

undercoverarts

M A G A Z I N E



ART
STATE
ARIZONA

25/26

VOLUME 05



the art of well-being

Why the Future of Wellness is fueled by Art, Creativity, Community, and Shared Humanity

The Future is Creative

Long before "creative aging" became a catchphrase, Watermark Retirement Communities was pioneering it as a core philosophy

Wellness in the Workplace

How Roche Tissue Diagnostics pushes the boundaries of creativity in the workplace

The Creative Economic Engine

Creative Workers Are Driving Jobs, Tourism, and Arizona's Cultural Identity. Explore Arizona's most comprehensive creative sector directory

SPECIAL THANKS TO WATERMARK
COMMUNITIES FOR UNDERWRITING
THIS ISSUE OF UNDERCOVER ARTS



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Letter from the director



Dear Friends, Collaborators, and Believers in the Power of Art,

This issue of *Undercover Arts Magazine* marks the return of something deeply needed—and the beginning of something bold.

After a five-year hiatus, we are proud to bring this publication back into the world, with generous underwriting support from **Watermark Retirement Communities**, whose belief in the transformative power of the arts made this relaunch possible.

But this is more than a magazine—it's a movement.

We are thrilled to unveil the next evolution of our work: **Art State Arizona**. Formerly the Southern Arizona Arts & Cultural Alliance, our organization has expanded its mission to serve the entire state of Arizona. This transition reflects not just our growth, but our belief that the arts are essential—not optional—in building healthy, connected, and thriving communities.

Art State Arizona is built on the idea that creativity belongs everywhere—

In our healthcare systems, public spaces, classrooms, businesses, memory care centers, and city halls. It is shaped by the

A Letter from Kate Marquez, Founder and CEO of Art State Arizona

*Undercover Arts Magazine |
Special Arts & Well-Being Edition*

conviction that art is not just beautiful—it's necessary. It's how we heal. How we connect. How we grow.

And there is no better theme for this inaugural statewide issue than **Arts and Well-Being**.

Inside these pages, you'll find compelling stories of artists, changemakers, caregivers, community leaders, and creative practitioners who are actively using the arts to improve lives across Arizona. From rural farms to hospitals, tribal communities to urban neighborhoods, their stories remind us that *well-being is not a luxury—it's a right*. And art is one of the most accessible, effective ways to achieve it.

This issue doesn't just highlight what's possible. **It shows what's already happening—**and how you can be a part of it.

It also includes the launch of our **Arizona Creative Sector Directory**—a searchable online guide of thousands of artists, makers, and cultural organizations at www.artstateaz.org. It's a tool to help you connect, hire, collaborate, commission, and support the creative economy in your own neighborhood. Because engaging with the arts shouldn't be complicated—it should be second nature.

This magazine also debuts our new call: **Let's create a true Art State. Together.**

That means integrating arts into **economic development, tourism, education, health,**

innovation, workforce development, and community-building efforts statewide. It means advocating, investing, and building infrastructure that supports not just arts organizations—but the people who make them run. The artists. The educators. The dreamers. The doers. You.

We know this work is urgent.

Across the country, arts and culture face funding cuts, shrinking support, and increasing pressure. But Arizona can choose a different path. We can be the state that says: **Arts matter here. Culture belongs here.** We can model what it looks like to lead with creativity—at every level.

We've done it before.

Our roots stretch back to 1997, when we were a small, rural organization serving Greater Oro Valley. We've spent the last two decades evolving, learning, and expanding our impact. Every program, every partnership, every festival and mural and residency has been a step toward this vision. A vision of a creative, collaborative, connected Arizona.

So as you turn these pages, be inspired—but also be activated.

Reach out to someone featured. Hire an artist. Share a story. Start a collaboration. Add your voice. Support the work. Use this magazine as a guide and a reminder that this is a moment to rise—not retreat.

Because we don't just believe in the power of art—we believe in the power of people to use it.

**Let's build something extraordinary.
Let's make Arizona the Art State.**

With gratitude and purpose,

Kate Marquez
Founder & CEO, Art State Arizona



MISSION

WHY WE EXIST

Our mission is to make the arts essential to everyday life in Arizona by fostering creativity, community collaboration, social progress, and economic growth.

We advocate for the power of art to inspire, heal, and enrich lives, transforming institutions and neighborhoods into vibrant cultural hubs.

