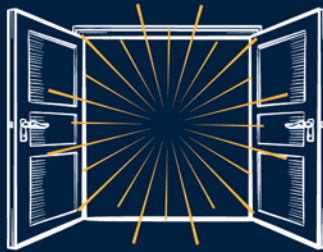


# DREAM BIG

2024 - 2025 CELEBRATION REPORT



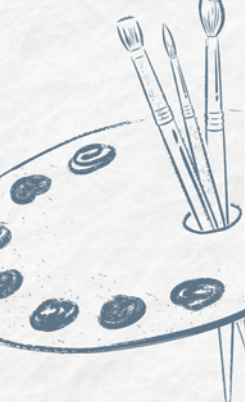
SUFFOLK  
CENTER FOR  
CULTURAL  
ARTS



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# A Message from Tom Yannuzzi, PhD

The Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts, as many know, started with the forethought of a group of people who imagined the old, run-down, Suffolk High School as a new, magnificent center that would celebrate our diverse cultures and keep the arts alive in downtown Suffolk. They imagined a Center that would invite all residents and visitors to roam its galleries, attend its performances, and participate in one of its many arts workshops. We are proud to say that in our first 18 years of operation hundreds of thousands accepted the invitation to be entertained, educated, and enlightened by an

experience at the Center.

In our 19th season, however, **we dared to Dream Big**, because when we looked around our community, we realized that too many children in our own community may never see the inside of this magnificent facility, and may never have the chance to have their talents recognized and nurtured. We found it unacceptable that so many children in our community may never be amazed by a theatrical performance, inspired by a provocative piece of art, or soothed by a beautiful arrangement of music; and it is not just children. Too many hardworking adults, often the parents of those children, will also never have an opportunity to engage in and be inspired by an arts experience.

Therefore, we had no choice but to **Dream Big**. We dreamed of a center that would go beyond welcoming residents and visitors, by reaching out to them to ensure that all residents, no matter their financial means, have access to quality arts experiences. We dreamed of a center that would serve its residents to help uplift our downtown community, creating a better quality of life for all of Suffolk and the entire Western Tidewater region. Our dreams included breaking down barriers to visiting the Center, and providing the means through which all residents of Suffolk could access the amazing experiences the Center provides.

To bring our dream to reality, we partnered with other non-profits and the city to provide traditionally underserved individuals and communities opportunities to engage with us. We created programs and processes that helped overcome their barrier to entry. For example, knowing the transportation challenges for our schools and underserved populations, we developed programs during more practical hours and offered them free to anyone in our community. These programs are not only highly entertaining, but they also provide relevant and often inspirational education about historical figures, events, and artifacts. We also created programs that took the Center to the community. Our Artists in Schools program, highlighted in last year's report, sends artist to the schools and uses art to teach lessons about humanity, lessons that are often challenging to teach through traditional methods.

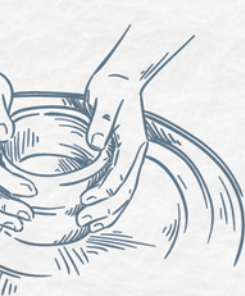
Our Big Dreams didn't stop at creating access to our incredible arts experiences, we dreamed of a center that would be used as an asset to address some of the basic needs of our community, such as food insecurity. For example, we held our inaugural Magical Christmas Tree Tour, which had 18 local organizations creatively decorate Christmas trees to represent their purpose/mission. The trees were installed in the Center's TowneBank and Norfolk Foundation art galleries, and the public visited the Center to vote on the trees using nonperishable goods. The tree that ended with the most goods under it was declared the winner—congratulations to the NBS Express Run Club! In fact, we all won when our dream came true and we donated over 2500 food items to the ForKids food pantry.

I am so very honored to be a part of this incredible institution, and even more proud of what we have accomplished over the past couple of years. I cannot wait to showcase all of the exciting plans for our 20th anniversary season! Our big dreams are just getting bigger!

In closing, I want to sincerely thank all of our members and the supporters of the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts. Your donations and engagement with the Center are truly making a difference; allowing us to continue the dream of a better future for all through the arts. I look forward to seeing you again soon at the Suffolk Center!

Thomas J. Yannuzzi, Ph.D.

Executive Director & CEO | Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts





The 2024–2025 season was filled with exciting milestones and inspiring growth. From the stage to the galleries and beyond, this year brought fresh energy and momentum to the Suffolk Center.



## 2024-2025 *Rewind*



### **Membership Increased:**

We increased from 223 members in June, 2024 to 279 in June, 2025; a 56 member increase, 39 of whom were new members!

### **Increased New Attendees:**

Over 1,300 new people attended exhibitions, classes, and performances!

