



# Oak Park Area Arts Council

2025 So Far



# 2025 has been a Year of Growth for OPAAC!

The Oak Park Area Arts Council (OPAAC) has been working hard to support artists and bring more public art to the wonderful communities that we serve.

In a time when arts funding is being cut, budgets are being shrunk, and art organizations are struggling to stay afloat, OPAAC's ability to grow and provide for the community is a testament to the quality of work being done and speaks volumes about the desire for these programs to continue to grow.



# The OP AAC Team

The Oak Park Area Arts Council has been thrilled to welcome two new members to the team this year. They've been vital to the growth of our programs and organization.



Jaime Garza  
Program Coordinator

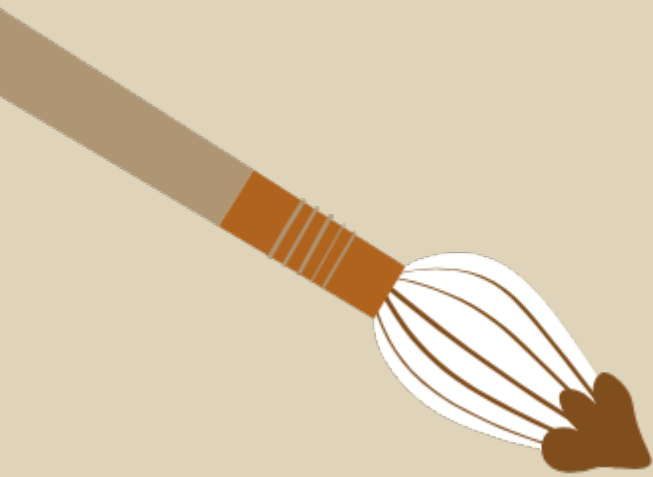


Camille Wilson White  
Executive Director



Taz Stahlnecker  
Program Coordinator





# Additional Growths

Since March,  
OPAAC's Instagram  
has gained 1,000  
followers.

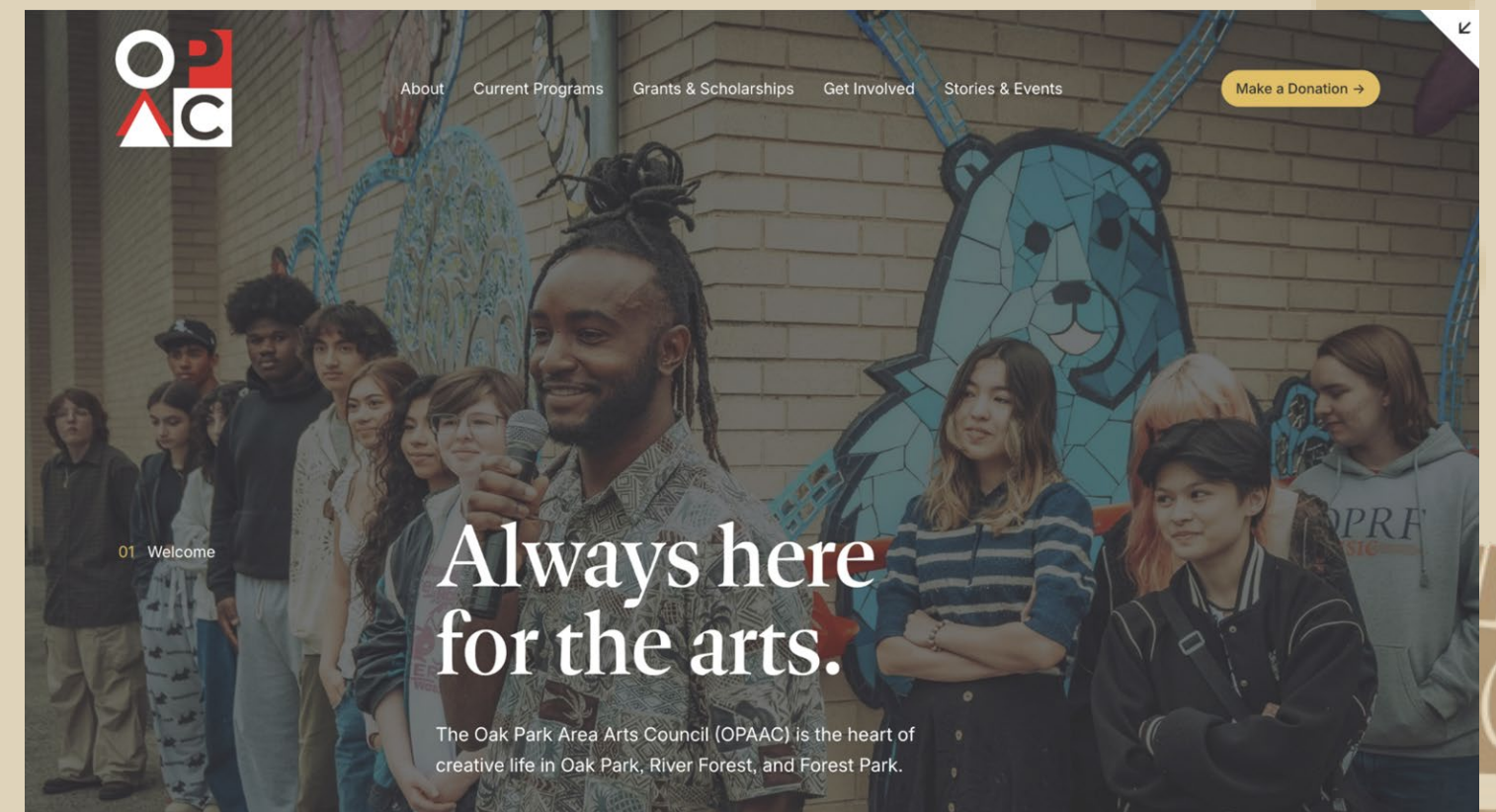
Growing Relationships  
with local organizations  
has lead to an increase  
in free art events.

Outreach and Events  
have allowed OPAAC  
to develop a contact  
list of 175 artists.



# New Website Loading....

With the Oak Park Area Arts Council stepping into a new era for the organization, it was time for a website update.