VISION

We envision Arizona leading the nation at integrating the arts into all sectors — community development, government, business, education, and health — by uniting the state's artistic and cultural assets.

In this future, the arts enable more imaginative ways of thinking and collaborative ways of doing, achieving equity, resilience, and prosperity for all.



The Southern Arizona Arts & Cultural Alliance (SAACA) has spent years cultivating the arts as a driver of connection, culture, and economic vitality in Southern Arizona.

But creativity doesn't stop at city limits. It moves, it evolves, and it connects us all.

Art State Arizona represents a transformational shift—an expansion of our mission to unify, elevate, and integrate the arts into every corner of the state.

This name reflects our belief that Arizona's creative and cultural economy is not just an asset—it's essential to the future we want to build.

Art State Arizona is building a future where creativity is treated as essential infrastructure—fueling vibrant, equitable, and economically resilient communities across the state.

We invest in community-led, arts-based initiatives that reflect the lived experiences of Arizonans, and we champion artists and creative leaders with the tools, visibility, and support they need to thrive.

By centering equity and culturally-rooted practices, we deepen impact and trust in every community we serve.

Through bold advocacy and cross-sector collaboration, we're positioning Arizona as a national leader in cultural innovation, public health, and the creative economy.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

From creative placemaking projects that revitalize neighborhoods to arts-integrated classrooms where under-resourced students outperform their peers, the evidence is clear: when communities embrace arts and culture, social cohesion, education, economic development, and public health all get a boost. This isn't fluff—it's a strategic investment in vibrant, resilient communities.

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Mary T.
Resident at The Hacienda at the Canyon

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Where Passion Finds Its Place

Lifelong artist Mary was so inspired by the shifting colors of the canyons outside her door, she had to incorporate them in her art. Literally. Every day, she collects leaves, stones, and even dirt, combining them into bold, new designs.

Mary shows us that beauty emerges when you embrace what's around you.



Discover more



By Monica Surfaro Spigelman

The Future is Creative

In The Heart Of Tucson, Arizona, Watermark's Hacienda At The Canyon Is Proving That Imagination Has No Age Limit.

Inside the Studio

If creativity is still one bedrock of community connection, then today something special is stirring in the Maker Studio – a dynamic launchpad for imagination and wellness tucked inside The Hacienda at the Canyon campus, part of Watermark Retirement Communities:

There's the hum of quiet concentration inside, as teaching artist Eliza works with residents to shape objects reflecting memory, imagination and personal story. At one table, Ann stacks brown glass vials into a temple-like structure atop a mirrored base, soon to glow once she weaves in fairy lights.

Nearby, Herb fastens branches and moss into a miniature treehouse. Ed builds his stone farmhouse diorama – nearly complete with functional window shutters, miniature horses and corral. Across from him, Joanne's Navajo-style hogan takes shape, embellished with woven rugs and personal silver keepsakes.

Maureen and John are adjacent and work in tandem, recreating Maureen's family home in Ireland, adding touches of paint and stone to this detailed, tiny structure.

The studio is filled with purpose and play. Soon the class will take their sculptures outside for a collaborative installation. But what's happening here isn't just about making art. More likely it's about expression, community and wellness.

Creative Before the Trend

Long before “creative aging” became a catchphrase, Watermark Retirement Communities was pioneering it as a core philosophy.

“Creative aging can be done right at scale, if arts are integrated with intentionality, empathy and innovation,” says Stephanie Boreale, Director of Health Strategy at the organization. “At Watermark, creative expression is vital in the journey of nurturing the whole person. Done right, it's transformative.”



Hacienda at the Canyon member participating in a group painting class

Growing Big Ideas in the Desert

Watermark's commitment to redefining aging creatively stems from its founding vision. That vision took root in 1985, when David Freshwater decided to ignore conventional wisdom about aging. Inspired by an abandoned marketing project and his grandmother's need for a better living choice, he developed a groundbreaking senior living concept characterized by creativity, wellness and purpose.



Hacienda at the Canyon member participating in an outdoor nature inspired photography activity

With input from the University of Arizona's Center for Aging, David kick-started his own management company. Alongside David Barnes, he launched The Fountains at La Cholla, the first in a break-out approach to senior living. Today David's vision powers Watermark's 40 locations nationwide, including five in Southern Arizona.

