

# NHIA Celebrates St. Anne's Future and the Leaders who are Making it Happen

On June 15, many friends, business leaders, and community members gathered at the Emma Blood French Building on Concord Street to celebrate a milestone: through the generous support of business partners and the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) the New Hampshire Institute of Art has raised the remaining funds necessary to repair and open the St. Anne Church building. The structure, which has been a focus of fundraising efforts since it was gifted to NHIA in 2009 by Brady Sullivan Properties, will house the Youth Arts Initiative afterschool program starting in the fall of 2016.

During the festivities, Board of Trustee Members Arthur Sullivan and Joe Reilly were presented with paintings by Director of the Teti Library Betsy Holmes as a 'thank you' to their esteemed work. As a partner of Brady Sullivan Properties, Sullivan was instrumental in gifting the church to NHIA, and has spearheaded the effort in reaching out to area businesses and inviting them to purchase tax credits. Both Sullivan and Reilly and their respective businesses (Reilly is the NH Regional President of Eastern Bank) have a long-standing commitment to the community and are heavily invested in programs that support the arts and underserved populations.

St. Anne Church, located on the corner of Merrimack and Union Streets in downtown Manchester, was built in the early 1850's to serve as Manchester's first Catholic church, providing community and refuge for the influx of Irish immigrants who had taken up residence in the city to work in the Amoskeag Mills. Throughout the decades preceding the closing of its doors in the early 2000's (repair and renovation costs became prohibitive to the parish), St. Anne's provided a community for Manchester's ever changing demographic, especially the many immigrants and refugees who made their home in Manchester.

In keeping with the tradition of its illustrious past, it was determined that the new ownership of the church should be under an organization that would continue its purpose as a resource for Manchester's underserved community. The New Hampshire Institute of Art's Youth Arts Initiative—which received 3-year funding by the Lincoln Financial Foundation when it was initially launched as the Student Enrichment Program in the Arts—appeared to be the perfect fit.

The Youth Arts Initiative is a way to give back to the community by providing free afterschool and summer art instruction to underserved youth within Manchester—especially those from immigrant and refugee families—while also preparing NHIA Art Education students with a hands-on learning experience. "This is, quite frankly, the easiest way we can give back to Manchester and make it a better place," said President Kent Devereaux.

The program has been greatly received by the participants and partnerships with community service organizations such as BRING IT! (Bringing Refugees, Immigrants, and Neighbors Gently into Tomorrow) an initiative of Granite United Way, the Granite State YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club of Manchester, and the Manchester School District. These organizations are instrumental in identifying the individuals and families who are most in need of the program. The New Hampshire Institute of Art's Youth Arts Initiative is helping to serve a population of youth who may not otherwise have the chance to really explore the fine arts. "Every time you give a kid an opportunity, you find them excelling," said Mayor Ted Gatsas, who was in attendance at the celebration. 



The New Hampshire Institute of Art is grateful to those who have made the Youth Arts Initiative possible:

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