

## ACE Docent Handbook

Welcome! This booklet is a living document of resources to help you learn about Art Center East and answer questions gallery visitors may have.

Docents act as the greeter for the organization. They help us to engage visitors with art displayed in our galleries and offer information about Art Center East, the history and uses of our building, current projects, events and classes, and to invite visitors to stay in touch via our weekly e-newsletter. Simply by being in the space to greet the public, docents protect employee work time. They also multiply the number of community members who care about the organization and can present information to the public.

While docents are volunteers in that they are unpaid, they do not have to take on volunteer tasks in addition to acting as docent unless they wish to. The act of greeting the public and orienting them to the space is the main priority.

There will be a clipboard with volunteer tasks on the docent table. Docents who wish to work on tasks while acting as docents may feel free to do so. Docents may also be needed to help volunteers orient to tasks.

Docents are not responsible for handling money, fielding administrative questions, or knowing everything about Art Center East. There will always be a member of our staff present while you are working as a docent - please ask them about anything and everything you don't know when engaging with a visitor. Over time, you'll learn more about ACE and get comfortable answering questions on your own. When you're first starting, we expect you will have many questions yourself. We encourage you to read through this handbook as a starting point. The Art Center East website also has a lot of information about who we are and what we do.

If at any point you feel you would like more direct training with staff, please let us know. We want you to feel comfortable and confident in this role. We deeply appreciate the time and effort you are contributing to Art Center East, and to helping make the arts more accessible in our community!

Sincerely,

Darcy, Jenn, Maggie, Abigail & Moira  
Art Center East Staff

**Help us improve this handbook!** Please use this page to list things you would like to know about ACE or other resources that would be handy to have at the docent station:

**Art Center East is a member-based, non-profit organization.** We like to stress the member part, because a strong community base is an important part of our success (and we want to encourage new memberships!).

## What We Do

- Onsite Programming
- Offsite Programming
- Artists in Rural Schools (AiRS)
- Community Music

### Onsite Programming

- **Free:** Gallery exhibits and opening receptions (year-round, average of 9 a year), The ACE Writing Project (monthly, year-round), Day of the Dead community celebration (Nov), Handmade Holidays (Nov), the Big Read (Feb-Mar), Art at the Market (May-Oct), Community Storytelling (occasional, year-round) + gallery talks, demonstrations, and performances as funding and opportunity allows.
- **Fee-based:** Gift Gallery, classes and private instruction (music, ceramics, painting, fused glass, kids classes, drawing, writing, folk arts, fiber arts, dance, culinary arts, etc)

### Artists in Rural Schools

- Program that places teaching artists in rural schools throughout Eastern Oregon. Since 1982, Art Center East has contracted with regional schools and communities to provide Artist in Rural Schools Experiences an average of 25-30 weeks per year or 400-500 contact hours of arts instruction in public schools.

### Community Music

- A program founded in partnership with Eastern Oregon University that includes the Grande Ronde Community Choir, African Drumming Ensemble, and Union County Children's Choir (currently on hiatus). Rehearsals take place in Loso Hall on the EOU campus.

- ACE also offers private music lessons at our EOU location, a freestanding house located on 6th street where it intersects with “L” Avenue.

## How We Pay for It

- Membership dues
- Commissions from gallery sales (exhibits + Gift Gallery)
- Registration fees (classes & music ensembles)
- AiRS program fees
- Donations from community members
- Business sponsorships
- Grants

Notice that grants are only one part of our funding scheme, and that we receive no regular funding from state or local governments. We like to be clear about where our funding comes from so that community members know 1) we are working for the community, not a branch of government or another organization, and 2) our funding is subject to the same limitations as for-profit businesses and it isn't guaranteed! Meaning: we have to earn it. Grants are a necessary part of the equation, but the money isn't free: we have to reapply each year and that takes many hours of staff time.

## Staff and Their Roles

- Darcy Dolge - Executive Director - [darcy@artcentereast.org](mailto:darcy@artcentereast.org)
- Jennifer Durr - Gallery Director - [jenn@artcentereast.org](mailto:jenn@artcentereast.org)
- Maggie McGrew - Programs Director - [programsdirector@artcentereast.org](mailto:programsdirector@artcentereast.org)
- Abigail Raasch - Development Coordinator - [development@artcentereast.org](mailto:development@artcentereast.org)
- Moira Madden - Outreach Coordinator - [outreach@artcentereast.org](mailto:outreach@artcentereast.org)

# Art Center East FAQ

*How do I find out about happenings at ACE?*

We have a lot going on! Stay in touch with us via our weekly e-newsletter, pick up a printed class schedule to have on hand (class schedules are available at ACE and around town; they list three months worth of classes and events, and are printed quarterly), follow us on Facebook or Instagram (@artcentereast), bookmark the calendar page of our website, visit our booth at the La Grande Farmers Market, stop by ACE for a visit (or check out our door for upcoming event posters if we're closed), and look for our pinecone logo on posters around town to know it's an ACE event!

