

## 2023 SAAC Annual Report

### Who We Are

The Sault Area Arts Council (SAAC) is made up of a group of artists and art lovers whose mission is “to inspire and encourage appreciation of the arts for all.” The Art Center, at its current home, Alberta House, serves as a gathering place where locals and visitors can come to share ideas, learn from each other, and create, exhibit, and buy, and sell art.

### Where We Come From

SAAC evolved from a colony of young painters (the Le Sault Artists Guild, established in 1955) who were looking for a place to regularly meet, create art, and gain inspiration from each other. They officially became the Sault Area Arts Council in 1969 and incorporated as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) entity in 1986. It was then that Mrs. Ida Stuart donated the Alberta House to SAAC. Our doors soon opened soon thereafter, and we have operated continuously ever since at 217 Ferris Street.

### Where We Are Going

The Alberta House provided SAAC with a solid base on which to grow. Right now, almost 40 years later, a new young art community is forming, and the enthusiasm and excitement we are experiencing, parallels the enthusiasm that of the 1980s the founding members in the 1980s exhilaration. SAAC’s programming has increased significantly, thanks to an influx of new artists and volunteers, increased sales, an expanded slate of class offerings, private donations, corporate sponsorships, and government grants. The caliber of our exhibits is consistently high, and the number of class offerings and hosted receptions has expanded severalfold. As a result of our recent growth, we find the space at Alberta House is no longer adequate for our activities. A new home with more space, visibility, and accessibility is needed.

Consequently, we are making plans to relocate to 538 Ashmun Street, in the heart of downtown Sault Ste Marie. The 538 building, owned by Five T-thirty-Eight, LLC, has been awarded three different grants (a blight elimination grant, and two downtown revitalization grants) to for remodeling and restore restoring the space. Ten new market rate market-rate apartments will be constructed on the upper floors, and SAAC will occupy two storefronts on the ground floor and the associated basements. The project is scheduled for completion in August 2025. Among many other adjustments, transitioning from the Alberta House requires, among many adjustments, a name change, as 217 Ferris Street the Alberta House will remain the historic “Alberta House,” on Ferris Street. Our new logo announces clearly who we are, now the Sault Area Art Center, and the service we intend to offer the community.



Over the coming months we will define the architectural and engineering requirements for our new home. The leased space will be in “white box white box” readiness for us, basic electrical

**Commented [L1]:** Hi, Dashie! The report is looking great—it’s come such a long way thanks to your hard work. For this copyedit, I’ll look it over and correct any errors, check for consistency, ensure proper syntax, and flag anything that’s unclear. I’ll be using *The Chicago Manual of Style* (CMOS) and *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* as my main resources. Let’s get started!

**Commented [L2]:** Addition okay?

**Commented [L3]:** Changes okay? I think this sentence flows a little better with these edits.

**Commented [L4]:** Any chance there’s an actual figure you could include here? Including this statistic would make a real impression on the reader.

**Commented [L5]:** I adjusted this name to match the name listed in this press release (and other articles online)—please confirm.  
<https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/news/press-releases/2023/10/05/whitmer-awards-funding-to-support-communities-and-encourage-population-growth-100-million-awarded>

**Commented [L6]:** Changes okay? It felt important to include the new name in the body of the text in addition to the logo.

wiring, ~~outlets~~, plumbing, lighting, and HVAC will be completed, but SAAC will need to build out the space to meet our specific gallery, shop, and classroom requirements. We will hold ongoing meetings to outline exactly what construction and furnishings are needed. Refining our ~~s~~Strategic plan, preparing for a major ~~c~~Capital campaign to fund these expenses, and applying for government grants ~~is-are~~ our next order~~s~~ of business.

## Showcasing Local Talent

### Children's Talent

One of SAAC's primary goals is to engage ~~our-local~~ youth in creating and appreciating art. ~~During the month of In~~ March, 56 students from six local schools participated in the ~~a~~Annual K-12 Youth Art Exhibit. The exhibit, attended by 125 participants, was visually delightful. Our local ~~children-youth~~ exhibited considerable talent. ~~(Insert photos)~~

In July, thanks to a grant from the Michigan Arts and Culture Council (~~MACC~~), 13 children participated in ~~thea~~ week-long ART CAMP ~~program~~ at the Bay Mills Cultural Center. They experimented with seven different art forms, including drawing, painting, ~~clay~~, photography, woodworking, fiber art, and traditional Native beading. The project served as a model for developing future art classes at the Art Center. Based on our success with the ART CAMP, we will be holding ~~twice monthly~~ Saturday art classes for children ~~twice monthly~~ during the school year. As evidenced by the joy and concentration ~~in-on~~ the faces of these young artists, the ~~children found the~~ camp ~~was~~ enjoyable and inspiring. ~~(—Insert photos)—~~

### Photography

The Art Center hosted a new photography event in July ~~entitled~~, "Chippewa County in Photographs: ", ~~subtitled "48-48-48"~~. Each of ~~the~~ 48 photographers (amateurs and professionals) had 48 hours to take pictures in one of ~~the~~ 48 regions of Chippewa County. The photos were then exhibited in the ~~g~~Gallery for the month. This project generated great enthusiasm among the participants and ~~other~~ attendees. Due to popular demand, this will become an annual event.

