

# **Mesquite Arts Center/Council Organizational History**

## **HISTORY**

Founded in 1981, the *Mesquite Arts Council* initially was a part of the Mesquite Chamber of Commerce Cultural Committee. Official recognition by the State of Texas occurred in 1984 as a result of the development of by-laws, articles of incorporation and tax exempt status. With the successful organization of the community theatre in 1985, the Arts Council assisted the band, chorus, and orchestra with an equitable allocation of hotel/motel tax monies. Delivery of the Local Cultural Grants Program in 1993 by the Arts Council, to the arts nonprofit community further solidified a commitment to arts services and continues to date. Currently, and in addition to the previously listed arts administration elements, the Mesquite Arts Council provides administrative support and policy making toward the operation of the Mesquite Arts Center.

## **PROGRAMMING**

The Arts Council has broadened its cultural responsibilities from initially sponsoring the *Mesquite Music Festival* to providing for the community a variety of events. *Writer's in the Schools*, *Shakespeare in the Courtyard*, *JazzBreaks in June*, *Chamber Music (both instrumental and vocal)* and the *Summer Children's Theatre/Art Camp* are offered to the community with much of the programming available free to the public. Presenting local visual artists and touring art exhibits insures that the galleries support a variety of work, including photography, works on canvas including oils & watercolor, handwork including weaving & quilts, and sculpture. International artists such as James Dick, the Debussy String Quartet and the Chamber Singers are included in the chamber music series. Support of programming for at-risk youth, senior citizens and emerging arts groups, is delivered yearly by the Mesquite Arts Council. Grants to the Arts Council supporting local programming includes Texas Commission on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, Texas Historical Commission and the State Arts Action Network which is part of Americans for the Arts.

## **ENDOWMENTS**

The Arts Council board and staff have oversight of six endowments. Those named endowments include the *Jeann & Ralph Wisenbaker*, *Bass/Brown/Collins*, *John & Alta Nichols*, *Edward Jones/Keith Singleton*, *Dr. Cary Tanamachi* and *Dede Duson*. These endowments provide partial funding of the following programs:

- *Jeann & Ralph Wisenbaker, Edward Jones/Keith Singleton, Dr. Cary Tanamachi*  
Latin Arts Association production of two annual bi-lingual theatrical productions for elementary age school students
- *John & Alta Nichols*  
Summer Children's Theatre or Art Camp
- *Bass/Brown/Collins*  
Sculpture acquisition
- *Dede Duson as designated by Jean Rogers Winchell of San Antonio, Texas*  
Children's Chorus of Greater Dallas annual concert featuring the music of Dede Duson

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Arts Council has provided training for potential board members and general referral and financial assistance to each “start-up” nonprofit. The Arts Council has also provided a central focus to the cultural enrichment of Mesquite and eastern Dallas County communities. Broad, Arts Council board representation, including *administrators from area colleges, Mesquite Independent School District*, the local business community, elected city officials, and city staff, position the Arts Council for strong community leadership with committed financial support.

## **FACILITY MANAGEMENT**

The Mesquite Arts Council provides partial salary reimbursement for the management of the Mesquite Arts Center. Prior to completion in December 1995 a major fundraising effort provided equipment and landscaping at the center. Generally, staff coordinates requests for space from the public, school district, city departments, and the 16 arts groups that lease from the center. Additionally staff prepares facility budgets including maintenance, operations and salaries. Recent figures indicate that over 130,000 people visit yearly and over 1,000 events take place at the Arts Center. In addition to making policies regarding the Mesquite Arts Center, the *Mesquite Arts Council Board of Directors* continues to provide support towards marketing, advertising and presenting the arts in Mesquite.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The recently completed “*Arts Center Master Plan*” forecasts the ability of the arts council to present a broad array of arts events. Doubling the square footage of the arts center will certainly provide for larger audiences, programming a greater number of arts events and enhance the image of Mesquite.

## **PUBLIC ART ORDINANCE**

On December 20, 2004 City Council approved the Mesquite Public Art Policy/Plan. Two-percent of capital improvement construction projects will go toward a public art component. Three public art projects have been completed: The Mesquite Animal & Adoption Center – “**Connections**” a metal sculpture consisting of carbon and polished steel, approximately 12 feet high by artist Terri Stone; Vanston Leisure Pool – “**solar tide**” is a hand cut, ceramic tile wall 7’ x 39’ by artist Dakota Warren; and the Community Services Building – “**Calyx**” is made of concrete and native plant material by landscape artist David Baldwin.