This new website will not only make it easier for the community to learn about the art council's programs and upcoming events, it will also make it easier for artists, organizations, and neighbors to contact us with potential partnership ideas.



# Programs

This is where the fun begins



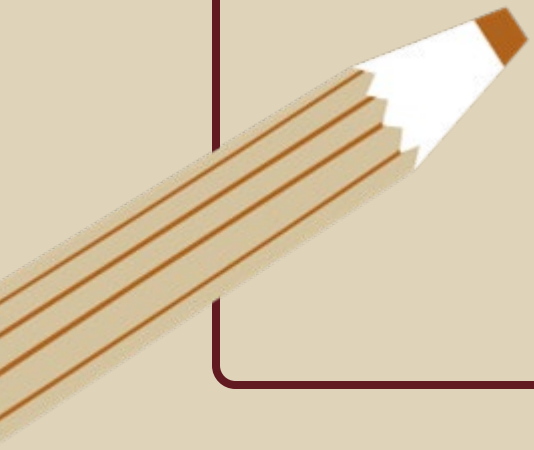
2025

# Arts Funds

OPAAC's Arts Funds Program is used to distribute funds to local arts organizations

In 2025, we granted 32 organizations funds through this program. \$85,000 in total.

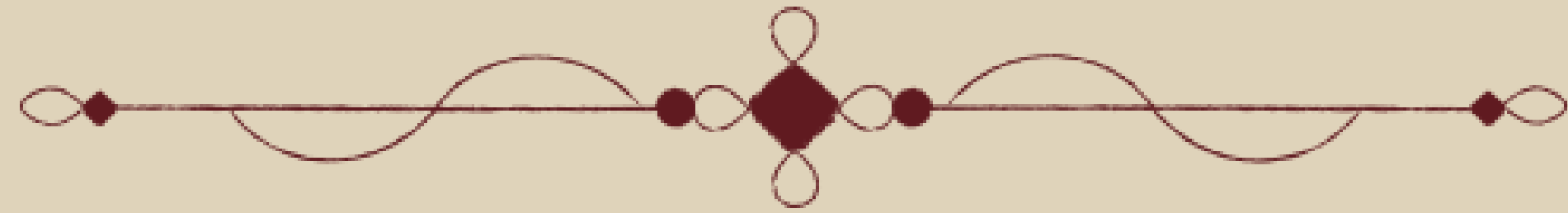
Many of these organizations rely on this yearly contribution for their annual operating costs.



# Arts Funds

- Chicago a cappella
- Chicago West Community Music Center
- ChoreoSpace
- Compound Yellow
- Ernest Hemingway Foundation of Oak Park
- Expressions Studio
- Forest Park Arts Alliance
- Frank Lloyd Wright Trust
- Habakkuk Theatre
- Handel Week
- Heritage Chorale
- Illinois Storytelling
- La Caccina
- Madison Street Theater
- Michael Teolis Singers
- Momenta
- Nineteenth Century Charitable Association
- Oak Park Art League
- Oak Park Concert Chorale
- Oak Park Festival Theatre
- Oak-Leyden Developmental Services
- PING!
- Pro Musica Youth Chorus
- Speculative Literature Foundation
- Spirito Singers
- Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest
- Terrain Exhibitions
- The Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest
- The Oriana Singers
- Thrive Counseling Center
- Winifred Haun & Dancers
- Wonder Works Children's Museum





## *Off the Wall*

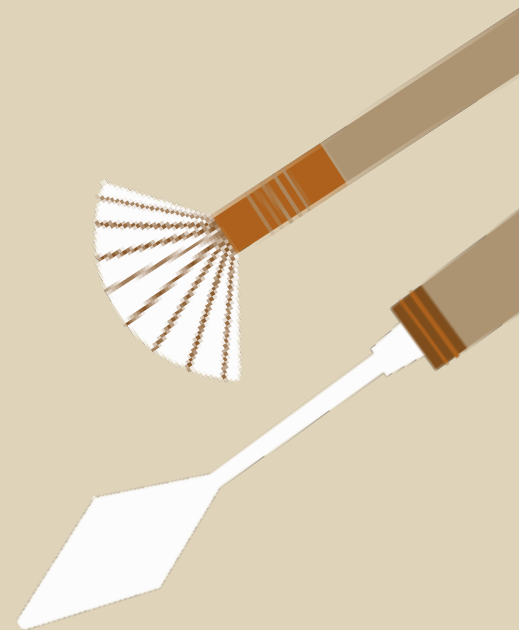
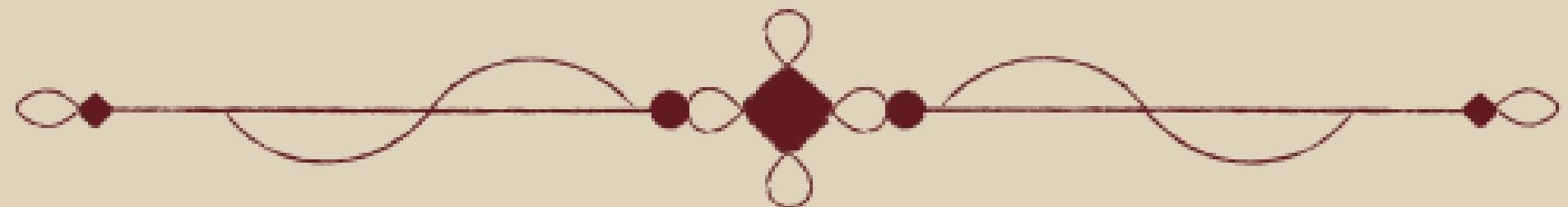
*Off the Wall* is our Youth Summer Employment Program.

