



Alleghany Foundation Supports The Alleghany Highlands Arts & Crafts Center



For the last twenty-four years, with the help of funding sources like The Alleghany Foundation, the Alleghany Highlands Arts and Crafts Center has worked to establish the Alleghany Highlands as a hospitable place for artists to come teach, create, and sell original, high quality artwork in a variety of mediums.

“The Center was founded in 1984 by a passionate group of residents who thought it was a shame there was no facility within a 30-minute drive that provided regular exhibits, classes, or marketing support for regional artists and crafts people,” says Nancy Newhard-Farrar, executive director of the Arts and Crafts Center. “After a lot of careful planning and consideration, they purchased the old power company building in Clifton Forge and the Alleghany Highlands Arts and Crafts Center was born.”

With one full-time executive director, one part-time administrative assistant, and more than 100 volunteers, the Center immediately began to fulfill its mission to stimulate appreciation of the visual arts in the Alleghany Highlands. Regular gallery exhibits showcase juried works by regional artists and craftsmen. Classes for art students and the general public include drawing, watercolor and oil, as well as techniques for stained glass, print and paper making. Retail space provides artists with a coveted outlet to market their work on consignment.

By the late nineties, the Arts and Crafts Center had grown to over 200 participating artists, and a public attendance of over 13,000 visitors a year. Educational outreach in the community had expanded to include professionally guided workshops for art teachers, and annual artist-in-residence programs for area high schools.

“The Center was quickly outgrowing its usable space,” says Newhard-Farrar. “And it was becoming difficult to convince qualified artists to teach in a ‘classroom’ that doubled as a gallery and retail outlet. We were in desperate need of an elevator to allow public access to the building’s second floor which was, at that point, only suitable for storage.”

To pay for the installation of the elevator, the Arts and Crafts Center was awarded a 70%-30% Challenge Grant from The Allegheny Foundation. Since that time, The Foundation has awarded the Arts and Crafts Center additional grants for building renovations and the purchase of updated computer equipment. All totaled, the Foundation has awarded grants to the Center in excess of \$425,000.

“We now have three beautiful, specialized classroom areas courtesy of The Allegheny Foundation,” says Newhard-Farrar. “In the first classroom, we have a natural light studio. The middle classroom is equipped with color adjusted light to insure all colors are true, which is especially important for portraiture. And, the third is a mat cutting room where local framers come in and teach artists how to prepare their work for professional display.”

Additional improvements to the historic building include a massive electrical overhaul, renovated office space, and a small library to house resource material for artists. The Allegheny Foundation’s most recent \$10,000 grant will cover the cost of modern computer technology which will allow for the capability of providing public access to a website for the Center.

“We are very excited about this grant,” says Newhard-Farrar. “Up until now, we’ve been getting by with donated equipment that’s over ten years old. A new computer system will really bring the Arts and Crafts Center into the 21st century.”

Farrar believes support from The Allegheny Foundation has been essential to the Center’s overall success.

“The Arts and Crafts Center is a central part of the artistic culture of the Allegheny Highlands,” says Beth Webb, executive director of The Allegheny Foundation. “The Foundation is pleased to support such a dynamic presence in our community.”

Since its inception, the foundation has granted nearly \$26 million to the following worthy, 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations with the purpose of improving the quality of life in the Allegheny Highlands:

- Allegheny County
- Allegheny County Parks and Recreation
- Allegheny County Public Schools
- Allegheny County Sheriff’s Office
- Allegheny County United Fire and Rescue Association
- Allegheny Health District
- Allegheny Highlands Arts & Crafts Center
- Allegheny Highlands Arts Council
- Allegheny Highlands Community Services Board
- Allegheny Highlands Economic Development Authority
- Allegheny Highlands Economic Development Corporation
- Allegheny Highlands Free Clinic
- Allegheny Highlands Genealogical Society
- Allegheny Highlands YMCA
- Allegheny Historical Society

Alleghany Humane Society
Alleghany Mountain Radio
American Diabetes Association
American Red Cross
Appalfolks of America
Art Museum of Western Virginia
Bath County
Bath County Health Department
Bath County Historical Society
Blue Ridge Public Television
Boiling Springs Elementary School
Boiling Springs Fire Department
C.O.P.E.
C & O Historical Society
Callaghan Elementary School PTO
Charles P. Jones Memorial Library
City of Covington
Clifton Forge Little League
Clifton Forge Main Street
Clifton Forge Nursery School
Clifton Forge Public Library
Clifton Forge Volunteer Fire Department
Covington City Schools
Covington Fire Department
Covington Rescue Squad
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College
Diabetes Education Support Group
Falling Spring Elementary School PTO
Falling Spring Fire Department
Falling Spring Rescue Squad
Greater Alleghany Highlands School Health Consortium
Jackson River Enterprises
Jackson river Technical Center
League of Older Americans
Mill Mountain Theatre
Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District
Mountain View Elementary School PTO
Rockbridge Area Community Services Board
Safehome Systems
Science Museum of Western Virginia
Scott Hill Foundation, Inc.
Sharon Elementary School PTO
Sharon Volunteer Fire Department
Shenandoah Autism Center
Southwest Virginia AHEC
Southwest Virginia Second Harvest Foodbank
Special Olympics
Total Action Against Poverty
Town of Clifton Forge
Town of Iron Gate
Unified Human Services Transportation System (RADAR)
West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine
Western Virginia Emergency Medical Service Council