The largest public art project in the history of Mesquite will be completed in June 2010. Plans are underway for public art to be included in the new Mesquite City Hall, which is located at 777 N. Galloway in Mesquite, Texas.

# Mesquite Arts Council/Arts Center

## Overview

### MISSION STATEMENT

*The Mesquite Arts Council is a nonprofit organization designated to support and nourish the arts in Mesquite. The Council allocates local grants funds and resources for the arts, provides needed services to artists, member organizations and the community; is an advocate for culturally diverse arts programs and is active in the community with regard to cultural planning, development and advocacy of the arts.*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board is comprised of 11 members and 4 standing committees (*grants review committee, by-laws revision committee, public art committee and the technology committee*)

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING DATES 2008

- January 8
- April 8
- July 8
- October 7 (Arts Presentation to Mesquite City Council)
- December 5 (Annual Arts Council Member Appreciation)

### Arts Council BUDGET =

75% Hotel/Motel Tax Fund  
25% Contributions, Grants, Ticket sales/concessions

**Budget FY 2008      \$158,300.00**

### Arts Center BUDGET FY 2008 =

**Maintenance and Operation** = costs \$270,000.00; income from rentals, leases, \$70,000.00

### Arts Council/Arts Center Administrative STAFF

2 full time

### Arts Center Operational STAFF

1 supervisor, 2 custodians (time is divided between the Arts Center and the Municipal Center)

### VOLUNTEERS

Sixteen Arts Groups provide programming at the Mesquite Arts Center. The volunteer base is substantial and numbers approximately six hundred. A volunteer handbook is available from the Arts Council office and is used as a guide by each of the Arts Groups.

## **COMMUNITY ARTS ORGANIZATIONS**

- Mesquite Area Music Teachers
- Mesquite Symphony Orchestra
- Mesquite Symphony Guild
- Mesquite Symphonic Band
- Reflections Chorus
- Mesquite Creative Arts Club
- Texas Area Artists
- Mesquite Community Theatre

## **PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS/ARTS ORGANIZATIONS**

- Mesquite Arts Council – presents chamber music, jazz concerts, professional theatre, touring visual art exhibits, children’s art/theatre camps, literary events
- Children’s & Youth Chorus of Greater Dallas
- The Writer’s Garret – presents nationally recognized authors
- Texas Winds – music outreach to seniors in the metroplex - presents 26 concerts in Mesquite nursing homes and senior centers
- Latin Arts Association/Artes de la Rosa
- Mesquite Jazz Repertory Ensemble
- Texas Voices
- Junior Players Guild
- Exhibits USA – offers touring exhibitions of visual arts and humanities
- Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services
- Michael Cross Gallery & Studio – two dimensional art in paint, charcoal and other media
- Terri Stone – sculptures in metal and other media
- Jeff Green – art from found objects
- Michael Cassidy - photography

## **ADVOCACY & Programming PARTNERSHIPS**

- North Texas Arts Alliance
- Historic Mesquite Inc.
- Mesquite Business Committee for the Arts
- Mesquite Convention and Visitors Bureau
- “The Rows” Mesquite Economic Development
- Mesquite Independent School District
- Mesquite Service League
- John and Alta Nichols Art Camp
- North Texas Business for Arts & Culture
- Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs
- State Arts Action Network

- Texas Commission on the Arts
- Texas Historical Commission
- Texans for the Arts
- Texas Lakes Trail
- Americans for the Arts
- National Endowment for the Arts

**FACILITY**

The Arts Council manages the Mesquite Arts Center. The Arts Center is designed for specific arts disciplines, which include vocal, chamber and orchestral music; drama and the visual arts. The concert hall seats 500 and contains a canopied stage (not curtained) for music. The Black Box Theatre is for the production of plays, and the Rehearsal Hall is used for recitals, art demonstrations, meetings and receptions. Two galleries support local artists and touring art exhibits. Each of these areas surrounds the *Jeann & Ralph Wisenbaker Courtyard*, which is used for receptions, jazz concerts and Shakespearean productions.