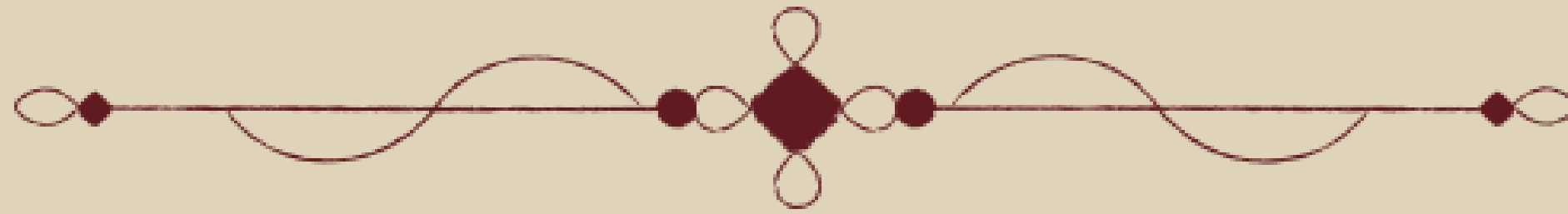
In 2025, we employed 14 youth.

The program partnered with Oak Park Township.

A mosaic mural, titled “Come to the Table”, was created on the side of the Townships Senior Services building, 130 S. Oak Park Ave.

“This mural celebrates intergenerational connection and communal dining, using pottery, dishware, textiles, and symbolic imagery to honor the cultural richness of the Oak Park Township Senior Service Center’s diverse community.”





## *Off the Wall 2.0*

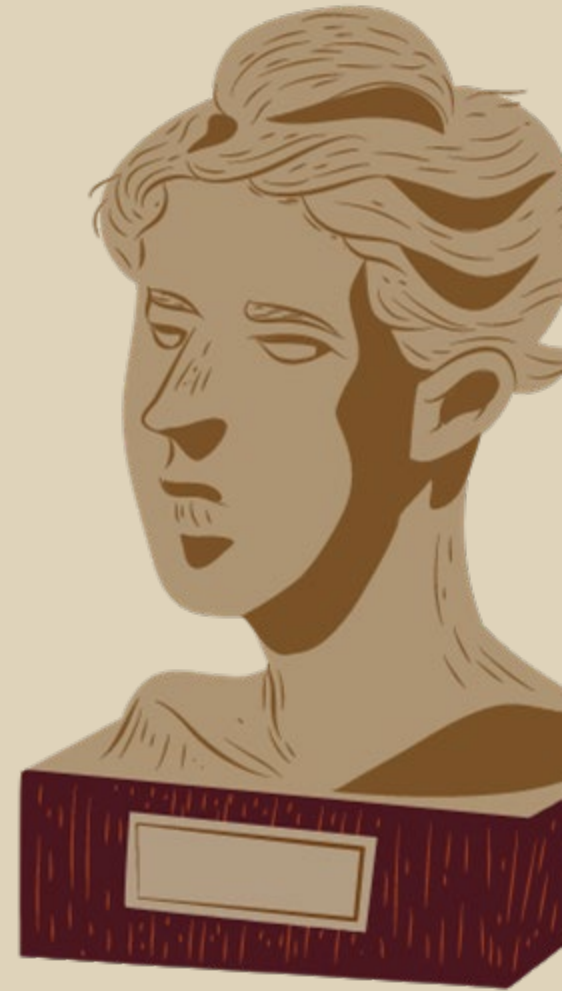
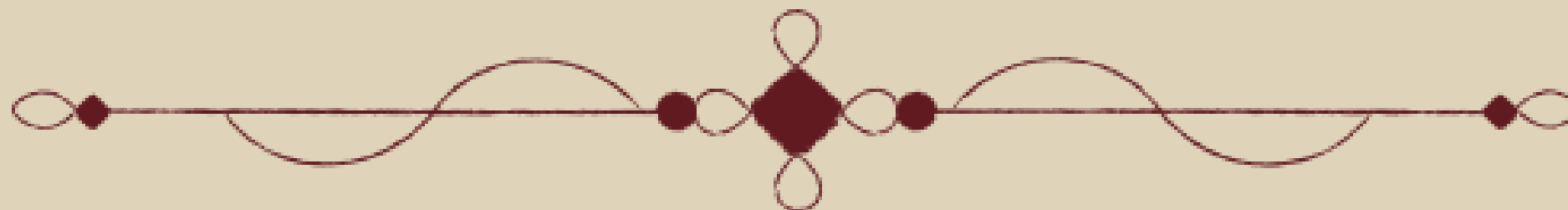
This year, the arts council was thrilled to offer an after-school program titled *Off the Wall 2.0*, which took place during the school year.

The program hired 15 students.

The students were taught how to set up and maintain a studio space.

A guest artist gave lessons about painting on canvas.

The program taught them the skills around mosaic mural that allowed for the mural created during *Off the Wall* to be one of the most detailed yet.





# Mini Murals

The art council's Mini Mural Program is the general public's most loved OPAAC program.

In 2025 there were...

Over 700 Submissions between two rounds

30 New Murals Selected

\$45,000 paid to Artists





# Sculpture Walk

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The Oak Park Area Arts Council's Annual Sculpture Walk  
expanded into two districts this year!!