### Indigenous Art

The November exhibit showcased ~~a~~Arts and ~~c~~Crafts of local Indigenous artists and included paintings, baskets, beadwork, sculpture, and a birch bark canoe. A retrospective of four generations of ~~Brimley's~~ Bowen family artists featured prominently in this show. The constellation of paintings was a moving tribute to the Bay Mills Indian Community as it was the first time that Tribal members were able to view the expansive works of so many Bowen artists assembled in one place. Also included were works by ~~artists Brenda Brining, Deanna LaLonde, and Ron Paquin of~~ the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians' ~~artists, Brenda Brining, Deanna LaLonde, and Ron Paquin,~~ and ~~the~~ Odawa/Ojibway artist Zoey Wood Salomon. ~~(Insert photos)~~

### Christmas ~~show~~ Show and Party

Another event initiated this year was the annual SAAC Christmas ~~show and~~ party. The exhibit featured small, ~~modestly priced~~ works ~~modestly priced~~. The primary purpose of this gathering

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Commented [L8]: Adjusted to reflect the wide age range in a K-12 group.

Commented [L9]: Given that MACC is only mentioned a few times and in different parts of the report, I suggest spelling it out each time (so you don't need to include the acronym).

Commented [L10]: To be consistent with the rest of the items in this list, I would suggest "clay sculpting" or "pottery" here (depending on which best describes the activity).

Commented [L11]: Change okay? "Brimley" is the town the Bowen family is from, correct? (Or is their name "Brimley Bowen"?)

was to honor our volunteers and sponsors with gifts and words of appreciation to thank them for their contributions to SAAC's efforts. A secondary purpose was to simply relax and have fun after a very busy year. And that we did—with delicious hors d'oeuvres and drinks, music by a string quartet from the Soo Theatre Project's STARS, several door prizes, 1<sup>st</sup> first, second, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> third-prize awards for participating artists, and—perhaps the most fun—an ugly sweater contest! (Insert photos -I have a good photo of the string quartet that I will send you, Rebecca.)

### Connecting Artists

To further advance our mission of creating a gathering place for artists and art lovers, we held a "Meet and Greet" in March. Ten local artists, new to SAAC, were welcomed. In addition, an evening of the Arts was held in April during the *Artist Choice Juried Exhibition* with the Gallery Awards presentation. This first-of-its-kind event was well attended.

We wanted to get to know the regional institutional sponsors of the arts, SAAC and hosted two other "Meet and Greets": one in June for the Regional quarterly meeting of the Upper Peninsula Arts and Culture Alliance and another in July for the Board of the Michigan Arts and Culture Council.

### Fostering Artists and Teaching Skills

#### Artist-in-Residence Program

A truly exciting innovation this year was the inauguration of our artist-in-residence program. Scott Laursen, Board Vice Chair, and his wife Eva are offering their VRBO cabin to three different artists (visual artists, writers, and photographers) for 10-day periods in September and November 2023 and April 2024. This innovative program, advertised on the Café Call for Entry website, drew fifty-six applications for the three slots in the 2023/2024 season! To date one writer and one photographer have completed the program, and both reported the experience was highly satisfactory. The participating artists are required to contribute a work of art or give a presentation at the Art Center. Visual artist Dawnice Kerchaert, our November artist-in-residence, is in the process of weaving this basket woven with pine needles and sweet grass, around a sandstone rock found on the beach is in the process of being woven. The Her completed work will be contributed to SAAC's permanent collection by visual artist Dawnice Kerchaert, our November artist-in-Residence. (Insert photo of basket)

#### Hosting Guest Artists

Two of our SAAC Board members offered overnight lodging for visiting artists from the Marquette area, at the time of their exhibit's opening reception in October.

#### Collaboration with LSSU for Art Classes

Lake Superior State University does not currently have any Visual Arts class offerings. The Director of the LSSU Arts Center, Thomas Meacham, expressed interest in SAAC offering

**Commented [L12]:** Change okay? From my research, it seems that the STARS program exists within the umbrella of the Soo Theatre Project (versus the Soo Theatre having a "Project STARS"), so this was edited for clarity.

**Commented [L13]:** I felt like this deserved the excitement of an exclamation point—feel free to reject this change if you disagree!

**Commented [L14]:** Perhaps "development" would work better here? That would avoid the repetition of "innovative" three lines down.

