



Dear Editor,

In early May I opened an express letter from the Presidential Committee on the Arts and Humanities. For the third year in a row the BCRAC was selected as one of 50 Semi-finalists in the Presidential Coming Up Taller Awards.

However, our highly honored arts in education program will be eliminated if the Pennsylvania legislature cuts Arts Funding to an unfair level. The Governor recommended a 10% reduction and the State Senate recommended a 100% reduction, and discussions are now underway.

Since 1988 the BCRAC has grown from an all-volunteer organization to a County-wide organization with 6 full-time and 32 part time staff, in part with the support of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA). In fact, the PCA provided the first funding in 1988 that allowed the BCRAC to hire Brooks as its first employee. Since then the BCRAC theatres (Keystone, Rialto and Sayre) have become anchor businesses in three Bradford County communities and have provided both entertainment and economic activity to our rural region.

At the same time, the BCRAC has won international, national and State recognition for its Arts in Education work. This work, done in partnership with the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts will be eliminated if the Grants for the Arts Funding goes to zero!

To repeat: **BCRAC's Recent Awards:**

1. **2009, 2008, 2007** – For three years running, the BCRAC was selected as semi-finalist from nominees from 47 states for a Presidential “Coming Up Taller Award.”
2. **2007** – On June 3, 2007 the BCRAC became the first recipient of the then, newly-created Americans for the Arts “Arts in Education Award” at the national convention in Las Vegas.
3. **2006** – BCRAC became the first rural organization to ever receive a Governor’s Award for the Arts in the 25 years of the awards. Our award was for Leadership and Service in Arts in Education.
4. **2004** – The Arts Council England selected the Learning Early Network and its *Learning Communication Skills Through the Arts* artist residency program were selected as an international model for early arts programming. The honor was presented at the NEW WORLDS CONFERENCE in Leeds, England in November, 2004

Can we afford to eliminate programs such as ours arts in education program that are helping children learn across the state? The PCA funds over 1400 arts organizations in Pennsylvania; programs widely recognized for excellence.

The PCA and the BCRAC are working with State and national partners to develop the International Early Arts Conference (www.earlyarsts.net) which will be presented in Pittsburgh next year. How can we tell participants that the organization that initiated the project (BCRAC's Learning Early Network) has been eliminated due to funding cuts?

Since the 1988 initial BCRAC funding, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts has dramatically increased funding to rural areas like Bradford County. Please encourage your legislators to maintain arts funding to all corners of the State; not just our urban centers.

For the BCRAC Board and Staff,

Brooks Eldredge-Martin

PS:

I have taken the liberty to attach Arts and Economic Prosperity: The effect of non-profit arts and cultural organizations and their audiences in Bradford County. As part of a national study, this report's conclusion is given below. Also attached is a photo of patrons, BCRAC board members and staff, local business people and the community.

Conclusion

“The nonprofit arts and culture are a \$3.9 million industry in Bradford County—one that supports 114 full-time equivalent jobs and generates \$247,000 in local and state government revenue. Nonprofit arts and culture organizations, which spend \$1.84 million annually, leverage a remarkable \$2.06 million in additional spending by arts and culture audiences—spending that pumps vital revenue into local restaurants, hotels, retail stores, parking garages, and other businesses in Bradford County. By demonstrating that investing in the arts and culture yields economic benefits, *Arts & Economic Prosperity III* lays to rest a common misconception: that communities support the arts and culture at the expense of local economic development. In fact, they are investing in an industry that supports jobs, generates government revenue, and is a cornerstone of tourism. This report shows conclusively that **the arts mean business in Bradford County!**”

The Conclusion of the 2007 AFTA study surveyed and collect input was collected from patrons attending events at the PA Apple and Cheese Festival, the Valley Chorus, Bradford County Regional Arts Council events, and many others to draw the conclusions.