### **Dream Big – The Imagination Celebration:**

On February 22nd, the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts hosted DREAM BIG – The Imagination Celebration, an evening that truly lived up to its name. Guests wore their dreamiest cocktail attire and filled the building with energy and excitement, enjoying fine food, signature drinks, live music, dancing, and lively bidding on auction items. The night brought together longtime supporters and new friends in a joyful celebration of creativity and community spirit.

Funds raised through ticket sales, donations, and sponsorships helped ensure that the arts remain vibrant and accessible for everyone in Western Tidewater. It was a night to remember and a powerful reminder of what can happen when a community comes together to dream big.







## In-House Catering Launched:

Officially implemented in December 2024, our exclusive in-house catering has allowed us to streamline planning and position SCCA as a true one-stop venue.

## Early Re-Booking by Production & Dance Companies:

Local studios now reserve the theater further in advance, locking in multi-day recital dates as early as a year out. This shift secures premium weekends, reduces dark-house gaps, and underscores the venue's importance to the regional dance community.

## Growth in Event Volume & Usage:

We completed 67 contracted rentals, up 15 % from last year. Those bookings totaled 549 event hours, a 21.4 % jump, demonstrating fuller weekday schedules and longer average events. The uptick reflects steady demand for our spaces and confirms the Center's growing financial strength.

## Rental Clients Return for Performances:

A growing number of renters return as ticket-buying patrons for our public shows, turning one-time venue users into repeat arts supporters. This crossover boosts attendance, broadens our audience base, and deepens community ties.



## United Way Certified Agency:

In 2024, the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts became a certified agency of the United Way of South Hampton Roads. This partnership reflects our shared commitment to building a healthy, vibrant community where every resident can thrive. Through this collaboration, we continue to expand access to programs and experiences that bring people together, strengthen connections, and enrich community life across Western Tidewater.



Ishta Hurtado  
Education & Community Outreach Manager





Taylor Ballroom



## Historical Classroom



## Birdsong Theater



## Special Events



**Kathy Decoud**  
Special Events Manager

This fiscal year, the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts has seen meaningful growth in its special events and rental program. With 67 events completed or scheduled, the Center continues to serve as a key destination for community gatherings, performances, and private celebrations.

Compared to the previous fiscal year, bookings and event hours increased by more than 20%, reflecting stronger engagement and greater demand across venue spaces. The addition of exclusive in-house catering has further enhanced the guest experience and streamlined event coordination.

### Event Type Breakdown:

Weddings & Receptions – 6  
 Birthday Celebrations – 5  
 Dance Recitals & Competitions – 10  
 Corporate & Nonprofit Events – 11  
 Government & Civic Events – 13  
 Reunions – 3  
 Productions & Concerts - 6  
 Workshops & Pageants – 6  
 Other - 7



# Artists in the Schools

This year's educational art program invited students to explore the richness of American Modern Art through the lens of community, identity, and awareness. Across seven monthly lessons, each tied to a national awareness month, participants discovered influential 20th-century artists whose work reflects and celebrates diverse voices and social movements. From honoring cultural heritage to recognizing important social causes, each lesson connected art history with meaningful dialogue, inspiring students to see how creativity can both shape and reflect the values of our society today.



Learn more about Artists in the Schools:

## Community Outreach

Community outreach plays a vital role in expanding the reach and impact of art education. It brings creative learning experiences beyond the classroom—into neighborhoods, schools, and public spaces—making the arts accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds.

Through outreach, individuals who might not otherwise have the opportunity to engage with the arts can discover their own creativity, build confidence, and develop new skills.





# Student & Community Matinees

This year, our Student & Community Matinee series experienced an overwhelmingly positive response, underscoring the growing impact of our programming. One particularly memorable highlight was the performance of "Black Patriot: A Visit with James Fayette", presented by the local organization History Alive, which specializes in immersive historical education.

We were proud to host 420 students from the Suffolk area public and homeschool communities. Notably, for the first time in our program's history, a public school from Virginia Beach also attended, marking an exciting expansion of our geographic reach.



Student and community matinee programs offer powerful educational and cultural benefits, especially when provided free of charge. These performances make the arts accessible to everyone—removing financial barriers and ensuring that all students and community members can experience live theater, music, and dance. Exposure to the performing arts at a young age sparks creativity, enhances learning, and encourages critical thinking and empathy. For the broader community, these programs build cultural awareness, foster connection, and create shared experiences that inspire future audiences and artists alike. Ultimately, free matinee programs cultivate a lifelong appreciation for the arts while strengthening the community's cultural fabric.