**Commented [L15]:** In many style guides, including CMOS, titles like this are not capitalized when presented after the name—if SAAC has a different guideline for this, you can reject this change.

**Commented [L16]:** Addition okay? This gives more context for readers who may not be familiar with Café.

**Commented [L17]:** A writer and a photographer are mentioned here, but later in the paragraph Dawnice Kerchaert, a visual artist, is identified as November's artist-in-residence. Was there an additional artist before the September and November participants?

**Commented [L18]:** Please confirm the proper pronoun here.

**Commented [L19]:** Edited here to distinguish this Arts Center from the SAAC's Art Center, which is referenced throughout the document.

future classes ~~where for which~~ students ~~will be able to can~~ get ~~u~~University credits in the ~~f~~Fine arts.

### **Poetry ~~N~~ight**

Renee Dreiling started a monthly poetry meeting at the Art Center where people can come to read ~~theirs~~their own poems and other'sor poems written by others and ~~discuss~~engage in discussion at the Art Center. Average attendance for this activity has been ~~4~~around four or five people.

### **SAAC Library**

Board member Terri Wolski has catalogued and made available for borrowers over 300 art books related to our collection.

### **Growing and Changing**

#### **Paid ~~S~~taff**

After relying on volunteer labor since we acquired Alberta House in 1986, we now have two ~~parttime~~part-time paid staff. ~~:-~~Rebecca Jones was hired as our social media specialist in October 2022, ~~and Robin Sorquist was contracted to be operations manager. :-~~ In March 2023 ~~Robin Sorquist was contracted to be Operations Manager~~. Robin, Rebecca, our volunteers, and the SAAC ~~b~~Board have enlivened operations at the gallery and shop and strengthened our overall programming. During January and February, Robin and Rebecca rearranged the shop, digitized the shop inventory, contacted artists to confirm addresses and update their inventory, and painted the shop and gallery.

#### **Volunteers**

~~÷~~Our volunteers have been life-savers. ~~-~~More than 30 volunteers have given ~~of~~their time and energy to work in the shop, help with gardening, maintain the interior and exterior of the building, shovel snow, hang the exhibits, provide food and drink for the receptions, write grants, and be ambassadors in the community. We can always find work for any new volunteers in accordance with their skills and desires. Physical maintenance of the Alberta ~~H~~ouse has always been a priority. ~~:-~~ ~~t~~To this end, ~~b~~Board member Tom Harrison and volunteer, Terry Moran, repaired and repainted the front porch, fire escape, and ~~handicapped-wheelchair~~ ramp.

#### **Website Development and ~~Training with~~ Point-of-Sale System ~~(PoS)~~**

The saultartcenter.com website was made fully functional and is updated continually by Rebecca Jones. Rebecca also posts regularly on Facebook and is getting an average of 1,500 hits weekly. Our Instagram account is monitored by Erin Bullock, who reports a 147% growth since July 2023. All classes, upcoming events, gallery exhibits, and contributing artists are posted online, as well as opportunities to become a members and/or make donations. All SAAC members are encouraged to share any website or social media announcements to help expand awareness of the organization.

Commented [L20]: Addition okay?

The shop volunteers have been trained with the new ~~p~~Point-~~o~~f-~~s~~Sale system (~~Pe~~SPOS). The ~~Pe~~S-~~POS~~ has made our accounting substantially more efficient, allowing input of all sales, donations, sponsorships, and memberships. It permits the easy ~~set up~~setup of new inventory for the shop and gallery exhibits, tracks and reports invoices for artist payments, and categorizes sales. ~~Through the~~The ~~Pe~~SPOS generates weekly, monthly, and annual financial reports ~~are generated~~.

### Collaborations

In addition to welcoming the general community to our center, over this past year, SAAC has reached out to other cultural institutions in the city and initiated informal collaborations with the Chippewa County Historical Society, the River of History Museum, the Lake Superior State University Arts Center, the Bayliss Public Library, and the ~~soon-to-be-opened~~soon-to-be-opened Soo Locks Children's Museum. Our new Ashmun Street location is ideal for growing these collaborations as we will be situated right next door to the Soo Theatre, across the street from the River of History Museum, around the corner from the Bayliss Public Library, and three blocks from the Chippewa County Historical Society! We anticipate that the Sault Area Art Center will be a vital member of what will become known as the Soo's Cultural Circle.