8 Sculptures installed in Downtown Oak Park

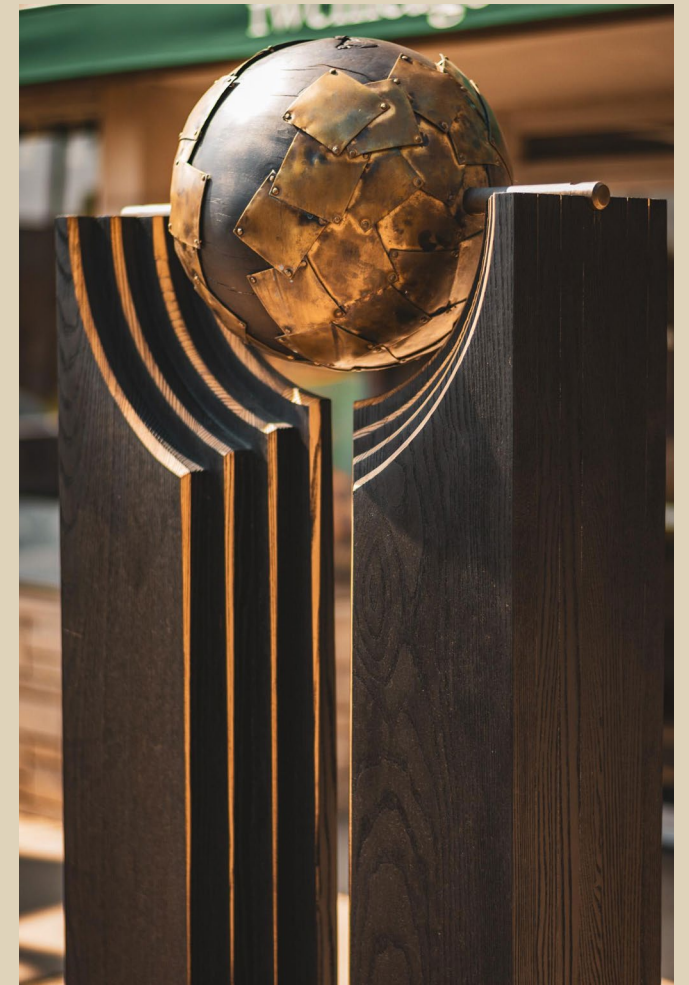
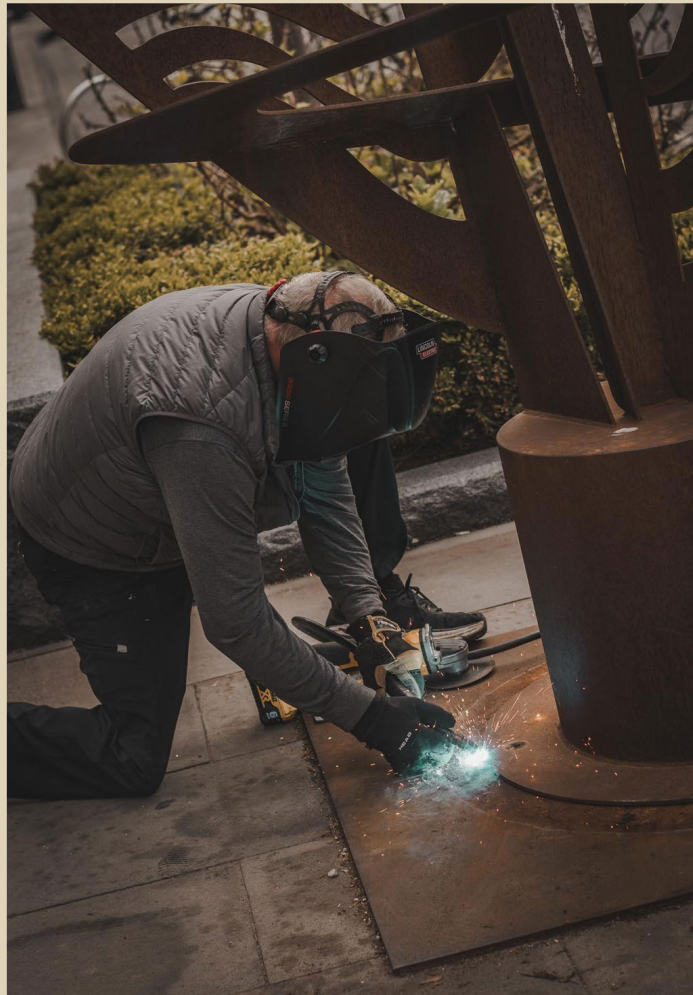
9 Sculptures installed in the Oak Park Arts District

35 Submissions

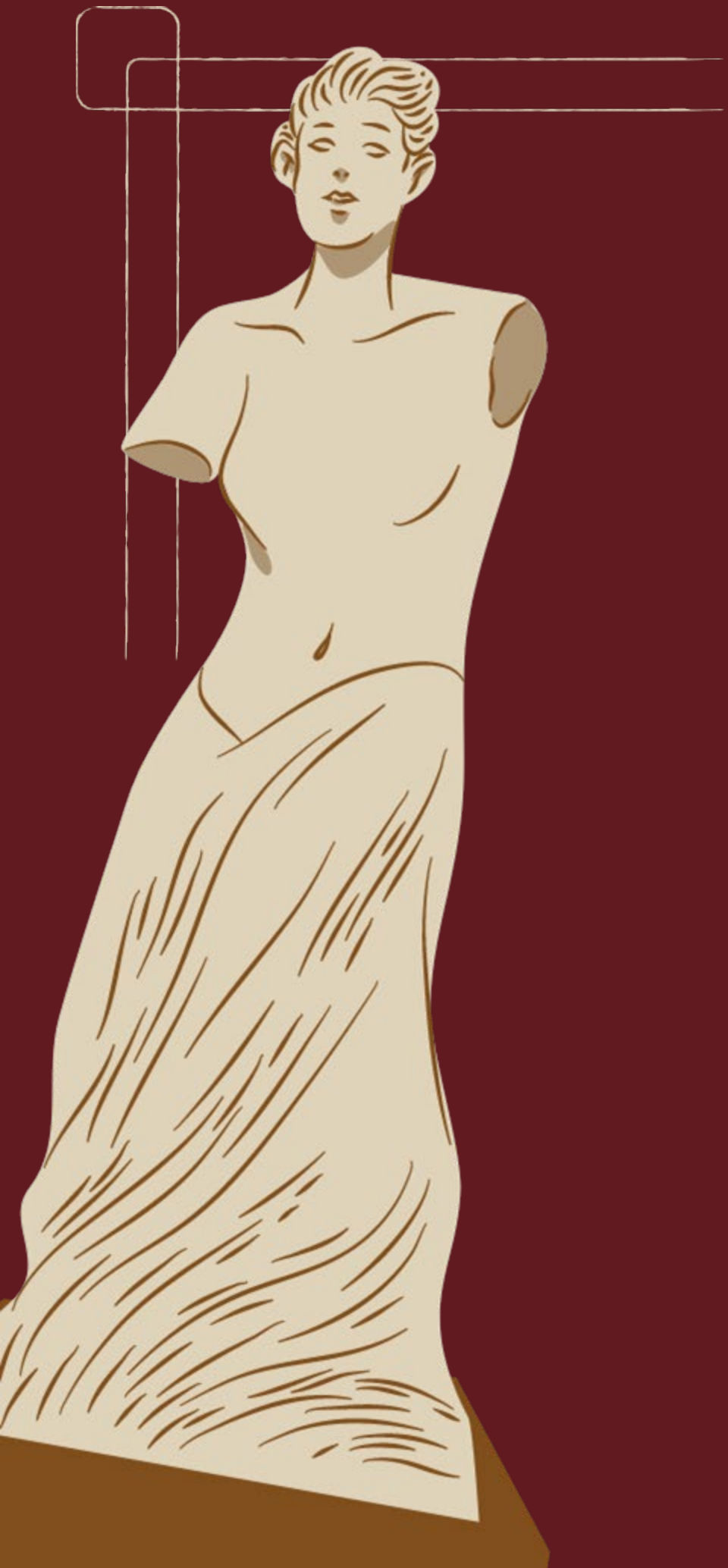
\$34,000 paid to Artists!!