## Magical Christmas Tree Tour

In December 2024, the Suffolk Center hosted its first Magical Christmas Tree Tour, a community event created to give back during the holiday season. Guests were invited to donate non-perishable items to ForKids by placing them beneath their favorite decorated tree. Eighteen local organizations participated, including Suffolk Economic Development, the Boys & Girls Club of Southeast Virginia, and S.T.A.R. Haven. With 2,551 items donated, the event was a festive success. We look forward to welcoming the Magical Christmas Tree Tour back in December 2025.





Birdsong Theater: Vinyl Radio

## Birdsong Theater

The Birdsong Theater, also known as our Main Stage, is the largest performance venue in the Suffolk Center. It features a classic proscenium stage and seating can welcome over 500 guests, making it an ideal venue for theatrical productions, concerts, and dance performances. In addition to hosting the Center's signature events, the theater is also available for community rentals and special occasions.

## One Center. Four Stages. Endless Possibilities.

As Creative Director, I'm proud to share that the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts is more than just a stage — it's four stages, each with its own character and purpose. The Birdsong Theater welcomes our largest productions with grandeur and tradition, while Downstairs at the Center invites audiences into bold, intimate experiences. Outdoors at the Center brings music and art for more casual experiences, featuring local talent. The Recital Hall gives space for discovery, rehearsal, and community connection. Together, these venues ensure that every performance, whether monumental or modest, has a home here at the Center.

**The Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts houses four distinct performance venues.**



Rick Byrd, PhD  
Creative Director





Outdoors at the Center: Performances by Local Artists

## Outdoors at the Center

Outdoors at The Center is designed for outdoor experiences ranging from music concerts, Karaoke nights, as well as small, intimate occasions like weddings, commitment ceremonies, and small business luncheons.

## Rehearsal Hall

Our Rehearsal Hall functions as both a rehearsal and performance space, equipped to handle a variety of uses. It supports dance classes, workshops, rehearsals, and community showcases that require a versatile layout.

## Downstairs at the Center

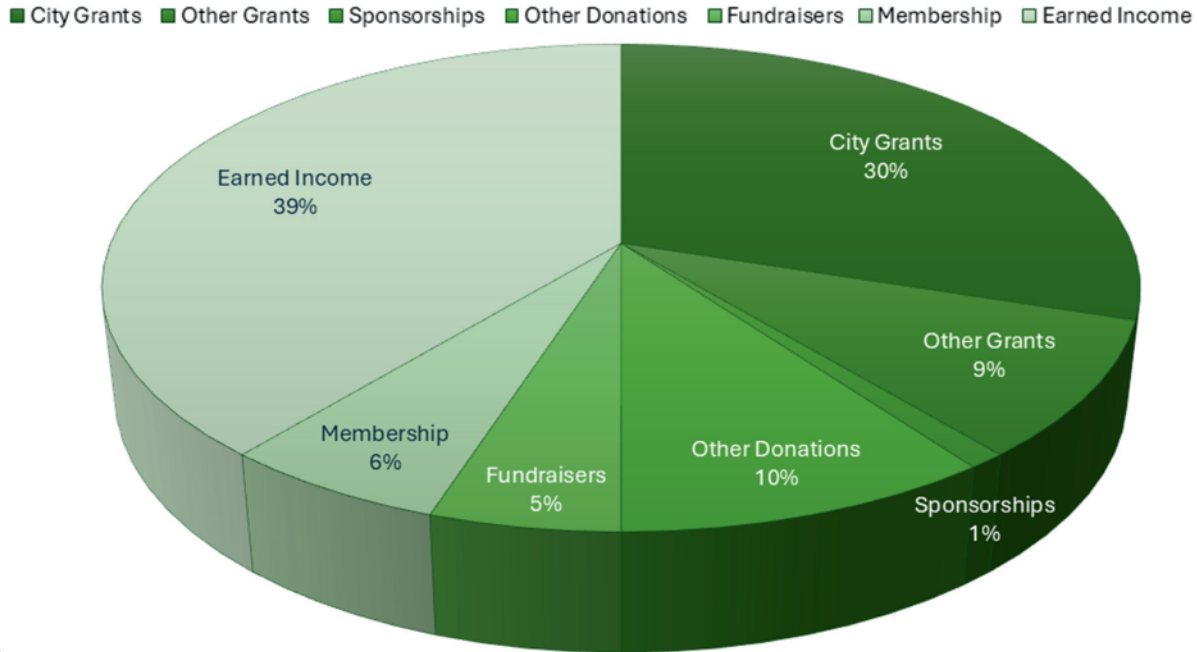
Downstairs at the Center is a smaller, flexible performance space with movable seating and staging options. It is suited for experimental theater, small cast productions, and events that benefit from an intimate audience experience.