*What free opportunities do you provide?*

Our gallery exhibits are always free and open to the public during our business hours: Wed-Fri & 12-5pm Sat 10am-2pm. Gallery receptions for the opening night of a new exhibit are free to all. In addition, we offer a variety of community events (Day of the Dead, The Big Read in partnership with Fishtrap, Handmade Holidays), music ensemble concerts & cultural performances, art activities (Art at the Market), Community Storytelling, a monthly literary series (the ACE Writing Project), and more throughout the year, all without a fee to participate. Check out our website's Free Events page ([artcentereast.org/tag/free](http://artcentereast.org/tag/free)) to see what's coming up.

*Are you ADA accessible?*

Sort of. Our downstairs entrance (located on the 5th Street side of the building) is ADA accessible, which allows access to the studio spaces where most of our classes take place. The upstairs portion of the building is a half-story above ground level and was built at a time when wheelchair accessibility was not a consideration. Although many of you may remember that the former library had an elevator, by the time Art Center East took over custody of the building it was no longer in working condition & not repairable (we had it assessed by the only elevator specialist in the state of Oregon).

Art Center East is currently working with the City of La Grande to raise enough funds to install a new elevator. The City Council has pledged to fund half of the project's cost and ACE is responsible for the other half. We are preparing grant applications and are

requesting community donations on a “Go Fund Me” site titled “Give the Arts a Lift.” If you would like to support this project, please consider making a monetary donation through the Go Fund Me site or directly to our ADA Accessibility account at Community Bank. We are also encouraging community members to write Letters to the Editor (informing the community of why the art center needs an elevator and what community members can do to help fund it) or letters to the City of La Grande in support of ADA accessibility at Art Center East.

### *How can I support ACE?*

Art Center East is a community art center. Community engagement is what makes us who we are and brings meaning to our work. Support us by visiting: come see what’s in the gallery or attend an opening reception, take a class, join a music ensemble, attend a free community event, and remember the Gift Gallery and ACE gift certificates when you’re shopping for the perfect gift.

Already a fan? Tell your friends about us, write a review online (Facebook, Google Business, & Yelp), or invite someone new to an upcoming event. We love our community and enjoy seeing new faces at ACE.

If you’d like to do more, consider becoming a member, making a one-time donation, teaching a class, or becoming a volunteer. Sharing ACE volunteer opportunities with your family, friends, local service group or church also helps us to engage with new people and reach a wider audience.

Volunteer Punch Card Program: Don't forget our volunteer punch card! For every ten hours you volunteer, you'll earn a 20% discount on classes or an item from the gift gallery.

### *How do you use my membership fees?*

Membership fees go toward operational costs, including: gallery maintenance, building and grounds maintenance, programming (classes, events, music ensembles), and supplies. Strong membership numbers also make our grant applications more competitive because it shows community support for our programs. This secondary benefit amplifies the monetary contribution you make when you become an ACE member and keep your membership current.

### *Why do you charge for classes?*

Art Center East is an independent, member-based, nonprofit organization. We do not receive regular funding from an outside source and, as a rule, grant funding does not usually cover operating costs. We rely on revenue generated from our programming to keep our building functioning and to pay staff. This revenue includes class fees, gallery sales, and memberships. Part of our class fees also go to pay the teaching artist, which amplifies the arts as an economic driver in the community.

### *Why are your classes so expensive?*

Class prices reflect the overhead costs of offering classes, including: wages for our teaching artists, building and equipment costs, marketing & printing costs, staff time, and, unless otherwise noted, the cost of supplies you will be using in class. In order to keep our pricing as consistent and fair as possible, we use a standard formula to arrive at the price for each class. We insist on paying our teaching artists because it represents the power of the arts as an economic driver in the community. To support the access of young people to the arts, we provide youth scholarships.

### *Do you offer scholarships?*

We currently offer a scholarship for youth age 18-years or younger for 50% off the price of a class. Find out more about how to apply. We also have a sibling discount: after the initial class registration, each additional sibling registration receives 10% off the cost of the class.

### *How is ACE funded?*

We receive funding from a variety of sources, including: revenue from gallery sales & classes, memberships, grants, business sponsorships and private donations. In addition to monetary contributions, we accomplish so much with so little because of generous volunteer help, in-kind contributions of materials and services, supply donations, and community service workers.

*Who maintains the building?*

The historic Carnegie Library building that Art Center East calls home is owned by the City of La Grande. However, Art Center East is responsible for funding and managing all building and grounds maintenance.