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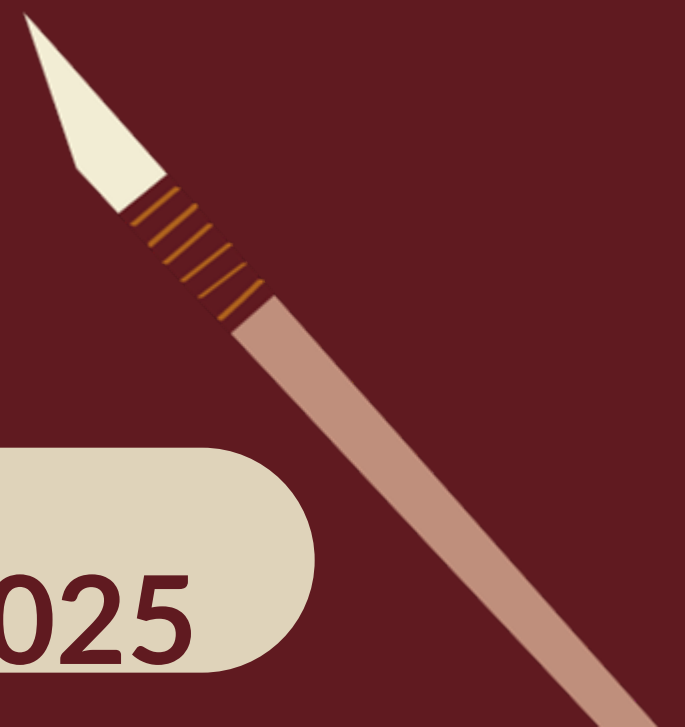


The Sculpture Walk brings free art to the public  
beyond murals and markets!



# Events & Sponsorships

Art is too Important not to Share - Romero Britto



2025



# Beyond the Walls

Uncovering the Magic of Oak Park's Mini Murals!

In partnership with the Park District of Oak Park, OPAAC hosted an evening at Cheney Mansion that celebrated the artists behind the mini murals.

25 artists were paid to recreate their mural on a smaller scale.

These pieces were then auctioned off at the event!

70 people in attendance.

28 pieces recreated.

\$12,500 paid to artists.







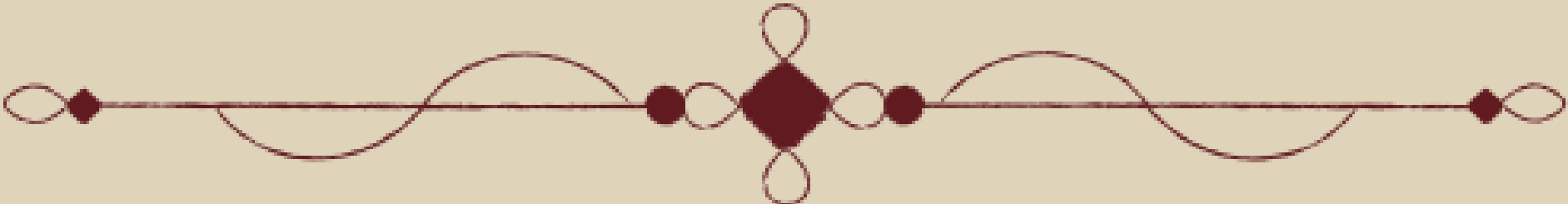
# Thursday Night Out Art Market

In partnership with the Oak Park Arts District and Downtown Oak Park, OPAAC brought an art market to Oak Park's Thursday Nights Out.

20 artists came out to sell their work from prints and paintings to stained glass and lithography.

An estimated 1,500 attended.

The artists raved about the market, praised its accessibility and constantly asked when the next market would take place.