At Watermark, residents are "members," and staff are "associates." Curiosity, connection and creative thinking are woven into daily life on Watermark campuses – with measurable results. "We see it every day," says Stephanie. "Members who engage in creative activities show enhanced cognitive function, better emotional health and deeper social engagement."



Hacienda at the Canyon members participating in a puzzle project

The Art of Whole-Person Wellness

Arts are just one strand in the broader Watermark philosophy. The proprietary 360Well program addresses four essential circles: mind, body, spirit and community. "It's a lifelong framework that shapes everything from daily activities to long-term strategy," says Hilary Lace, executive director of Watermark's Hacienda at the Canyon. Another standout program is Watermark University, open to both



Hacienda at the Canyon member participating in a creative art painting and crafting project

members and staff associates. Courses span culinary arts (often led by local chefs), lectures, visual and performing arts. The goal is to live fully in the company-wide model integrated across independent living, assisted living and memory care.

"We've seen the arts help our residents express themselves without words, connect with others, improve self-esteem, even work through stress," adds Maureen Garvey, regional director of resident programming for Watermark Retirement Communities. The goal is to add variety—and voice.

Adapting to Changed Motivations

Now, in 2025, the senior living landscape is shifting. Boomers are arriving, fast replacing the Greatest Generation as clients, and they're bringing new expectations. They're looking for more compelling lifestyle choices that engage, are culturally relevant and have opportunities to shape their communities. Watermark's flexibility is helping meet these Boomer needs.

That adaptability was put to the test during COVID, when the pandemic forced adaptations throughout all senior living complexes. "Our Community Life teams were incredibly creative in designing programs that kept residents engaged and connected with one another and loved ones," says Watermark Director of



Hacienda at the Canyon residents prepare for their original theatre performance "Grease"

“

Creative Aging is the freedom to learn new skills.”

Sam Mulder
Community Life Associate, Creative
Aging Specialist Hacienda
at the Canyon

Communication and PR Vicki Doyle. “Creativity helped fill in gaps and made a difference in both residents and associates.” Reinforced by its onsite clinics at all locations and decades of planning, Watermark navigated the crisis while keeping the core values that continue to ensure the health and safety of Watermark communities.



Members at Hacienda at the Canyon enjoy an original theatre production in the community theatre

Measuring Up, Delivering Results

These core values perform in Watermark’s value-based care. As reported by Stephanie in the online news site McKnight’s Senior Living, there are compelling examples of Watermark’s positive impact: “Watermark Retirement Communities’ onsite clinics achieved a 43% reduction in hospitalizations, a 30% drop in falls and a 43% decrease in polypharmacy, highlighting how value-based care can elevate both resident well-being and operational performance,” she underscores in the report.

It’s clear that creative engagement is essential,” Stephanie continues. “The data supports what we see in programs like the Maker Studio at Hacienda at the Canyon. Watermark’s vision lifts health, morale and community connection.”

Expression as Culture

That vision feeds the strong ROI roadmap that’s woven throughout Watermark’s sustainable operations.

Sam Mulder, Community Life Associate and Creative Aging Specialist at Hacienda at the Canyon, is one of the vision’s enthusiastic champions. She helps organize monthly exhibitions of resident and associate artwork, coordinates visiting teaching artists and helps curate the Watermark Expressions Calendar, a showcase of original works from across all Watermark communities.

“Creative aging is the freedom to learn new skills, that’s how I view it,” says Sam. “It’s the freedom to rekindle lifelong passions or try something new, or revisit something old with fresh eyes. That’s where the health benefits come from – renewed purpose for the individual as well as the entire community.”

Watermark’s network of Community Life professionals across all locations meets virtually to share ideas and spark innovation. “Watermark programs involve associates and are intergenerational. That strengthens the fabric of our community life,” she says.

When Play Is Performance

We’re always stretching the comfort zone, continues Sam, and at Hacienda at the Canyon, expression finds its way to the stage. The community has begun rehearsals for a hugely popular event, the annual summer stock-like musical. This 90-minute parody of life in a senior community is in rehearsals all summer, with the performance to be held at Park Place Mall’s Arts Express theater later this year.

“The performance is completely written and produced by associates, and members write lyrics, learn choreography, build sets. Everyone is involved,” says Sam.



Hacienda at the Canyon members perform in the original production of “Grease” the Musical

Working with SAACA Deputy Director Matt Rolland, Sam also recently secured an Arizona Commission on the Arts creative aging grant. This allows Watermark to launch an “awe walk” program, which adapts a wellness practice originated by University of Arizona professor Dr. Jennie Gubner. The initiative pairs the benefits of walking with creative reflection. A teaching artist is helping members turn their awe walk experiences into visual or written works for a future exhibition.

