to raise funds, organize the application process, and set up a portion of their website exclusively for the program.

Taylor says the Kids in the Arts Program will see a number of benefits. "Firstly, children who may not be usually exposed to arts and culture programs are getting the ability to do so. Secondly, many arts and culture programs saw a reduction, postponement or cancellation of programs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Kids in the Arts program can help to bring those numbers back up in the coming months. Finally, the mental health of children is of utmost importance. Many children have not been able to have access to different activities over the last year. We want to give them those important opportunities so they can showcase their artistic abilities."

In late March, Taylor made a presentation to Edson Town Council explaining the program and looking for seed money to start. "The entire Council was very supportive," says Taylor. "They asked great questions and said that this program would fall perfectly into their COVID-19 recovery plan. We understand that many individuals have faced additional financial hardships due to pandemic, and this is another way we can help their families in their time of need." In early April, Town Council awarded ACES \$5000 to begin the program so that they could start taking applications soon.

Shortly after the presentation, Main Street store Fineline Stationary donated an additional \$1000 to kickstart the campaign. "This was completely overwhelming," says Taylor. "We are so thankful to Mr. Ken Ramsay for this generous donation. This shows the amazing community partnerships that exist in our great community."

ACES is continuing to look for local businesses to help sponsor the program. If businesses or individuals are interested in assisting, please contact Taylor via their website, artscentreforedson.ca.

"Now we are looking to make sure the message gets out to the arts organizations and individuals," says Taylor. "From there these organizations can tell their participants. We want people applying for this funding." ACES encourages families to apply by going to the ACES website. Applicants will need to provide a letter from a sponsor who can vouch to their financial need. All applicants' names and information will be kept strictly confidential. Individuals may also sponsor families who they feel may need financial assistance.

With that, ACES is looking forward to seeing the first batch of applicants come in over the coming months. There are three deadlines to apply for funding throughout the year: June 15th, September 15th and January 15th.

For more information on the Arts Centre for Edson Society, go to their website at artscentreforedson.ca.