



Strategic Plan 2023-2025

Report to the Community

Valley Art Center
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Message from the Board President and Executive Director

While the turbulence of the pandemic over the past few years challenged every organization in unforeseen ways, Valley Art Center persevered while also celebrating its 50th anniversary with joy, community, and inspiration. With these themes in mind, the Board of Trustees and Staff are excited to present this Strategic Plan for 2023 through 2025.

Building from our strengths and growing into opportunities, our strategies for the future center around the key pillars of human capital, building awareness, programming, and fiscal position. Grounded with newly identified values and informed by the insights gathered from hundreds of community member surveys, dozens of interviews, and hours of reflective contemplation, the resulting strategic plan for the future is one that is flexible, adaptive, and forward thinking for our ever-changing environment.

We'd like to personally thank all the individuals who played a part in the development of this plan by sharing their insights and perspectives through surveys, interviews, and meetings. Thank you also to our consultant Eileen Saffran with MTN Strategies, who guided the entire strategic planning process. A very special thank you to the Board whose collective passion shaped the strategy and to Committee Chair, Deb Perry, and the entire committee of dedicated supporters who worked tirelessly to bring the details to life.

As an organization, we celebrate how far we have come over the past 50 years and look forward to strategically focusing our efforts and intentions to fulfill our mission for years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa Bertke".

Melissa Bertke, Board President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Gruss".

Rebecca Gruss, Executive Director



MISSION: Valley Art Center enriches and inspires the community through meaningful visual art education, exhibitions, events and partnerships.

VISION: We cultivate art appreciation and the growth of creative potential for people of all ages and backgrounds to advance the arts in the community.

VALUES:

- ❖ **SUPPORTING ARTISTS AND CREATIVITY:** We support artists, creativity and art appreciation through excellence in art education, programming, events and community partnerships.
- ❖ **COMMUNITY BUILDING:** We cultivate community through engagement and shared experiences in an environment where all are welcome.
- ❖ **EQUITY/INCLUSION:** We foster an environment that advances principles of social equity, inclusion and equal access to resources and opportunities.
- ❖ **STEWARDSHIP:** We value the careful stewardship of our human, financial, physical resources and organizational history.



Introduction

Valley Art Center (VAC) was founded and incorporated in 1971 to operate a facility “for the teaching, practice and presentation of the arts, to offer courses of instruction in the arts, to accept works of art for sale to the public and in increasing the public interest in the arts through various programs and function”. The Center is the hub of the visual arts in the Chagrin Valley, providing local communities with art classes, exhibitions and fine art for over 50 years.

Before embarking on this present strategic plan, VAC’s previous strategic plan covered October 2019-September 2022. These dates fell within quite a tumultuous and challenging period of time due to COVID. Although several of the initiatives identified in the plan during this period of time were unable to be accomplished, VAC remained operational, strong and vital throughout. In October 2022, the organization set out to create a comprehensive roadmap for its future covering the period of 2023-2025.

It is VAC’s pleasure to present this Strategic Plan Summary to the Community as we are excited about our journey ahead and we invite you to learn more about it. The purpose of this report is to share the Plan’s *Pillars* (key initiatives) and *Objectives* identified under each Pillar. Additionally, there are many *Tactics* identified to achieve the objectives that are far too numerous to be included in this summary. Anyone interested in learning more about this Plan is welcome to contact VAC’s Executive Director, Rebecca Gruss.



Plan Development Process (Methodology)

In early 2022, VAC began to set forth plans to develop a new 3-year Strategic Plan. Deb Perry, former Board Chair, agreed to Chair the Strategic Planning Committee. At the end of September 2022, the organization hired Eileen Saffran, MTN Strategies, as the consultant to lead them through the process. A Strategic Planning Committee comprised of 13 people was identified consisting of present and past board members, staff, instructors and artists. The Committee met over a 5-month timeframe and the full Board and Staff held a half day retreat in December 2022 to identify the key initiatives. Ultimately, the Committee presented their final draft plan to the Board and it was approved in March 2023.

VAC set out to obtain an abundant amount of information and feedback from the community-at-large in order to develop a comprehensive and informed roadmap for its future. This included: 34 stakeholder interviews (board members, former board members, donors, instructors, volunteers, funders, civic leaders, students, outreach partners and staff); a thorough organizational assessment and review of all of VAC's internal documents (financials, fundraising, demographic data, programming, marketing and communication materials); environmental scan (interviews with 4 other nonprofit community-based Executive Directors); and survey responses (2130 sent) from volunteers, students, instructors, donors and artists.

Appropriate Board Committees and VAC staff members will be responsible for the implementation of this Plan. It is the intention of all involved to review the progress of the Plan on a quarterly basis. It is important to note that VAC's Board and Staff will pursue the implementation of this Plan in a fluid and flexible manner recognizing opportunities and changes may be necessary over time.



Pillars (Key initiatives) and Objectives

PILLAR 1: Maintain the highest quality of HUMAN CAPITAL

- ❖ Enhance the effectiveness of the Board
- ❖ Evaluate optimal staffing structure to support retention and accomplish strategic initiatives (roles, salaries, flexibility and benefits)
- ❖ Develop succession plans (Instructors, Staff and Board)
- ❖ Leverage current and past Board and Volunteer resources
- ❖ Grow and optimize Volunteer pool.

PILLAR 2: Expand the REACH and AWARENESS of the Center through well-developed branding, marketing and use of technology

- ❖ Make VAC's offerings memorable and relevant through delightful storytelling
- ❖ Increase brand awareness in the Chagrin Valley community and in the Greater Cleveland art community, especially including diverse audiences
- ❖ Leverage existing events/programs (i.e. Art by the Falls) to enhance brand awareness and market VAC programming

PILLAR 3: Ensure a STRONG FISCAL POSITION today and tomorrow

- ❖ Create a viable program for sustainable revenue
- ❖ Optimize donor management
- ❖ Enhance stewardship of donors and members

PILLAR 4: Enhance and grow PROGRAMMING to reach a diverse audience

- ❖ Engage new and diverse audiences
- ❖ Expand gallery-related programming
- ❖ Facilitate art appreciation in the community



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