What’s Creative Next

As Watermark reshapes expectations of senior living, the organization knows it’s standing at the edge of a formidable demographic wave. “We’re at the leading edge of this silver tsunami created by the Boomers,” notes Hilary. “For us this means never stop listening, never stop envisioning what creative aging is all about.”

Always reaching higher is a Watermark trademark. It’s a maverick vision rooted in creativity. And it’s all about helping members have the health and the agency to live the lives they want.



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By Monica Surfaro Spigelman

The Art of Innovation: How Creativity Shapes the Culture at Roche

The grand backdrop of the Catalinas commands your attention the moment you reach the Roche Tissue Diagnostics campus off Oro Valley's Innovation Park Drive. You can't see it yet, but imagination is at work here.

Look around. Walkways curve with gentle purpose around architecture so understated they conceal the powerful ideas within. Step inside one building, where a wall of global patents faces a mural of a scientist delighted by enormous yellow notepads seemingly alive with his equations and sketches. Down a nearby corridor, a sunlit gallery reveals where the link to imagination becomes clear: Here's where creativity and critical thinking unite. Here's where science and art illuminate the unknown. Here's where harmony and health happen.

The improbable story of Roche Tissue Diagnostics (RTD) is a story of how the visionary idea of one pathologist evolved into a groundbreaking instrument that revolutionized tissue-based cancer testing throughout the world. It's also the story of a company's unwavering commitment to creative process and scientific rigor in a relentless drive for what patients need next.

The Future Starts Here

It begins with that early vision of Dr. Thomas Grogan, a pathologist and University of Arizona professor who in 1985 founded Ventana Medical Systems, Inc. to improve the then-manual-labor-intensive process of tissue staining for diagnosing cancer cells. Working off ideas sketched on his yellow notepads, Dr. Grogan honed the creative seeds for what became pathology's first automated instrument for immunohistochemistry. Building on this pioneering work, Dr. Grogan grew Ventana and took the company public in 1997. When multinational biotech Roche acquired the company in 2008, a newly renamed Roche Tissue Diagnostics quickly became a global leader in innovative, standardized instruments that allowed quicker detection of cancers, so patients could begin their targeted treatments.

In this 40th anniversary year of his company's founding, Dr. Grogan says his odyssey



Collage artist Angela Puffer stands beside her work which honors both of her subject pairings



Artist Erika Segura performs an original song inspired by the journey of a Roche employee and cancer survivor



Ceramist Elaine Walsh poses next to her clay sculpture, shaped by the values of family, legacy, and strength of her subject



Poet Ashanti Files shares a joyful moment discussing the inspiration behind her written work installed in the gallery



Chris Newhouse, Workflow and IT Project Leader poses in front of artist Carla Lobmier's Original Artwork inspired by his diagnostic journey

from those lined yellow notepads has come full circle, with the company still focused on one masterful forethought about the power of imagination to impact wellness.

"The company was founded on a novel idea that opened a door into a new room, a visual one," says Dr. Grogan. "We do chemistry of tissue sections, and our work reveals patterns in technicolor about what's going on in cells of the body. So it follows that the people of our company should work in an environment that is an invitation to their imagination."

What Makes Place

The melding of arts and science was always visible in the work environment Dr. Grogan cultivated. Even in the beginning years, Dr. Grogan's wife, Cande, encouraged him to

keep his growing enterprise nurtured with visual signposts that kindled imagination. The early Ventana facilities began by exhibiting works of local photographers. Because the art always prompted positive reactions within the team, Dr. Grogan continued it. "Art stimulates, helps us question," he notes. "Art was part of our passion for what we were doing. So, we extended it."

It's not difficult to understand how this alchemy of creativity and critical thinking became a recurring theme when the company moved in 2001 to its 118-acre Oro Valley campus. While collections of local, international and employee works are displayed throughout the campus, the Ventana Gallery was established in 2004 to formalize a visual corner of creativity. The Gallery winds through two buildings of the campus, featur-

ing three rotating exhibitions annually along with public opening receptions to kick off each new show. Throughout the year, the Gallery also opens twice monthly to the public by appointment.