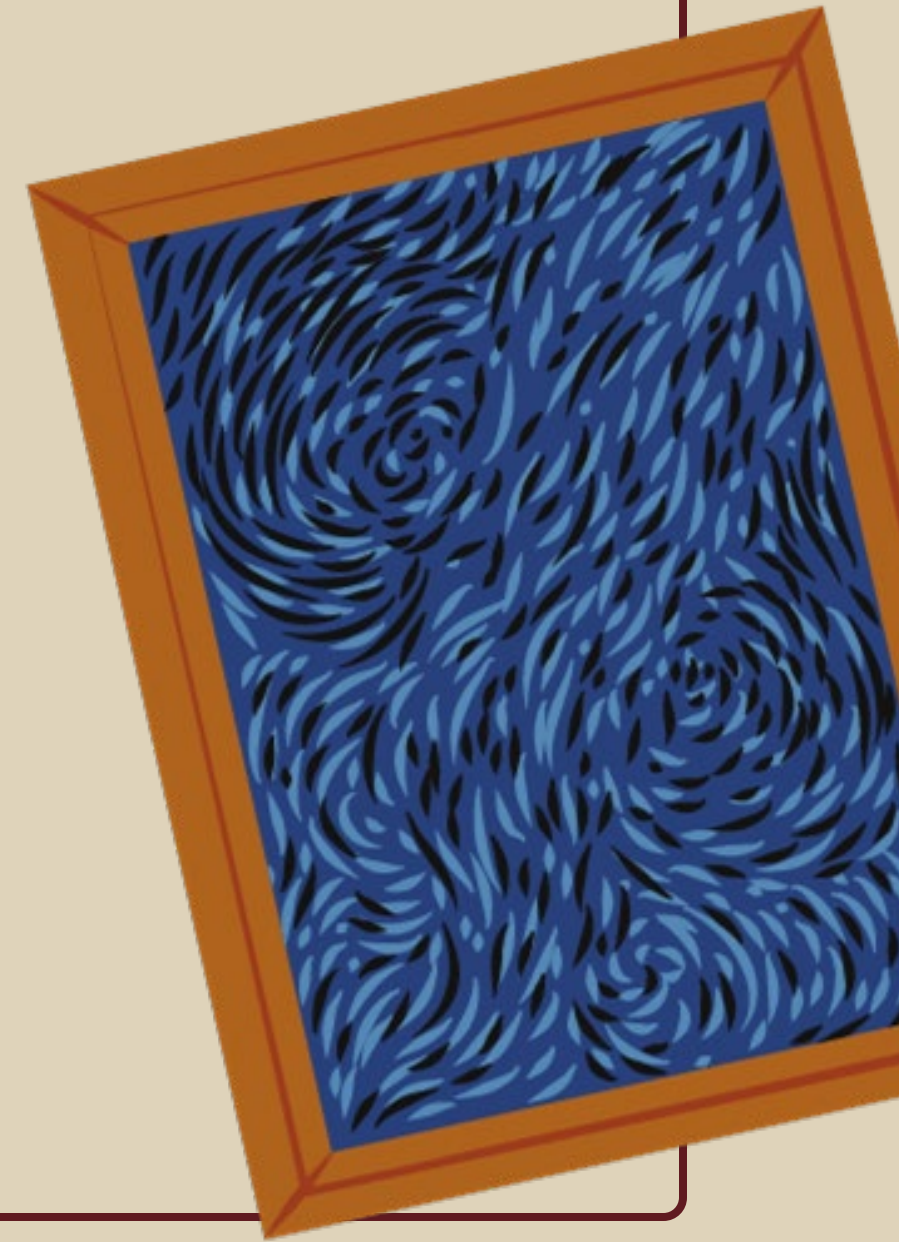


# What's Blooming on Harrison

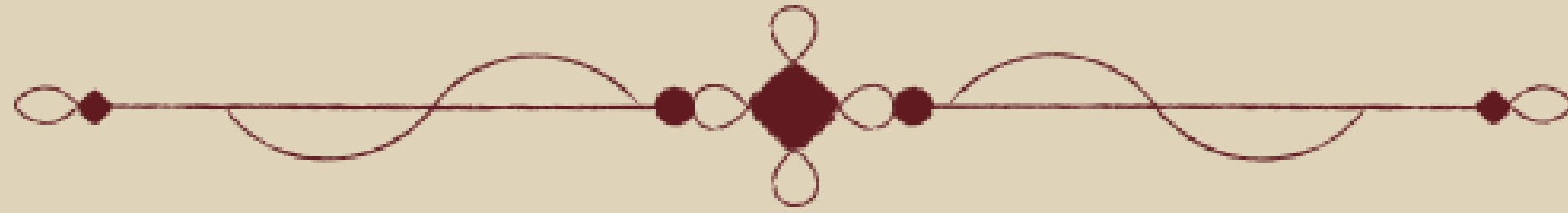
OPAAC was proud to sponsor the stage for the Art District's What's Blooming on Harrison Street Festival.

OPAAC's financial sponsorship supported the stage, lighting, and PA system for over 100 performers ranging from kids to professionals.

An estimated 4,000 people came to the event.





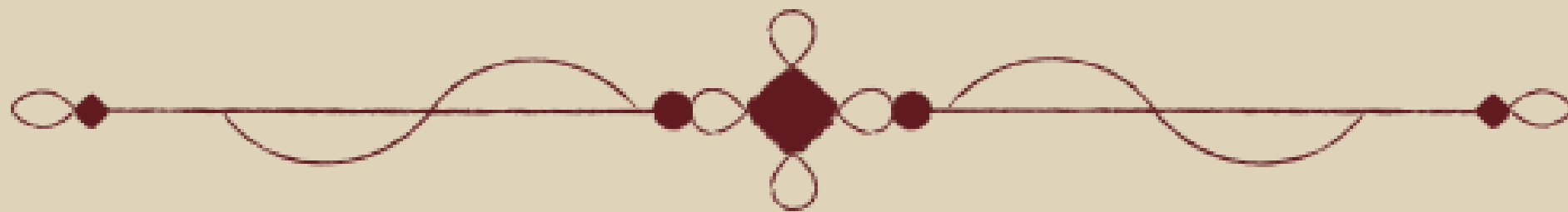


# A Day in Our Village

OPAAC is always thrilled to participate in A Day in our Village.

This year, OPAAC decorated our tent with dozens of photographs of the mini murals.

We also hired an artist who did free caricatures.  
He was a huge hit with attendees.





# Annual Meeting

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Held at Pleasant Home, Oak Park Area Arts Council's 2025 Annual Meeting was a celebration of the work that was done and the work that is to come.

Over 70 people in attendance including representatives from 35 local organizations

Our Keynote Speaker, Senior Director of Programs & Special Projects at Arts Alliance Illinois Kacie Smith, spoke about the importance of advocating for the arts and Social Prescribing.

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# Sponsorships

## Oak Park Festival Theatre

OPAAC was delighted to be able to provide funding essential to Oak Park Festival Theatre in producing their 2025 summer production of Twelfth Night.

OPAAC provided funds will also be used to provide scholarships to OPFT's upcoming youth summer camps, allowing kids to participate in exciting theater programming without financial barriers.

## Oak Park Arts District

OPAAC's sponsorship is making it possible to refresh all the light pole banners in the Art District. The Arts District is printing 37 unique banners each with the work of a different artist from the district. Support enables paying the artists, designer, printing, and the installation of these banners.

Additionally, OPAAC's sponsorship helped provide live music on 6 different evenings this summer at the Village Church and additional support in marketing and executing Friday events in the district.