Downstairs at the Center: Annual Fundraiser



## INCOME



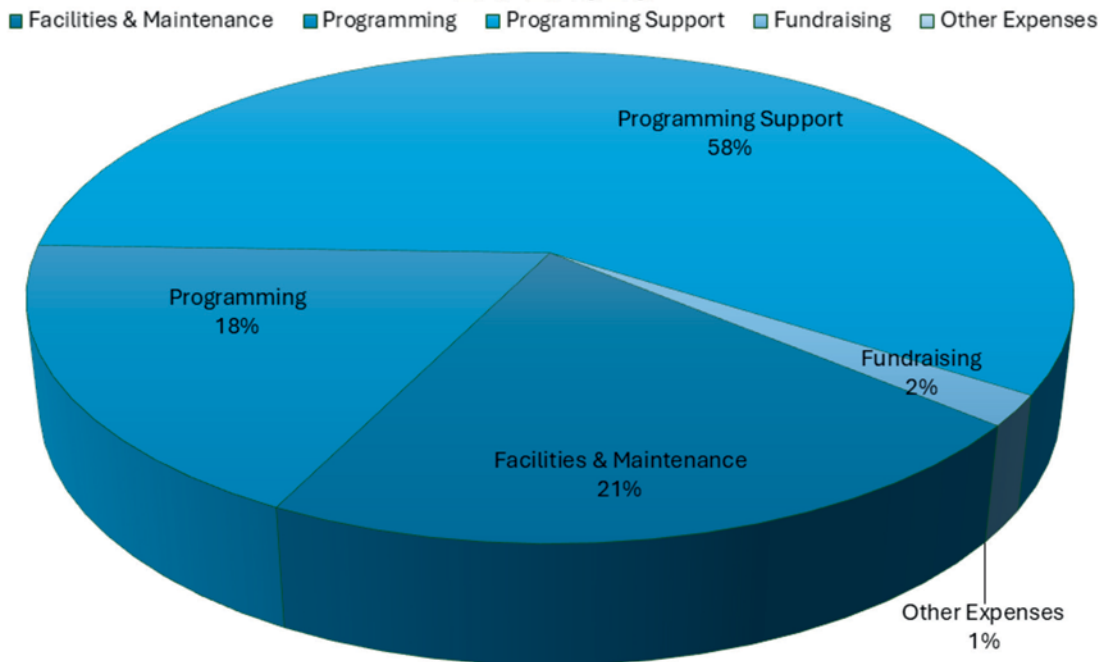
# Finance at a Glance

In 2024–25, the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts maintained a balanced mix of public funding, community investment, and Center-generated income. City and government grants provided core operating support, while other grants, memberships, sponsorships, and other donations reflected strong community commitment to the arts.

**Memberships and donor support are essential to sustaining our mission. Every contribution helps keep the Center open, safe, and active as a gathering place for Suffolk and Western Tidewater.**

*General operating income and expenses do not include Employee Retention Credits, Capital Campaign funds, or asset depreciation. Figures are based on unaudited financials.*

## EXPENSES





# SEASON PREMIER PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

## **Our Premier Partners:**

### **Birdsong Peanuts & TowneBank**

At the Suffolk Center, we're proud to recognize Birdsong Peanuts and TowneBank as more than sponsors; they are true champions of the arts. Their generosity fuels creativity, supports excellence on our stages, and helps deliver meaningful cultural experiences for all ages. Because of their steadfast commitment, the Suffolk Center continues to grow and thrive as a vibrant cultural home where our community comes together to celebrate the arts.



**TOWNE BANK**  
*Serving Others. Enriching Lives.®*



# You make beautiful things happen.

Because of your support, the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts continues to serve as a vibrant home for creativity, connection, and transformation. Every student who steps onto our stage, every visitor who finds joy in a painting, and every neighbor who feels seen through a cultural celebration... that's you at work.



As a visual artist myself, and someone who came to the arts through music and theater, I've seen and experienced how creativity can transform lives. It's not just a belief; it's backed by science. The National Institutes of Health reports that engaging with the arts can reduce anxiety and depression, particularly in youth and older adults, (NIH, 2023). A recent NEA blog notes that at each grade level from kindergarten through fifth grade, taking arts classes outside school was linked to better reading, math, and science scores, (NEA, 2025). And according to Psychology Today, participating in the arts boosts empathy, problem-solving skills, and cognitive function across all age groups (Psychology Today, 2021).