Watch This Space

The Ventana Gallery is a tangible representation of the company's investment in the well-being of employees and the community, says Darlene Kryza, Roche Senior Communications Manager and Community Engagement Lead of U.S. Diagnostics Sites.

"Artists and scientists tend to rely on intense observation of detail," says Kryza, an artist herself. "Art helps us question what we see on the surface. It enriches us unexpectedly. The presence of the gallery invites an unspoken dialogue which inspires new ideas."

RTD's commitment to the arts is empowered by a partnership with SAACA / Art State Arizona, which helps curate the rotating exhibitions of original works.

"We want the exhibits to be accessible, imaginative and reflective of our colleagues' creative senses," says Kryza. The partnership with SAACA's Business and Arts Integration Program allows RTD to develop unique exhibitions which feature local and regional artists, employee creativity as well as work focused on critical patient-centric innovation.

Uncommon Heroes, Healing

"*Uncommon Knowledge*," an exhibit installed in 2023, was one extraordinary window into this collaboration and showcased how the Ventana Gallery often steps outside the box to highlight the company's focus on health-care. This one-of-a-kind exhibition highlighted the journeys of 21 Roche employees who had experienced life-altering disease diagnoses. Each was paired with a literary and visual artist who interpreted the deeply personal stories in creative and moving ways.

Chris Newhouse, Systems, Workflow and IT Project Leader whose Roche career

“

Without creativity, there would be no innovation. It is integral for us to continue to develop diagnostics solutions that positively impact the patients we serve.”

Jill German, Head of Roche Tissue Diagnostics

spans almost 25 years, decided to participate in the “*Uncommon Knowledge*” exhibition because he knew it could have a positive impact on someone else’s life. He also believed it was a natural extension of the Roche Tissue Diagnostics mission: “We help physicians see the unseeable, and that’s what art can do,” he says.

In a process that involved Newhouse collaborating with his artistic team for eight months, a raw modernist portrait and a powerful ballad emerged as the representation of his story for the exhibit. “Both pieces have great impact for me,” he reveals. “The painting and the music capture the emotions of what took over me during that time. It was in a way healing to have it out there for others to hear and see. It was always inside of me but having the creative mechanism to share my story was a unique experience.”

Because art also provides a sometimes-unexpected new stage for inspiration, Newhouse sees its value in the work environment: “Art helps us think, ‘maybe there’s a different way to see things.’ And helping people see things in a new light, providing insights through a unique combination of robotics, software and chemistry to enlighten a treatment plan, is absolutely what we do at Roche.”

The impact of the “*Uncommon Knowledge*” installation, still available virtually, continues to have a ripple effect, says Newhouse. “Another employee who had been diagnosed with thyroid cancer came to me because she remembered the exhibit,” he explains. “The gallery helps make those very real connections. It brings art that stimulates the campus and helps us comfortably blend work and personal life. Art can make us stronger as an organization, as collaborators and creators.”

Part of the Plan

Jill German, Head of Roche Tissue Diagnostics, agrees that the arts are integral to the company’s mandate. “We develop these exhibitions to promote the importance of early cancer screenings for better outcomes, educate the general public on



Singer Deanna Campos performs an original song during the exhibition opening

local cancer resources as well as engage our employees through either art-making or direct participation in the shows,” she says. “The ‘*Uncommon Knowledge*’ exhibit was the best example of this, where our employees, who were also patients, connected with painters, writers, ceramicists and other creators who got to know our colleagues before proceeding with telling their unique stories in the most beautiful ways. It was the most deeply touching and inspirational art exhibit I have ever attended.”

Dr. Grogan and his wife Cande first brought art to the campus to inspire innovation, and

that intention continues, notes German. She explains why: “Science and art are connected through creative thinking, with both scientists and artists driven by a desire to understand the world more deeply. They come to their final products/solutions through observation, experimentation and ultimately expression.”

Being part of the global Roche group of companies is a great cultural fit, German says, as art is foundational to the entire Roche organization. “At our Roche headquarters in Switzerland, the arts are palpable,” she observes. “When walking through the buildings in Basel, you can be sure that around the next corner you’ll encounter an art piece that inspires.”