# Coming Up...

The paint hasn't dried yet



2025



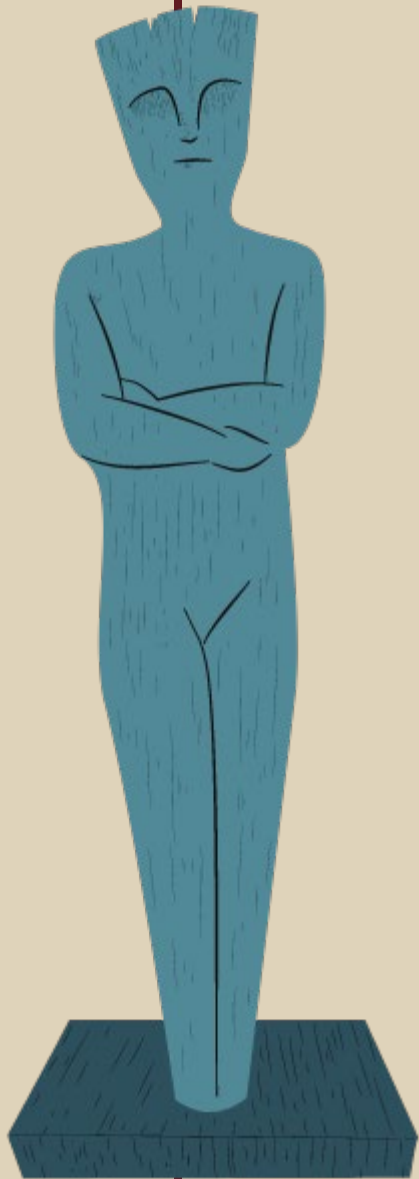
# Pilgrim Church Art Market

In Celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, the arts council is partnering with Pilgrim Church to host a Hispanic Art Market.

The market will feature local artists & performers in the hispanic community.

This art market is part of Pilgrim's effort to regularly host Multicultural Art Fairs, which OPAAC has been helping them develop.

The Hispanic Art Market is scheduled for October 11th from 8am-12pm.



# Sidewalk Sticker Sale

As part of an effort to assist the Oak Park Arts District with their recently launched *StART Your Weekends on Harrison*, OPAAC has partnered with the Arts District to host a Sidewalk Sticker Sale.

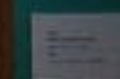
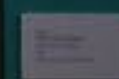
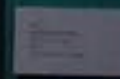
18 Artists have been invited to participate.

Each artists will be partnered with a local business or gallery.

The Sidewalk Sticker Sale is scheduled for September 12 from 4pm-7pm.







# Oak Park Plein Air Festival

OPAAC and Explore Oak Park & Beyond are excited to host the first ever Oak Park Plein Air Festival.

The festival will encourage artists to be outside painting some of the wonderful locations that make Oak Park so special.

8 categories. 8 cash prizes.

including a special category and prize sponsored by the Oak Park Arts District

The festival will conclude with a FREE Art Exhibit  
at the Nineteenth Century Club.

The Oak Park Plein Air Festival will be September 5-7.

# Thank You!!



For all that you do in  
supporting OPAAC,  
supporting the arts, and  
supporting Oak Park.



# 2025 Summary So Far:

- 2 new OPAAC Staff Members
- Over \$120,000 paid to artists through programs and events
- 30 New Mini Murals
- 17 Installed Sculptures
- 2 New Mosaic Murals
- Partnerships with Oak Park Arts District, Downtown Oak Park, Park District of Oak Park, Oak Park Festival Theater, Explore Oak Park & Beyond, Pilgrim Church, Oak Park Township & More
- 5 new art events
- Estimate of 4,500 attendees at OPAAC hosted and sponsored events
- 215 Artists supported through OPAAC programs and events
- 1,000 New Instagram Followers
- And more still to come!!!

## **OPAAC 2026 Events, Programs, & Sponsorships**

### **Planned 2026 Programs:**

- ❖ Off the Wall 2.0 After School Program
  - January through May
  - 10-12 Student Apprentices
  - Partnering with OPRF High School
  - Begin development on OPRF's Field House Mural Project 2
  - Bring in Guest Artists to teach additional art techniques
- ❖ Off the Wall
  - June through August
  - 10-12 Student Apprentices
  - Fabrication and installation of mosaic mural designed during 2.0
- ❖ Mini Murals Project
  - Goal is for 30 New Murals
  - Artists to be paid \$1,500 for their work
  - Need funds for the white paint used to prep the mural locations
  - Need funds for the anti-graffiti top coat to protect the murals
- ❖ Annual Sculpture Walk
  - Goal is to have sculptures in both DTOP and the Arts District
  - Ideal number is 16 sculptures, 8 in each district
  - Artists to be paid \$2,000 for the rent of their sculpture
  - Funds needed for the signage and installation that goes with each piece
- ❖ Arts Funds Grants
  - Anticipating 32+ applications
  - Ideally, would like to give more per grant next year compared to this year
  - Looking to provide additional training on the grant application process
- ❖ Meetings of Art Organizations
  - Currently an unnamed program being developed
  - Local art organizations and groups would be invited to participate
  - Would include monthly or bi-monthly meetings where the organizations can share about their current projects and programs, ask for support, and stay connected.
  - Would be overseen by OPAAC
  - Ideally, these organizations would work together to host new art festivals and events for the public
- ❖ Art Scholarships
  - Renewal of family funded scholarships for students studying the arts

### **Planned 2026 Events:**

- ❖ Beyond the Walls
  - This was a successful event in 2025 that we'll be repeating in 2026
  - Partnering with the Park District of Oak Park
  - Helps bring attention to the mini mural project and the artists behind the murals
  - We paid \$12,500 to artists this year, would love to do so again next year