Yet, critical funding for the arts is being cut across the country just when we need it most. That's why your membership means everything. The Suffolk Center is about to celebrate our 20th performance season. That's two decades as the region's cultural arts anchor within the beautifully restored 100+ year-old former Suffolk High School building. Our mission is to cultivate, promote, and provide access to the creative arts for all residents and visitors through programs, education, and outreach. Your support will keep our mission alive for generations to come.

Thank you for being part of our story. If you're ready to become a member, renew your membership, or deepen your support, the enclosed form makes it easy. Together, we'll keep the arts accessible, inclusive, and life-changing for the next 100 years and beyond! Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "R.S. Myers".

Rebecca S. Myers, MBA, CFRE  
Development Director  
Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts





## Membership Benefits

A membership to the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts offers more than benefits—it builds a connection to creativity, community, and culture. Members enjoy exclusive access to ticket presales, special events, and discounts while directly supporting performances, exhibitions, and educational programs that enrich the region. Your membership helps sustain local artists, inspire students, and ensure that the arts remain accessible to everyone. In essence, membership is both a personal investment in the arts and a meaningful contribution to the cultural heartbeat of Suffolk.

SUFFOLK CENTER FOR CULTURAL ARTS 2025-26 MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS	YOUTH 25 & YOUNGER	SUPPORTER	ADVOCATE	LEADER	PATRON	DIRECTOR'S SOCIETY	RENAISSANCE SOCIETY	1922 SOCIETY	KEYSTONE SOCIETY
	\$25	\$50	\$100	\$250	\$500	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$10,000
10% discount on select classes and workshops*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Weekly e-blast & SCCA Newsletter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gift noted in annual Celebration Report		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SCCA membership sticker			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10% discount on full-price mainstage performance tickets**			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gift noted on website				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10% discount on full-price Downstairs @ The Center tickets				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
One free class or workshop*					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10% off purchase of 1 piece of art at exhibitions through 8/31/2026****					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Annual Supporter membership(s) to give as gift(s)						1	2	3	4
Complimentary mainstage performance tickets**						2	2	2	2
Wine and cheese reception for 10 during performance intermission***							1	1	1
Social media shout-out for new or renewed membership							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Complimentary VIP mainstage performance tickets**							2	2	2
Gift noted on permanent Keystone Sign								<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Complimentary Dinner Theater mainstage performance tickets**								2	4





Every gift helps keep the arts alive and accessible for all.

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Davenport & Company  
Dills Architects  
Duke Chevrolet Buick GMC  
Nansemond Insurance  
Agency, Inc.  
The Smithfield Times  
Southern Bank  
Suffolk News Herald  
The Tidewater News  
TowneBank

## \$100,000+

City of Suffolk  
Anonymous Donor

## \$25,000 - \$50,000

Virginia Commission  
of the Arts

## \$10,000 - \$24,999

Franklin Southampton  
Charities  
The Pretlow Family  
Foundation  
Pruden Family Fund of the  
Hampton Roads Community  
Foundation  
Ruth Camp Campbell  
Foundation  
Suffolk Foundation

## \$5,000 - \$9,999

Mr. & Mrs.  
McLemore Birdsong, Jr.  
Camp Foundation  
Clearstead  
Dominion Foundation  
National Endowment for the  
Arts  
Richard Bennett Trust  
Suffolk Foundation  
Suffolk Rotary Club  
Virginia Natural Gas

## \$1,000 - \$4,999

Anonymous  
Gary Barlow  
Michael & Megan Banks  
Warren & Penny Birdsong  
C.W. Brinkley  
Camp-Younts Foundation  
Donna Carroll  
Lisa & Harry Lee Cross III  
Corey Cutright  
Antoinette Davidson  
Marianna Friend  
Kenny Galderisi  
Dr. Thomas Guirkin &  
Mr. Brian Sharp  
Les & Wanda Hall

Mrs. Pearl Harrell  
Ben & Christianna Johnson  
Langley Federal Credit Union  
Louis and Mary Haddad  
Foundation, Inc.  
Helen McKinley West Wimberly  
Organic Roots, LLC  
Smithfield Foods, Inc.  
Suffolk Elks Lodge #685  
Tidewater Children's  
Foundation  
Keller & Jennifer Watts  
Margie Wiley