Innovation Acknowledged

The Ventana Gallery’s work as a conduit for educating community is getting recognition. The Gallery’s current installation, “*Inside Out, Outside In*” was selected as a finalist in the prestigious Moonshot awards, designated each year by social impact management company Benevity for excellence in corporate purpose programs. “This thought-provoking program called for artists to create work based on the individual organs, bones and systems of the human anatomy,” says Kryza. “As a top healthcare company, the exhibition gave us the opportunity to educate on the signs and symptoms of the most prevalent cancer types and what

“

When people see their story reflected back to them and witnessed in community, it brings a deep level of healing and allows others to see strength and beauty in their own story too.”

Amanda Staples, Artistic Programs Manager,
SAACA / Art State Arizona

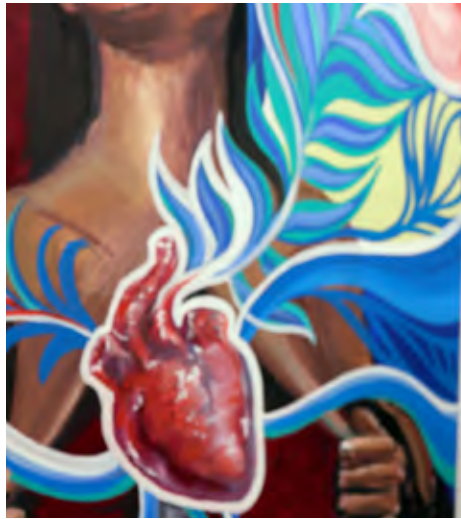
screenings are available. We showcased four local charities that provide information, screening and treatment for cancer through our external giving campaign.”

As with all the Ventana Gallery installations, “Inside Out, Outside In” was designed via the collaborative partnership with SAACA/Art State Arizona. “Every third quarter the Ventana Gallery hosts a program focused on aspects of the business and how the people and products impact patient outcomes,” says SAACA/Art State Arizona Executive Director Kate Marquez. “In addition to a powerful statement about the novel work underway at the company’s Oro Valley and Marana sites, the show always demonstrates collections of astounding depth that feed the cultural vitality of our region.”

A standout 40th anniversary installation and program are in the works for September. “*Echoes of Innovation*” will be a wearable arts exhibition inspired by histology stains which will hang in the Ventana Gallery. Additionally, they will host a choreographed fashion show with designs by teachers and students at the University of Arizona, Pima Community College and Arizona State University. The ticketed opening will support SAACA / Art State Arizona’s future ability to host arts and business integration programs.



In a quiet moment, Roche employee Melania reads the literary tribute to her journey, crafted by poet David Navarro



Jill German, President of Roche Tissue Diagnostics, Greater Tucson Area, stands in front of a painting by Laura Thurbon



“Through their public programs, Roche Tissue Diagnostics helps make science universally accessible and useful to the community,” notes Marquez. Program influence is measured in part through community impact campaigns, which raise funds for the local charities highlighted with certain exhibits.

Imagination, Horizons

As challenges to patient-centric care speed ahead full-throttle, Roche Tissue Diagnostics keeps on innovating. With over 250

worldwide patents, the company provides over 50 percent of the world’s market for immunostaining equipment and reagents. Its operations are unique, providing end-to-end research, product development and reagent production in Oro Valley. A separate Marana site houses a 60,000 square-foot-facility for instrument manufacturing as well as an adjoined facility for logistics. More than 1,800 full-time employees and contractors work across the Pima County facilities – each in tune with the same deeply-rooted commitment begun by Dr. Grogan.



Thomas Grogan, American professor, pathologist and founder of Ventana Medical Systems, Inc.

“Without creativity there would be no innovation,” says German. “It is integral for us to continue to develop diagnostics solutions that positively impact the patients we serve.”

The needs in personalized patient care continue, and there’s no doubt that Roche Tissue Diagnostics will always be a step ahead. In working to improve the world around us, the company reminds us that imagination is key to finding answers in the possibilities that unfold.

Learn more about how Business & Art Integration programs are changing the Arizona professional landscape at www.artstateaz.org



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By Annie Stevens, Tucson Jewish Community Center

The Art of Aging Well:

The Importance of Creativity for Older Adults in Southern Arizona

“The arts allow people to experience abilities, not disabilities,” said Linda Travis, PsyD, director of Healthy Aging at the Tucson Jewish Community Center (the J). “And this is really the case for older adults.”

Linda sees the impact of the arts nearly every day. The J is home to a variety of Healthy Aging programs, which she oversees—including a Parkinson’s exercise and wellness program, a lecture series on aging and social connections, and Build Stronger, Healthier Bones and Muscles classes. But perhaps most unique and comprehensive is the Movement/Arts Immersion Group, designed specifically for older adults in the early to mid stage forms of dementia.