- ❖ Oak Park Plein Air Festival
  - As of writing this report, there are 27 artists registered for this event
  - The festival helps bring focus and attention to the beauty of Oak Park
  - Hope to do business sponsored awards with local businesses next year, similar to what we are doing with the Oak Park Arts District this year
  - Ends with an art exhibit that is free to the public
  - \$3,200 in awards will be given out this year, ideally this would be matching next year
- ❖ Juneteenth Art Market
  - Partner with Pilgrim Church
  - Will spotlight local African-American artists in the community
  - Will be another Pilgrim Multicultural Arts Fair event, like the Hispanic Heritage Art Market we are currently organizing with Pilgrim Church for this October
  - Most likely will take place during the Farmer's Market, encouraging people to come out and shop at both
- ❖ Thursday Night Out Art Markets
  - Partner with Downtown Oak Park and the Oak Park Arts District
  - Provide space for 20+ local artists to share their work
  - Talking with DTOP about doing two arts markets next year
- ❖ Day in Our Village
  - One of our favorite annual events to participate in
- ❖ Make Music Day
  - This is an International event that encourages local musicians to go out and participate in free public music for the day.
- ❖ StART Your Weekend on Harrison Events
  - Partnership with Oak Park Arts District
  - Current plan is to host 1 live music event and 1 art event a month as part of the Art District's StART Your Weekend Fridays
- ❖ Art & Mental Fortitude Conference
  - Looking to host a conference that discusses mental health and the arts
- ❖ Unidentified Partnership Events
  - One of the best parts about OPAAC's expansion this year is that organizations have come to OPAAC asking to partner on different projects and events. We fully anticipate these requests to continue to come in which will lead to currently unplanned events being hosted by OPAAC in 2026.

### **Planned 2026 Sponsorships:**

- ❖ What's Blooming on Harrison Stage Sponsorship
  - The goal is to be able to sponsor two stages next year
- ❖ Oak Park Festival Theater Summer Production Sponsorship
  - The goal is to be able to sponsor 5 apprentices for OPFT's 2026 summer production

## **OPAAC Additional Funds**

### **IDHS 2024 Grant**

- ❖ \$350,000 for Youth Employment Programs
- ❖ This money has already been spent, funds had to be used by June 30, 2025
- ❖ This grant was used to create the Off the Wall 2.0 After-school program, which concluded with the unveiling of a mosaic mural at Longfellow Elementary.
- ❖ This grant was not renewed

### **DCEO 2024 Grant**

- ❖ \$350,000 for General Operation Use
- ❖ Funds are currently budgeted out and being spent
- ❖ Funds must be spent by June 30, 2026
- ❖ This budget is covering 50% of the salaries for Jaime and Taz, and 20% of the salary for Camille and Kaidrea
- ❖ Funds are being used for Beyond the Walls, Oak Park Plein Air Festival, Thursday Night Out Art Market, Day in Our Village, additional Mini Murals, What's Blooming & OPFT sponsorships, and additional theater and music events along with salaries and general organization supplies.

### **DCEO 2025 Grant**

- ❖ \$300,000 for General Operation Use
- ❖ Funds are not yet currently budgeted, waiting for the state to send paperwork
- ❖ Looking to use the funds from July 2026 - June 2027 to support OPAAC programming the same way that the current DCEO grant is
- ❖ This grant will cover 50% of the salaries for Jaime and Taz, and 20% of the salary for Camille and Kaidrea
- ❖ The state highly discourages these funds be used for subgrants
- ❖ The plan is for these funds to be used for the 2026's Beyond the Walls, Oak Park Plein Air Festival, Thursday Night Out Art Market, Day in Our Village, additional Mini Murals, What's Blooming & OPFT sponsorships, and additional theater and music events along with salaries and general organization supplies.

### **Union Pacific 2024 Grant**

- ❖ \$15,000 for Off the Wall Program
- ❖ Money has already been spent
- ❖ OPAAC is ineligible for this grant next year

### **Illinois Arts Council 2025 Grant**

- ❖ \$55,000 total received
- ❖ \$15,000 for General Operating Use
- ❖ \$40,000 for regranting in 2025 (arts funds)
- ❖ All funds have already been spent, had to be spent by August 31, 2025



**Oak Park Area Arts Council**  
**2026 Budget**

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	TOTAL
<b>Income</b>													
General Operation Support	13,239.58	13,239.59	13,239.58	13,239.59	13,239.58	13,239.59	13,239.58	13,239.59	13,239.58	13,239.58	13,239.58	13,239.58	158,875.00
Arts Funds and Off the Wall						120,000.00							120,000.00
Public Art Support			22,500.00			22,500.00			22,500.00			22,500.00	90,000.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.59</b>	<b>35,739.58</b>	<b>13,239.59</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>155,739.59</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.59</b>	<b>35,739.58</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>35,739.58</b>	<b>368,875.00</b>
													0.00
<b>GEN Operation Exp Expenses</b>													0.00
Exexecutive Director Salary 80%	6,666.66	6,666.67	6,666.66	6,666.67	6,666.66	6,666.67	6,666.66	6,666.67	6,666.67	6,666.67	6,666.67	6,666.67	80,000.00
Admin Assistant Salary 75%	4,866.67	4,866.67	4,866.67	4,866.67	4,866.67	4,866.67	4,866.67	4,866.67	4,866.66	4,866.66	4,866.66	4,866.66	58,400.00
Program Coordinators Salary 40%	1,706.25	1,706.25	1,706.25	1,706.25	1,706.25	1,706.25	1,706.25	1,706.25	1,706.25	1,706.25	1,706.25	1,706.25	20,475.00
<b>TOTAL GEN OP EXP TOTALS</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.59</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.59</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.59</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.59</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>158,875.00</b>
													0.00
<b>Art Funds &amp; Off Wall Expenses</b>													0.00
Artist Contracts					30,000.00								30,000.00
Supplies and Materials					30,000.00								30,000.00
Arts Fund Grants						60,000.00							60,000.00
<b>Total Arts and Off Wall Exp</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>60,000.00</b>	<b>60,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>120,000.00</b>
													0.00
<b>Public Art Support Expenses</b>													0.00
Fine Arts Scholarships Paid							10,000.00						10,000.00
Minimurals Paid					45,000.00								45,000.00
Sculpture Walk Paid			35,000.00										35,000.00
<b>Total Public Art Expenses</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>35,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>45,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>10,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>90,000.00</b>
													0.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.59</b>	<b>48,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.59</b>	<b>118,239.58</b>	<b>73,239.59</b>	<b>23,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.59</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>13,239.58</b>	<b>368,875.00</b>
													0.00
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-12,500.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-105,000.00</b>	<b>82,500.00</b>	<b>-10,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>22,500.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>22,500.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>