## \$100 - \$999

Kevin & Sandra Alston  
Thomas & Jennie Barrett  
Sharon and Warren Beale  
Bill & Annette Bailey  
Mr. & Mrs.  
William C. & Karen Branche  
Rebecca A. Byrd  
Johanna Pruden Covell  
Chandler Cutright  
Timothy Harrison Daniel  
Dr. & Mrs. Anthony J. Distasio II  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Duman  
Dr. Stephen L. Green & Betty  
Sue Green Donor Advised Fund  
Michael & Kristy Edwards, Jr.  
Stephen & Kathy Gallotta  
GFWC Junto Woman's Club  
Janie Guill & William G. Chrystal  
Mr. & Mrs.  
James M. Habel III  
Thomas & Karen Hazelwood  
Gail P. Hinton-Copeland  
Carol & Scott Hulbert  
Jean Hoyniak  
Mr. & Mrs. William Kennett  
Tiffany Kiser  
Kathryn Kramer  
Kristy Lynn Edwards  
Louise Lewis  
Lin & Martha Callis  
Mr. & Mrs.  
Howard W. Martin, Jr.  
Nancy T. Mathis  
Phil & Barbara McPhail

Gloria J. Medaglia  
Jeff & Linda Minnix  
Tom Moore  
Nansemond-Suffolk  
Academy  
Dr. Joleen Neighbours  
Dianne Polson Oliver  
Ellen Pappetti  
C. Douglas Parr, Jr.  
Dr. & Mrs. Jeffrey B. Persons  
Charles & Juanita Pond  
Roberta Powell  
Ms. Cynthia Quesenberry  
Randy Raines  
Frank & Sally Rawls  
John Rector  
Nick Rittner  
Clint Rudy & Kevin Sary  
Jeffery Seneca  
Sharon Slate  
Drs. Tish Szymurski &  
Tom Yannuzzi  
W. McIlwaine and  
Elsie Thompson  
United Way of South  
Hampton Roads  
Michelle & Donald Van Ness  
Dr. & Mrs.  
Joseph L. Verdirame  
Virginia Auction Company, Inc.  
Annie Marie Ward  
Mr. & Mrs.  
Joseph N. Webb, Sr.  
Betty K. West

## Up to \$99

Teresa & Perry Alers  
Barbara Barnes  
Rebecca Beale  
Mae Burke  
Korman Butler  
Starlite Cassias  
Chuckatuck Ruritan Club  
Deborah Douglas  
Don & Kay Goldberg  
Amy Harman  
Priscilla & Jason Horner  
Kevin Hughes  
Valencia M. Lloyd

Daniel Mendoza  
Linda H. Mosher  
Nancy H. Pichel  
Steve Pippins  
Stephanie Pitts  
Karla Polito  
Orin Reams  
Sharon Speer Adgate  
Mrs. Katie A. Stallings  
Jeff & Elizabeth Taylor  
Giles Valerir  
Thomas Weatherford

# Memorial & Honorarium Gifts

## Lori Craine

In honor of Rebecca Myers

## Ellen Pappetti

In memory of Robert Blair

## Drs. Tish Szymurski & Tom Yannuzzi

In memory of Tony &  
Catherine Yannuzzi

## Drs. Tish Szymurski & Tom Yannuzzi

In memory of John &  
Marcelle Szymurski

## W. McIlwaine & Elsie Thompson, Jr.

In honor of Harry & Lisa Cross

## Annie M. Ward

In memory of Raymond McClenny

**We are only as strong as the support we receive from you.**

Information as of June 30, 2025



# Visual Arts

Visual arts serve as both a reflection and a catalyst of community life. They give people a way to express shared values, tell local stories, and celebrate cultural diversity. Art transforms spaces into places of inspiration, sparking dialogue, creativity, and pride among residents.

The 2024–2025 season welcomed over 50 new local artists to the Suffolk Center's galleries, showcasing a dynamic range of mediums and themes in the visual arts. Exhibits included striking photography by Allyn Brown and Earl Manning celebrating the beauty and complexity of Black textured hair culture, historical memorabilia honoring Marquis de Lafayette, and imaginative glass, metal, and ceramic works from the Perry Glass Studio and local sculptors. It was a memorable season that inspired creativity and engaged both artists and history enthusiasts throughout the community.

## Sister Cities

The Suffolk Center partnered with Suffolk Sister Cities International to host the 36th Annual Young Authors and Artists Showcase, themed “Friendship: The Heartbeat of Global Peace.” Over 250 student works in art, writing, and music were displayed in the galleries, culminating in a reception and awards ceremony. The event highlighted the creativity of Suffolk’s youth and affirmed the importance of giving young voices a platform to be seen, heard, and celebrated.

## Walk on The Wild Side: Chilling Creatures

Walk on the Wild Side: Chilling Creatures offered a captivating twist on The Suffolk Center’s annual exhibition. Artists explored the eerie and imaginative sides of nature and fantasy, bringing mysterious creatures to life through their work. The exhibition was a joy to curate alongside featured juror and creative visionary Charles Rasputin. The opening reception welcomed more than 120 guests, who celebrated the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners while enjoying a live string quartet performing selections from Game of Thrones and Howl’s Moving Castle. It was an unforgettable evening that The Suffolk Center will treasure for years to come.

