



April 7, 2020

Friends and Community Partners – The continued health and safety of our entire community has been the utmost importance to the Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association (BRMAA). Given the increasing changes, projections and safety concerns over COVID-19 and with the recent state-wide school cancellation for the rest of the academic year by Governor Kemp, the Art Center will continue to remain closed to the public through May 5, 2020, until further notice. Additionally, we are extending all cancellations and postponing/rescheduling the following events and programs:

- Youth-based programming such as Dance and Music will be cancelled through May 5, 2020. We are currently working on possible video/ online programming to share with all currently registered students. We will share this with registered students as soon as it becomes available.
- All BRMAA sponsored artist guild meetings and community partners meetings such as Master Gardeners and Blue Ridge Business Association will be cancelled through the end of May 2020.
- All classes and workshops scheduled through May 2020 will be postponed or cancelled to a later date. Our Arts Education and Programming coordinator, Ginger Yaxley, will be in touch with further information and details on specific class updates, transfers and refunds to all registered students and instructors.
- **23rd Annual Writers' Conference**, originally scheduled for April 3rd and 4th, 2020, has been rescheduled to September 4th and 5th, 2020. If you have registered for our conference, we will work with you to transfer your current registration to the new dates or offer a full refund. New registrations will now be accepted. Please visit www.BlueRidgeWritersConference.com for registration and information on our new September date. We thank you for your patience as we work to make sure we take care of each registered guest personally.
- **BRMAA's Volunteer Appreciation** event originally scheduled for April 23rd at Burra Burra Restaurant has been postponed for a later date. We will notify our volunteers as soon as a date has been secured.
- **BRMAA's Volunteer Exhibit Training** originally scheduled for April 23rd at the Art Center has been postponed for a later date. We will notify our volunteers as soon as a date has been secured.
- **The Community Quilt & Fiber Arts Show**, scheduled for June 13 - July 19, has been cancelled this year to accommodate this season's exhibit changes and cancellations.
- **The 3D Off the Wall** exhibition, scheduled for July 25 - August 29, has been cancelled to accommodate all our class cancellations and postponements.



Smithsonian Institute's *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* Exhibit and Events

The scheduled **April 24th & 25th Grand Opening reception** and our presentation of Smithsonian's *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* exhibit and all partner exhibition openings including *Appalachian Perspectives*, Community PhotoStory, *Stories: YES* Fannin High School video project and our 2nd quarter Artist in Residence Colleen Sterling have been postponed. We are working with our partners at the Smithsonian Institute and Georgia Humanities to solidify new dates. At this time, we are hopeful for a mid-June to July opening. As soon as we secure our final dates, we will notify our partners and our community, pending further public health measures. All programming developed in partnership with the Crossroads exhibition (www.BlueRidgeArts.net/crossroads2020) will be postponed until mid-June/ early July, as well.

44th Annual Spring Arts in the Park

As of today, April 7, we are actively exploring our options with regards to our 44th Annual Spring Arts in the Park, scheduled for **May 23rd & 24th**. On average, Spring Arts in the Park usually garners over 10,000 individuals to our area and with a responsibility and commitment to the health and safety of our community, it is with a heavy heart that we are considering cancelling or postponing the 44th Annual Spring Arts in the Park festival. Our Spring Arts in the Park festival is not only one of the premiere arts festivals of North Georgia providing a financial platform for many of our participating artists and local businesses, but also serves as the largest source of operational funding income for BRMAA. Just like many of our artists and local businesses are experiencing, the possible cancellation of this event will be detrimental to our organization and our organization's future. We continue to ask that everyone please bear with us as we navigate all the nuances of this postponement/ cancellation and how it affects our artists, general public, our partners and ultimately the future of BRMAA. The Board of Directors and I expect to make a final decision no later than April 15, 2020 on the future of our 44th Annual Spring Arts in the Park.

We are following the recommendations of The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the State of Georgia Governor's office, Fannin County Health Department, City and County government and are monitoring the situation closely. We will continue to respond according to their advice and guidance. Should we need to cancel or postpone further events and classes, we will be in touch via social media, email or phone with important updates as new information is released.

We encourage everyone to visit our Facebook or Instagram (@BRMAA_art_center) pages for updates and our *Creative Connect* initiative...our daily creative and arts-based updates featuring resources and links that will hopefully help artists, families, and community members with the many healing facets of the Arts and community connections during this challenging time.



If you would like to support BRMAA during this difficult time and **make a donation**, you may contribute to our future by visiting our website www.BlueRidgeArts.net/support or links provided via our social media accounts. There are many ways to show your support to our arts community... like and share our posts, renew or upgrade your membership to BRMAA, purchase artwork online from one of our highlighted artists, or just send us a kind e-note on how you love the arts. We thank our community for all the support you have shown us over the last 40 years. This has definitely been a 40th anniversary that we will never forget.

We send our best to all those affected by COVID-19 and hope that everyone stays healthy and safe in these uncertain times. In the meantime, let's all do what we can to lessen the severity of this outbreak by staying home and following medical and local government guidelines. We thank you for your continued support and patience as we navigate this ever-changing global health crisis in our very own community. We continue to send positive thoughts to all those in essential services, healthcare and the medical industry who are working tirelessly to combat this virus head-on.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our offices at (706) 632-2144 or via email at BlueRidgeArts@gmail.com.

Sincerely (from home),

Nichole Potzauf
Executive Director