

Volunteer Information

Welcome to The Brookline Arts Center.

Let us start off with a big Thank You! Your time and energy spent with us is very much appreciated. Volunteering with us is demonstration of advocacy for arts education and its importance in the community. Throughout your volunteer term we hope you take the time to learn more about the center and its work, but also learn more about yourself as a person, artist, and community member.

The following information has been provided to give you a behind the scene view of the Brookline Arts Center. As you read through our handbook please make notes. Whether it is a question or suggestion we are always interested.

History

The Brookline Arts Center began in 1964 as an art class for 15 children, administered by volunteers and taught by a professional artist, in the basement of a private home. In 1968, the BAC moved to its current location, a beautiful old firehouse on the edge of a small park. This building allowed the BAC to grow: expanding course offerings, creating free art outreach programs and holding a nationally recognized annual crafts fair. In 1980, a capital campaign allowed for major renovations, including handicapped access and the creation of a pottery studio.

Our Mission:

The Brookline Arts Center is a non-degree school for the visual arts committed to stimulating individual creative expression and appreciation of the visual arts by providing high quality, affordable programming. The Center is a supportive environment where people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities can study, create, and present art. Through educational programs, community outreach and exhibitions, the Brookline Arts Center brings people together and enhances community life.

Our Service

Municipal budget cuts have meant that public schools are able to offer fewer inexpensive art courses for children and adults. Non-profit cultural centers like the BAC are well positioned to make up the difference by expanding current high quality programs to educate and entertain a larger audience. Through our art classes and outreach programs, the BAC makes exceptional art courses accessible to people who cannot afford to take a course at a museum or college. The BAC contributes scholarships and gift certificates to many local educational and community organizations.

Brookline Arts Center

Through exhibits, Art Talks and Reading Nights, the BAC enriches the community by making cultural programs accessible to the public. Through its salons, workshops and screenings, the BAC provides an important, yet rare, resource for artists: a collegial work environment in which to share art ideas, techniques, theories and critiques with their peers. The BAC offers events that provide artists the chance to interact with fellow artists, bring them in contact with audiences, and develops educational, cultural, social and professional opportunities creating more opportunities for audiences to develop as viewers, listeners, critics and creators.

At a time when the Boston area is losing many community art spaces, the BAC is challenged to become more visible as a destination for making, enjoying and learning about art. Communities are strengthened when people of diverse backgrounds come together to socialize and learn. The Brookline Arts Center embraces the challenge and adventure of bringing all members of the community together through art. In addition, the BAC works with Brookline Artists Open Studios, Jamaica Plain Open Studios, Sculptors without Walls, the Brookline Chamber of Commerce, Brookline Public Access TV, the Brookline Gallery and Crafts Tour, the “Boston Street” photography group and other community organizations.

ARTreach outreach programs for low-income populations are offered in spaces located throughout the community, and particularly at the BHA housing projects, the majority of classes and programs are based in the historic BAC building.

Operations

The BAC is a 501(c)(3) organization governed by a community-based Board of Directors, administrated by a small, dedicated staff, with classes taught by a faculty of community artists and cultural programs organized and presented by the staff and volunteers in collaboration. The BAC is open for classes and special events 7 days a week, with classes starting at 9 a.m. and continuing through 9:30 p.m.

The active 18-member Board of Directors has a wide range of experience in the arts and business communities. The board establishes policy, has fiduciary responsibility for the Arts Center and supervises the Executive Director. The board meets eight times a year and committees meet a minimum of once a month. Please review the list of committees and lets us know if you are interested in assisting one of the following.

- ⊗ Programming
- ⊗ Development
- ⊗ Community Relations / Marketing
- ⊗ Budget
- ⊗ Gallery
- ⊗ Buildings and Grounds

The BAC employs two full-time staff members: the Executive Director, Susan Navarre and the Assistant Director, Jonelle Prill. The Executive Director reports to the Board; represents the organization in the community; initiates programming and exhibitions;

curates gallery shows; writes, develops and administers grant programs; and supervises the staff and the daily operations of the Center. The Associate Director reports to the Executive Director and is primarily responsible for client contact, curriculum planning and classroom operations. Staff also includes three part-time employees: an office assistant, a bookkeeper and a pottery room manager. The faculty includes 50 working artists who teach part-time at the Brookline Arts Center.

Volunteer Duties

As you can see there is more work than staff, which is why your volunteer time is greatly appreciated and highly valued. Annually, enthusiastic area residents volunteer at the BAC to provide assistance in a variety of capacities, ranging from events planning to weekly office help. These volunteers are of all ages and backgrounds and often work together as project teams. As a result of their volunteer activities, many of our volunteers develop such career skills as teaching, writing, curating, special event planning, Internet research and database research skills. The following is a break down of our programs and activities, please read through carefully to find an interesting volunteer opportunity.

Assistants for Children's Art Classes

We offer over sixty classes a semester as well as special weekend classes and workshops. During school vacations and in the summer, on-site courses run for two to eight weeks. To accommodate the parents and community members we follow the Brookline Public School schedule.

Special Event Planning, Special Event Assistance, or Idea Generator

As a community arts center, BAC feels one of the most important programs is to offer regular free high quality cultural events. These events make art accessible to the entire community and build an appreciation for the arts among all. A list of our events is below please let us know which events fit your interest and expertise.

- ⌘ Arts for Everyone Event Series, which offers monthly art talks, and exhibition openings to art lovers of all ages.
- ⌘ Community Authors series, which offers readings by regional or national writers whose work relates thematically to the artwork on view in the gallery.
- ⌘ Photo Salons are lively events, where a featured photographer exhibits their work and holds a discussion. Then the floor opens to the audience opinions and the opportunity to show their own photography.

Gallery Attendant

With each of these exciting events being held in our space visitors are often intrigued to visit during office hours. We would love to have a friendly face that is ready to welcome them and answer any questions.

Brookline Arts Center

Crafts Showcase Assistance

Our largest fundraising event is the three-week long Crafts Showcase in December, which generates income for the participating artists and for the BAC. The Crafts Showcase is one of the most exciting events Brookline has to offer and has received increasing attention in the past years. Given the planning, time, and energy that such an event takes we need all hands on deck.

Office Helper

Throughout the year the center continues to run as a small business. There are mailings to send out, phones to answer, and data to enter in to the computer. These are good opportunities to brush-up or learn new office skills.

Handyman

As with any building in such high use we need to do daily repairs to keep our historic building in good working order. There are many small improvement projects that we could use professional guidance and help completing.

Classroom/Office Organizer

This may be one of the most important opportunities you can offer your time towards. With the constant traffic and variety of classes we offer there is always room for classroom organization and clean up.

This combination of programming creates an open-door center for all community members. The children's programming often provides an introduction to the arts for parents and grandparents. The BAC studios function as a casual meeting place for long-time area residents and newcomers, including many first-generation immigrants and temporary residents coming from overseas.

Rewards

The following rewards are to show our appreciation for your time while offering you new opportunities. Upon your volunteer introduction you will be placed on our current volunteer list and your volunteer hours will start to accumulate. The following is the rewards.

25 HOURS	BAC hand made mug
50 HOURS	One free class for every 50 hours
75 HOURS	10% discount on the purchase of special events tickets or gallery artwork
100 HOURS	An hour with Susan Navarre. This is a special meeting in which you can share your experiences and ideas, and we can show our appreciation.

Please let us know if you have any questions or ideas you would like to share. We look forward to getting you involved in our community!

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.” -Marjorie Moore, Minds Eye Information Service, IL.