### **Art exhibitions play a vital role in connecting artists and audiences,**

offering a space where creativity, culture, and community come together. They showcase diverse perspectives, inspire dialogue, and spark imagination while supporting local talent and making art accessible to all. Through exhibitions, communities celebrate their shared humanity and the transformative power of artistic expression.



Nana Ferdnace  
Visual Arts Manager







# Spotlight!

## Front Desk Volunteers

Our volunteers are the heart of our daily operations and the first warm welcome our guests receive. These dedicated individuals generously give at least four hours of their time each week, assisting not only at the front desk but also behind the scenes with administrative support and the occasional arts and crafts project. Their enthusiasm, kindness, and reliability help keep the Center running smoothly and ensure that every visitor feels right at home.



Standing L to R: Mildred Turner, Rita Truitt, Retta Singleton, Patty Brown, Shirley Griffin, Carol Hulbert, Inger Callahan

## THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS

Our front desk team are the friendly faces and helpful spirits that embody the welcoming atmosphere of the Suffolk Center. Thank you, Retta, Carol, Patty, Shirley, Joyce, Rita, and Inger, for your unwavering commitment and the joy you bring to our community each day!





# Art of Wine

During the 2024–2025 season, the Suffolk Center's Art of Wine series continued to blend visual art, fine wine, and culinary creativity into one unforgettable experience. Each event invited guests to step into the artist's world; where every glass poured and every dish served echoed the colors, textures, and emotions of the work on display.



A patron purchases a painting by Al Staszkesky



Together, these elements create a sensory dialogue... allowing audiences not only to see the artist's vision, but to taste and feel it, transforming appreciation into a truly memorable experience.



# Education Spotlight \_\_\_\_\_

## Lisa Morrison



For more than three decades, Lisa Morrison has shaped the creative spark of students across Suffolk. A lifelong artist, she fell in love with ceramics during a Girl Scout visit to local potter Linda Bunch's studio and carried that passion into her own career. After earning her BFA in Art Education from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1989, she began creating functional pottery and teaching the craft she adored. Since 1988, Lisa has shared her expertise in both classrooms and studios, showing generations of students that art is as much about discovery as it is about technique.

Today, Lisa balances two roles that bring the joy of clay to life. For 26 years she has inspired elementary students in Suffolk Public Schools, weaving pottery into her art curriculum, while at the Suffolk Center she leads adult pottery classes and occasional children's art sessions. Whether it is wheel throwing, handbuilding, or watching a student's vision take shape in clay, Lisa thrives on the moment when confidence and creativity collide. As she puts it, "One can never have too many serving pieces," and through her teaching, she ensures Suffolk never runs short of new artists ready to create them.







This year, we began providing **Life Painting and Drawing Sessions**, providing an opportunity for more experienced artists to meaningfully engage with SCCA beyond the galleries. This program attracted a wide range of participants and featured diverse cultural and historical themes, creating unique moments of community connection.



### New Class Offerings

We introduced new and engaging class offerings this season, including stained glass and crocheting. Enrollment numbers reflect a renewed enthusiasm for arts education and creative exploration within our community.

# Education

During the 2024–2025 season, participation in educational classes has increased significantly compared to the period following COVID-19. The renewed enthusiasm for learning - and for discovering or advancing new art forms - is clearly evident throughout our programs.





## Dr. Joleen E. Neighbours | Chair of the Board

# What's the best-kept secret in Hampton Roads?



For those who've experienced it firsthand, the answer is clear—**the vibrant and thriving arts scene in Suffolk.**

Thanks to the continued momentum of the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts, it's no longer a secret. The Center is transforming how our community sees, hears, feels, and engages with the arts. From breathtaking visual art exhibitions to powerful live performances, from intimate lectures to expansive educational outreach—the Suffolk Center is where creativity lives, culture is celebrated, and access to the arts is made possible for everyone.

At its heart, the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts exists to enrich lives and strengthen our community through the power of the arts. Whether you're stepping into our historic building for the first time or returning as a longtime supporter, you'll find a shared space of inspiration, connection, and growth. This past year, we expanded programming that celebrates the diversity of our region, welcomed nationally recognized artists, showcased the talents of our students, and offered a platform for voices that deserve to be heard. Every gallery exhibit, concert, workshop, and class is thoughtfully curated to reflect our shared humanity and build bridges across backgrounds and generations.

As Chair of the Board of Directors, I see daily the vast positive impact the arts—and especially the Suffolk Center—have on our community. The Center is more than a venue; it is a vital thread in the fabric of Suffolk, opening doors to creativity, dialogue, and belonging.