The group meets twice a week for three-hour sessions. During each session, participants exercise, make art, play games and create music—while socializing and connecting with one another.

“Although early to mid-stage forms of dementia can present cognitive challenges,” Linda said, “there is evidence to support the importance

of social connection and expressive arts to help people enjoy familiar items—such as favorite songs—and experience emotion.”

There’s a reason that, on any given day, the Movement/Arts Immersion Group might be listening to The Beatles or The Rolling Stones. “Listening to music tied to young adulthood can evoke long-term memory in ways words often cannot—and you can notice an immediate positive change in mood.”

One of Linda’s favorite community resources is Dan Kruse, local radio host, musician, and researcher. His expertise lies at the intersection of music, culture and memory. He frequently hosts music workshops for the Movement/Arts Immersion Group, featuring sing-alongs and “Name That Tune” activities that participants adore.

Art and Social Connection

Research continues to show that people who report long, happy lives tend to have strong social connections. But as people age, their communities often shrink, and activities become more limited.

One way to address this challenge? “The arts encourage social connection.” The J’s Healthy Aging programs are focused on expanding these connections for participants and their loved ones. There is a thriving arts community across Southern Arizona that shares this mission.

Taking an art or pottery class—or joining a theater production, choir or dance class—offers promising opportunities to find like-minded friends of all ages. “Creating art is already fantastic for emotional and cognitive wellness, but doing so alongside others makes it that much



Movement Arts Immersion at the Tucson J



Fostering connections through music and community at the Tucson Jewish Community Center

better,” Linda said. “You’re exposed to new ideas and conversation while engaged in creativity—what’s better than that?”

For the third consecutive year, the Sonoran Glass School led fused-glass art classes for the Movement/Arts Immersion Group and their family members, culminating in an art show for participants, families and staff.

“The Sonoran Glass School has been an outstanding partner,” Linda said. “Fused glass is a perfect example of an art form that many people think is unapproachable, yet it is such an accessible and enjoyable experience for all.”

Art and Accessibility

Some people grapple with speech as they age, and even then, “the arts help people express themselves without an overreliance on words,” Linda said.

Arianna and her mother Susan, who was diagnosed with dementia in 2020, are weekly attendees of the Movement/Arts Immersion Group.

“My mom loves to dance, so we really like the dancing parts of the program,” Arianna said. “And we really, really like art. She has so many coloring books that she’s completed at home, I don’t know what to do with them. Here, she gets to do that in a group with other people who are doing the same thing. And there are some amazing artists, so we get inspired by them as well.”

One of those inspiring artists is Martha, a retired school librarian, passionate watercolor artist, and grandparent to preschoolers in the Tucson J’s Early Childhood Education program. Martha can often be seen live-sketching animals or fellow participants throughout the sessions and enjoys using her own watercolors during art activities.

Resources on Aging and the Arts in Southern Arizona

Nearly one-third of Southern Arizona’s population is over the age of 65. With a supportive and thriving arts community, local organizations are working together to help older adults create, connect and stay active.

Linda encourages older adults to take advantage of the Pima Council on Aging, a Tucson-based nonprofit with a wide network of services. In addition to the J’s robust Healthy Aging programs, some of her favorite arts-based organizations with age-friendly offerings include the Tucson Museum of Art and Tohono Chul.

“Art is a universal language,” she said. “Regardless of your creative background or cognitive or physical abilities, it offers a way to stay engaged with the world around us. As we grow older, creative expression can become a powerful tool for connection, resilience—and most importantly—joy.”

To learn more about the Tucson J Healthy Aging programs, email Linda at ltravis@tucsonjcc.org.

A photograph of three women in an art gallery. One woman in a red top is smiling and holding a small bouquet of yellow flowers. Two other women are looking at the art. The background shows several colorful abstract paintings on the wall.

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Written By Isabela Gamez

The Art of Leadership:

Flinn Foundation's Vision for Culture, Creativity, and Community

On a crisp February evening in downtown Phoenix, the Flinn Foundation's gallery walls pulsed with color, texture and movement. Visitors filtered into the intimate gallery space, where soundscapes and art across many mediums invited them to pause. This was the opening night of The Art of Achievement exhibition, celebrating 40 years of Flinn Scholars through a vibrant collection of original artworks.