*Why do you have limited hours?*

Our galleries are open to the public from Wed-Fri & 12-5pm Sat. 10am - 2pm. Our Exhibit and Gift Galleries are open for extended hours during all exhibit opening receptions and public events held in the ACE building. These hours are what we can maintain with the staff our budget allows.

*Can I host my event/party/reunion at ACE?*

Yes, Art Center East has a facilities rental program. Inquire in the Gift Gallery or visit [artcentereast.org/information/facility-rental](http://artcentereast.org/information/facility-rental) for details.

*Will ACE make a donation to my organization/club/team/etc?*

We allocate a portion of our budget each year to supporting local community organizations. Find out more about how to request a donation by filling out a request form at [artcentereast.org/information/donation-requests](http://artcentereast.org/information/donation-requests).

*How do I teach at ACE?*

We are always looking for new teachers to add their skills and enthusiasm to the class lineup. Find out more about teaching at ACE by inquiring in the Gift Gallery or visiting [artcentereast.org/artist/teach-at-ace](http://artcentereast.org/artist/teach-at-ace).

*How do I exhibit at ACE?*

We have two exhibit galleries, the Main Gallery and the Co-op Gallery. Main Gallery exhibitions are juried (applications are reviewed and selected by a committee), while the Co-op Gallery is non-juried, open to applicants 15-years + on a first come basis. Both galleries require that you submit an application to be considered for an exhibition.

*How do I sell my art in the Gift Gallery?*

Artists may apply to sell their goods in the Art Center East Gift Gallery. There is no fee to apply and artists keep all proceeds minus a standard commission (30% for ACE Artist Members, 35% for Non-Members). It's a great way to get your art in front of the community and into a popular retail space. Find out more about selling in the ACE Gift Gallery by inquiring in the Gift Gallery or visiting [artcentereast.org/artist/gift-gallery-submission](http://artcentereast.org/artist/gift-gallery-submission).

*Can I use your studio?*

Studio rentals are considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on the artist's needs and ACE studio availability. If you are interested in studio space (our general studio as well as ceramics studio), we'd love to hear from you! Please contact us at [info@artcentereast.org](mailto:info@artcentereast.org) with information about what kind of space you are looking for and how often you would like access to it.

*What is Art Center East's relationship with Eastern Oregon University?*

Art Center East has had a long-standing relationship with EOU through our former incarnation as the Eastern Oregon Regional Arts Council, which was based in the same EOU campus building that ACE now occupies. EOU provides this space - used for an ACE administrative office as well as the ACE community music program and private lessons - rent-free, as well as the use of the McKenzie Theater and rehearsal space for ACE music ensemble performances. Besides the in-kind donation of space, EOU does not make financial contributions to Art Center East.

*What is Art Center East's relationship with the City of La Grande?*

Art Center East is an independent nonprofit arts organization with a Board of Directors, staff, budget and revenue stream completely separate from the City of La Grande. The

historic Carnegie Library building that we call home is owned by the City of La Grande, from whom we lease the building. As part of that lease, ACE is responsible for all building repair, restoration, and maintenance costs, as well as grounds maintenance.

*Who are Art Center East's community partners?*

We make a point to engage with as many community organizations and individuals as possible, hosting community conversations, talks, events, classes, and exhibits, as well as attending other organizations' events and festivals with outreach materials and free art activities.

We have formalized partnerships with the following community organizations:

Union County Juvenile Department

Shelter from the Storm

La Grande Farmers Market

EOU

Traditional Live!

Fishtrap

Impact 100

*Why is an art center important?*

In 2017-18, Art Center East served 25,166 students, artists, and audience members. Art Center East provides a home for creative expression and exploration, cultural connections, advocacy and income generation for working artists, while helping to bring art back into rural schools. ACE also serves as a driver for the local economy and a contributor to the development of a vibrant and creative business community.

Art Center East employs staff to organize and coordinate a full schedule of art exhibits, classes, music ensembles, and cultural experiences that enrich the quality of life in our rural region. Through our AiRS program, we also provide resident artists to teach art to school-age children in ten counties of eastern Oregon. In addition to acting as a catalyst for connecting our community with art & cultural experiences, Art Center East plays an important role in the local economy. As an advocate of working artists, we pay all of our teaching artists and provide an income source for artists that exhibit in our galleries or sell their pieces in our retail Gift Gallery.

A 2017 economic impact study of northeast Oregon conducted by Americans for the Arts found that based on data collected in 2015, the non-profit arts sector (individual artists and for-profit arts businesses were excluded from the study) of Baker, Wallowa, and Union counties supports 39 full-time equivalent jobs, generates \$657,000 in household income to local residents, and delivers \$72,000 in local and state government revenue. These non-profit arts organizations (of which ACE is one) generate \$1.2 million in economic spending within the northeast Oregon region.

