



Dear Arts Advocates,

Welcome to the Arts Advocacy Day at the Capitol 2018.

Martin Luther King, Jr. so eloquently expressed, “Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

Like last year, we are faced with a new reality with our current administration, a new way of realizing government and government’s responsibility to its citizens. The recent focus on cutting Arts funding has never been more possible or evident than it is in this current climate. This calls for bold conversations with your neighbors, social media connections and of course, elected officials, sharing with them the realization that Art matters in our lives and in our culture. We have strong economic indicators for the Arts in Colorado, it is our fifth largest economy employing over 140,000 people, with \$7.2 billion in earnings annually, and we received \$3.1 million from the NEA that was distributed to every congressional district in our state. Our office of Creative Industries receives 1/3 of their budget from the NEA, which is generously distributed statewide.

But none of the economic arguments has much to do with the true value of the arts and humanities. The arts and humanities have value because they make us better human beings. That’s basically it. They teach us history and encourage virtue, they help us debate serious issues in a respectful (or sometimes indirect) manner, they make us appreciate beauty, they make us more empathetic and they challenge our own beliefs. All of this helps ensure a skeptical, human and responsible citizenry. We have spent far too much time articulating the economic and ancillary benefits of our disciplines and not enough time actually building and serving the culture. (Burriesci, Matt, 2017)

Sharing your personal stories of engagement, learning and growth through the Arts helps build the foundation of empathy toward each other, and contributes to our society in Colorado in a positive outreach that we can all love and appreciate. Today, please make sure you feel the impact and share your passion with your elected officials. However, we cannot stop with just one day of advocacy, we must keep at it each and every day, use your Facebook posts, hashtag your Representatives in all of your Arts related posts – you have the ability to make a difference.

Thank you for your presence,
Jay Seller, PhD
Arts for Colorado, President
Join us today @ ArtsforColorado.org