Nowhere is this impact more profound than in our commitment to arts education. From hosting school groups for live performances to bringing guest artists directly into classrooms, we provide transformative experiences that open young minds and nurture dreams. These are more than field trips—they are moments of discovery that students carry with them for a lifetime. An investment in the arts is, at its core, an investment in the well-being, potential, and future of our children.

We also take this opportunity to celebrate the many individuals who help bring our mission to life. Our talented staff, generous supporters, and passionate volunteers are the soul of this organization. Our board of directors has led with heart and purpose, and this year we were proud to name Mac Birdsong, Charles Pond, and Betsy Brothers as our inaugural inductees into the Suffolk Center's Honor Society. Their decades of service, leadership, and unwavering belief in the arts have built the strong foundation we continue to grow from.

As we look to the future, the Suffolk Center remains committed to its role as a cultural destination and community cornerstone. With your continued support, we will keep breaking down barriers to access, uplifting local talent, and bringing meaningful arts experiences to every corner of our city. Thank you for believing in the power of the arts—and for standing with us in this shared journey. The story of the Suffolk Center is one we create together. And there is still so much beauty ahead.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. Neighbours', written in a cursive style.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joleen E. Neighbours, Chair of the Board  
Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts





## Honor Society Recipients

Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts' Honor Society was created to recognize individuals whose leadership, generosity, and vision have shaped both the Center and the wider Suffolk community. The inaugural 2025 honorees were **McLemore Birdsong, Jr., Betsy Williams Brothers, and Charles Pond, III.** These pillars of our community were recognized by SCCA's Board of Directors for their transformational roles in founding, sustaining, and growing the Center. Their contributions have ensured that the arts remain a vibrant and vital part of Suffolk.



# Looking Ahead

## 2025/2026 Season



**SEP  
20**

### **The Copper Piano: Dueling Pianos**

September 20, 2025  
7:00 PM

### **Masters of Soul**

October 4, 2025  
8:00 PM

**OCT  
4**



**NOV  
1**

### **UPAC Presents: The Glory of Gospel**

November 1, 2025  
2:00 PM & 7:00 PM

### **The Four C-Notes**

November 8, 2025  
8:00 PM

**NOV  
8**



**NOV  
15**

### **Murder Mystery Dinner Theater**

November 15, 2025  
7:00 PM

### **TADA Presents: Rudolph Jr.**

November 22, 2025  
2:00 PM & 5:00 PM

**NOV  
22**



**DEC  
7**

### **Southside Ballet Presents: The Nutcracker**

December 7, 2025  
3:00 PM

### **Brunch with Santa**

December 13, 2025  
10:00 AM

**DEC  
13**



**DEC  
19**

### **Tidewater Guitar Orchestra**

December 19, 2025  
8 PM





The stage is set for another unforgettable year at  
**The Suffolk Center**



**DEC  
20**

**UPAC Presents: A Soulful Christmas**

December 20, 2025  
8:00 PM

**Jazz Night with The Band Vontrelle**

January 17, 2026  
7:00 PM



**JAN  
17**



**JAN  
24**

**UPAC Presents: Having Our Say**

January 24, 2026  
2:00 PM

**Gentlemen's Quartet**

January 30, 2026  
8:00 PM



**JAN  
30**



**MAR  
13**

**Myspace Adult Prom**

March 13, 2026  
7:00 PM

**UPAC Presents: Black Girl Magic**

April 3, 2026 | 8:00 PM  
April 4, 2026 | 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM



**APR  
3&4**



**APR  
18**

**Drag Dinner & Bingo**

April 18, 2026  
7:00 PM

**Southside Ballet Presents: Cinderella**

April 18, 2026  
3:00 PM



**APR  
18**



**MAY  
23**

**Vinyl Radio**

May 23, 2026  
8:00 PM



## Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts Staff



*Standing from L to R - Tom Yannuzzi, Richard Maglone, Cathy Daughtry, John Peace, William Wells, Rebecca Myers, Joe Peace, Rick Byrd  
Seated from L to R - Ivy Subialdea, Ishta Hurato, Nana Ferdnance, Kathy Decoud*

The mission of the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts is to cultivate, promote, and provide access to the creative arts for all residents and visitors through programs, education, and outreach.



Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in partnership with Virginia Commission for the Arts and National Endowment for the Arts. Donations are tax-deductible. We are a United Way certified agency.



[suffolkcenter.org](http://suffolkcenter.org)

110 W. Finney Avenue, Suffolk, VA 23434

Main: 757-923-0003 | Box Office: 757-923-2900