### *Do you take supply donations?*

We appreciate when the community thinks of us when preparing for a garage sale, move, or just doing a deep cleaning. The best way to make a donation is to call us first (541-624-2800). Because we have limited storage space, we can only take items that we are able to use right away. Please do not leave items outside the building when it is closed, or drop off mixed loads of materials without calling ahead first.

Wondering what materials we are looking for? We almost always accept office supplies (especially printing paper) and basic art supplies (new or like-new condition: markers, paper, acrylic paint, brushes, glue, specialty supplies, etc). We may be interested in miscellaneous art supplies, collage materials, art pieces, or art books, depending on space availability at the time of donation. We are rarely interested in well-used supplies or equipment, repurposed materials (unless we are requesting something for a specific project), frames (with or without art), etc. Please call us to determine if your donation is a good fit for our current needs and to schedule a drop-off time.

Another type of donation we always accept is food items for our gallery opening receptions. The contribution can be homemade or store bought, savory or sweet, and just needs to be something easy to eat without utensils. Contact [info@artcentereast.org](mailto:info@artcentereast.org) if you would like to contribute something for an upcoming reception.

### *What kind of music opportunities do you have?*

Art Center East coordinates two music ensembles: the Grande Ronde Community Choir and an African Drumming Ensemble. Art Center East also offers private music lessons at our office located on the Eastern Oregon University campus. Find out more about music opportunities at [artcentereast.org/music/private-lessons/](http://artcentereast.org/music/private-lessons/). The Union County

Children's Choir is currently on hiatus. Please contact Art Center East if you are interested in enrolling your child.

*How do I register for a music ensemble?*

You can register in the Gift Gallery or online at [artcentereast.org/music/music-emsembles/](http://artcentereast.org/music/music-emsembles/)

*Do you have dance, exercise, or wellness classes?*

Yes! A number of partnering organizations and instructors work with us to provide health and wellness classes at Art Center East, including TraditionalLive!, the Grande Ronde Yoga Collective, and others. LivFit fitness classes have moved their location to Peak Lifestyle Studio at 1118 Adams Avenue.

*Where's the library?*

The Cook Memorial Library is located just down the street from Art Center East at 2006 Fourth Street in La Grande.

## A Brief History of Art Center East

Art Center East is located in a historic Carnegie library building. The library served the City of La Grande until 2006, when it moved into a new building on Adams and 4th Street. When the City library moved, a nonprofit called Art Center at the Old Library took over the space, offering exhibits, classes, and events. In 2015, Art Center at the Old Library merged with ArtsEast (also called the Eastern Oregon Regional Arts Council) to become Art Center East.

The merger combined the two organizations' missions and projects. Art Center East has significantly grown the number of annual exhibits, events, and classes available to the community. We continue to manage the community music ensembles started through a partnership with the EOU Music Dept and ArtsEast, as well as the Artists in Rural Schools (AiRS) program initiated by the Eastern Oregon Regional Arts Council, through which rural schools have access to a roster of teaching artists and the administrative support (from ACE) necessary to bring art education into the classroom.

## The Carnegie Legacy

Andrew Carnegie, born in Scotland to a family of modest means, built his fortune with steel and believed that those who were lucky enough to end up in his position should give back to the community. In 1893, he began a three-decade campaign to support literacy and learning by funding the construction of nearly 1,700 library buildings across the U.S., seventy-percent of which were built in rural areas.

A Carnegie library grant required only that the community provide continuous funding for its operation. His injection of libraries into rural America and the stipulation that those communities sustain them had a significant impact on the country. Carnegie libraries brought stature and significance to fledgling communities, allowing citizens – especially women and children – greater access to education, culture, and community gathering.

That story was true for La Grande, where the potential of a Carnegie grant sparked interest in the town's first library. Built in 1913 with a \$12,500 grant, our library was fashioned in the typical design of many Carnegie libraries, incorporating open stacks (most pre-Carnegie libraries used a closed stack system with more librarians and more labor cost), an imposing desk near the front door (to discourage theft), and an elevated "ground floor" accessed from a prominent staircase.

The inclusion of a staircase in nearly every Carnegie library was not by accident. As someone with humble roots who learned and earned his way to wealth, Carnegie wanted his libraries to incorporate a symbol of this “climb to enlightenment.” While the architectural poetry of that sentiment is admirable, today’s eyes see the same staircase as a barrier to ADA accessibility.

Other Carnegie legacies, however, continue to thrive at Art Center East, where we create and recreate spaces for community gathering, advocate for cultural expression and preservation, and giving our little city something to be proud of.

Exhibits in detail:

Labels are often in the following format:

Title

Medium (what the artworks are made of)

Artists Name

Price (if there is an NFS listed in the price section the piece is not for sale.)