In May of 2003, *Milton Powell & Partners* prepared a masterplan for the proposed expansion of the Mesquite Arts Center. The plan was presented to the Mesquite Arts Council Board of Directors, the mayor and city council members for the City of Mesquite. At an estimated cost of \$12 million, the expansion will include a 900 seat *Main Auditorium*, an *outdoor performance space/sculpture garden* and *200 seat lecture/recital hall*. Additionally, expanded parking and bus drop off will be included in the plan.

**TOTAL 2006 Events and Participants at the Mesquite Arts Center**

*Total number of events 1,066*

*Participants*

- Arts Groups -- 118,247
- City Employee classes -- 3,476
- Public sponsored events -- 6,749
- School District events -- 1,528
- TOTAL --130 ,000

**PROGRAMS**

*Arts and Cultural Programming:*

- Internationally recognized series of chamber music concerts occurs year round (a focus on summer programming is significant).
- Local artists are invited to exhibit in the Main & Chamber Galleries. The Arts Council assists in shipping, hanging and placement of the work, produces publicity material, title plates and funds artist receptions.

- Professional jazz musicians are presented in June of each year for free outdoor concerts.
- Arts Council funding to The Writer's Garret provides for the Writer's in the Schools program. Currently one middle school and two high schools in MISD are represented in the after-school creative writing program. The annual culmination of the program consists of "read-ins" held at the Mesquite Arts Center and Starbucks, Borders Books & Music or Panera Bread.

*Public Art Program:*

The City of Mesquite is committed to the Public Art Policy and program. In December 2004 the City of Mesquite provided that 2% of designated capital improvement projects be designated for public art. Public art is integral to the complex underlying structure of a community by recognizing its potential to:

- Strengthen economic development and tourism;
- Enhance neighborhood identity;
- Educate children and adults;
- Support a public process for incorporating artist services and artworks in the design of civic spaces and facilities; and
- Enrich the spirit and pride of its citizens.

Three public art projects in Mesquite have been completed to date.

"Connections" by Terri Stone is located at the Mesquite Animal and Adoption Center; "solar tide" by Dakota Warren is located on the bath house at Vanston Leisure Pool and "Calyx" by David Baldwin is in front of the Community Services Building.

*Arts Education:*

- Working closely with Mesquite's Youth Services Coordinator, the Arts Council provides funding for a variety of events and youth activities. "Teen Time" provides summer excursions for up to thirty teens who do not have funds for day trips such as museum outings, IMAX Theatre presentations, Arboretum classes, and visits to the Science Museum. "Drama Teach" is a Youth Services program using drama techniques to help a student gain self esteem. The student gains a better understanding of "how to interview for a job."
- Other endowment funded activities by the Arts Council include arts youth camps such as the John & Alta Nichols Children's Theatre Camp and Art Camp.
- Three endowments are managed by the Mesquite Arts Council and they include the Jeann & Ralph Wisenbaker, Edward Jones/Keith Singleton, and Dr. Cary Tanamachi Endowments. These scholarships have assisted in funding the "live teleconference" which emanates from Colonial Williamsburg. Mesquite Instructional Television organized the event where over 600 MISD students were served annually through

the program. Currently the endowment funds are used in presenting bi-lingual theatre productions that are produced by Artes de la Rosa.

- The Dede Duson Endowment as established by Jean Rogers Winchell provides funding for the annual children's choral concert.

*Grant Making:*

- The Mesquite Arts Council, through the Hotel/Motel Tax Fund of the City of Mesquite, provide the Local Cultural Grants Program to area arts organizations. Through an established peer review process, delivery by contract for arts services from applicant organizations is managed professionally. In 2007 sixteen applications from eleven arts organizations requested funding for arts projects of \$31,558.

*Services to artists and Arts Organizations:*

- The Arts Council provides technical assistance with a broad range of elements specific to nonprofit operation including: the effective nonprofit board, grant writing techniques, contract management, newsletter production and other printed material, producing events and festivals and essential elements of publicity.

*Advocacy/Marketing:*

- The Arts Council staff provides arts advocacy to elected officials, the City Council and School Board; and assists the Economic Development Department with visual aids and statistics representing the Arts in Mesquite. Staff serves the Mesquite Chamber of Commerce as the cultural liaison to the board of directors and serves on the board of Texans for the Arts, a statewide organization.

*Public Art Policy/Plan*

- City Council approved on December 20, 2004 the Public Art Policy for the City of Mesquite. "two percent of all capital improvement construction projects will be used for a public art component."

*Community Cultural Planning & Development:*

- The Arts Council staff produces surveys and community cultural plans.