### Managing ~~and~~ Raising Funds

After visiting several other art galleries and learning about their strategies, we are reformulating our ~~b~~Business plan. Cathie Chenoweth is creating a comprehensive list of potential revenue streams ~~which that~~ include, but are not limited to:

**Commented [L21]:** Consider adding Cathie's role at SAAC for those who may not know who she is.

- ~~f~~Fund-raising events, ~~including a potential-~~ We are considering initiating a \$20,000--prize ~~r~~Raffle and weekly ~~b~~Bingo ~~sessions~~sessions;
- ~~an a~~Annual appeal letter;
- ~~a m~~Membership drive;
- ~~the~~ Kohl's Volunteer Incentive Program, ~~in which~~ Kohl's ~~offers to pay~~s a nonprofit institution \$25 ~~per~~ /hour for the time that any of their staff volunteer at that institution -- Kathleen Maine, a part-time Kohl's employee, volunteers for five hours in the shop each week, ~~and-~~ ~~h~~Her efforts have ~~made~~resulted in a significant contribution to SAAC;
- ~~b~~Bank accounts -- ~~t~~The SAAC ~~account~~ and Olive M. Craig Gallery accounts were merged, giving us a current total of X\$\$\$-- ~~in the bank at this writing~~
- ~~s~~Sponsorships -- ~~e~~Each monthly exhibit had a \$500 sponsor; ~~-(Rebecca, please put the below list~~Exhibit Sponsors -- see below -- ~~in a box close to this list.)~~
- community donations; (Another box nearby, Rebecca, for the Community Donations list -- see below.)
- ~~and g~~Government grants -- ~~for~~ For the first time in its history, SAAC applied for and received state and federal grants.
- 

**Commented [L22]:** I reorganized this text just to make it clear to Rebecca what is included in the main bulleted list and what is designated for a separate text box.

### Exhibit Sponsors

April: *Artist Choice Juried Exhibition* (Century 21, Advantage Plus)

May: *Fiber Arts* (Kristin Fairbanks, DDS)

June: *Kaleidoscope and Lens & Chisel* (anonymous sponsor)

July: *Chippewa County in Photographs* (4Front Credit Union)

August: *Paint and Metal* (GHL Certified Public Accountants)

September: *The Curiosities of ~~two~~ Two Dames* (Craig Flickinger, DDS)

October: *Bonifas Award Winners* (Rotary Club)

November: *Indigenous Arts and Crafts*

December: *Christmas at Alberta House* (Soo Co-~~Op~~ Credit Union and Blick ~~Art~~ Materials)

**Commented [L23]:** A title for this sidebar box will help connect it to its related text.

**Commented [L24]:** This entry is missing a sponsor—please include it, or if there wasn't one, leave this exhibit off the list.

### Community Donations another box here, Rebecca

#### Community Donations

Bay Mills Indian Community \$1,500

Cloverland Electric Cooperative \$500

Walmart \$200

Convention Bureau \$250

### ~~Government grants For the first time in its history SAAC applied for and received state and federal grants.~~

We were awarded two grants from the Michigan Arts and Culture Council (~~MACC~~) for ART CAMP 2023 (\$3,500) and operations support (\$5,927). The latter grant proposal, written by Scott Laursen, scored 97%, which made SAAC eligible to receive \$5,927 this year and 55% of our rolling average annual unrestricted revenue over the next two years ~~we will receive 55% of our rolling average annual unrestricted revenue.~~

We were also awarded a \$10,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (~~NEA~~) to hold *"The Soo Collects: Art for All"*. ~~In September 2024,~~ a multi-venue event ~~will occur with that will~~ exhibits ~~of~~ art that is currently held in the collections of organizations and private individuals in September 2024. A series of lectures, discussions, art-making classes, and even a scavenger hunt—searching for significant public art throughout Sault Ste Marie—will fill the month. The program will be free to all, and bus transportation will be provided for residents throughout Chippewa County.

The Veterans Administration granted SAAC \$3,970 to cover tuition for any veterans attending any classes offered by SAAC.

Two additional grant proposals are in process; the first is a COVID-~~r~~Relief grant (sponsored by the Michigan Arts and Culture Council, MACC) and the second is a capacity-building grant

from ArtsHERE to better equip our organization ~~for to~~ bringing art to our underserved community members.

Revenue for 2023 is ~~x~~times that of 2022

TOTAL NET REVENUE Jan 1, 2023 ~~—~~ Dec 31, 2022 ~~-was~~ XXX

TOTAL NET REVENUE Jan 1, 2023 ~~—~~ Dec 31, 2023 was XXX

? ~~include year-end~~year-end financial report (Jim)

### Short- and Long-Term Plans

Our immediate priority is to organize a capital campaign to raise funds for building out the gallery, shop, kitchen, classrooms, and venue space at our new home. Over the next months we will identify our specific “brick and mortar” needs, obtain cost estimates, and create blueprints, drawings, and pictures. We will then be able to submit relevant grant proposals and seek out potential donors for matching funds.

Our 30-month plan includes clearly defining our expenses and revenue streams, selling Alberta House, and being settled in at 538 Ashmun Street by June 2026.

**Commented [L25]:** This would work well in another sidebar instead of being part of the main text.