"This gallery is a powerful testament to the incredibly creative and accomplished people we have in Arizona," said Matt Rolland, SAACA/Art State Arizona Deputy Director, and Flinn Scholar.

Flinn's Strategic Vision

Tammy McLeod, Ph.D., Flinn Foundation president and CEO, believes in the arts' power to unify and heal.

"There's a lot of evidence that shows that arts and culture is not just imperative for the community but at a deep personal level, it contributes to your overall health and wellness," McLeod said.

She points to research showing that participation in music can even boost children's mathematics skills and explains how engaging with the arts, whether visual, performing or literary, can improve mental health by reducing rumination.

"Art and culture have the opportunity to bridge divides by providing a common interest," McLeod said.

She also believes that new companies that would be good to have in Arizona are more likely to choose places that have vibrant arts and culture communities.



Flinn Scholar Lindsey Chew stands beside the watercolor painting inspired by her personal journey, created by artist Karen Donmoyer

"There's a lot more we can do to support art and artists," she said.

One business that is investing in art is Fry's food stores. The current president, Monica Garnes, hired local artists to come in and put murals in every Fry's store in Arizona.

"She's created something of beauty in the store for customers to appreciate," McLeod said.

But McLeod emphasized that corporate support like this is still rare and that broader, sustained funding remains one of the most significant challenges in the arts sector. Public and private investment often falls short, limiting access to quality arts education and programming.

"Funding is the main issue; we want more money to go to the arts in order to have better arts education for kids," she said.

Beyond education, this lack of consistent investment also affects the sustainability of arts organizations. Many face unstable funding cycles. For smaller and rural-based groups, these gaps can mean a world of difference.

"So if I'm the only one out there all the time saying art is important, it doesn't serve me and it doesn't serve the community, but if I can put that in the voices of young

people, of old people, of all different types of people, then I think it starts to become a trusted source, and people start to believe it,” McLeod said.

Initiative for Financial and Creative Health

Flinn’s approach to the arts supports deep rooted change, best seen with its Initiative for Financial and Creative Health which supports Arizona’s largest arts organizations with multi-year grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$300,000.

Flinn also partners with SMU DataArts to provide grantees with evidence-based operational growth tools. Collaborations with the Arizona Commission on the Arts support rural engagement, especially through the funded Creative Communities program.

Through these collaborations, Flinn aims to support both established institutions and emerging groups, ensuring access to arts and culture across Arizona’s urban and rural landscapes.

By supporting a range of organizations, Flinn is helping create a more connected and resilient creative ecosystem.

The Partnership Story

The Art of Achievement exhibition, produced in collaboration with Art State



Flinn Scholar Devon Sanner shakes hands with artist Victor Navarro, who captured Devon’s vibrant spirit and culinary background through bold colors and a chef’s coat in his portrait

Arizona (formerly the Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance), explored the intersection of creativity and leadership. It paired 21 Flinn Scholars with artists, including fellow scholars, to interpret their leadership journeys through various mediums: sculpture, dance, theater, and music.

Dr. Nicole Person-Rennell, a Flinn Scholar and choreographer, created a dance piece inspired by fellow scholar Sara Zervos. “This work focuses on movement through time and space with change and adaptation to our next adventures.”

Art State Arizona Executive Director Kate Marquez emphasized the project’s power to unite. She noted many scholars were also

The Art of Achievement

An exhibition that redefines leadership through art

The Art of Achievement transforms the Flinn Foundation gallery into a dynamic celebration of Arizona talent. The exhibit features original works by artists interpreting the lives of 21 Flinn Scholars. Mediums ranged from contemporary dance and sculpture to theater and music, with every piece paired to a real-life leadership story.

Highlights include:

- Nicole Person-Rennell’s dance video set to Brandi Carlile’s “The Story.”
- MIT professor Roger Levy inspired Matt Rolland’s original fiddle composition.
- Mixed media installations exploring identity, growth, and resilience.

Curated by Art State Arizona, the show is a year-long testament to creativity as a tool for understanding, connection, and impact. More than a gallery, it’s a living archive of Arizona’s future leaders and the artists who help tell their stories.

By inviting the community to engage, the exhibit becomes a reflection of Arizona’s collective creativity, anchored in experience, shaped by story, and lifted by the transformative power of art.

artists, and some collaborations brought together alumni from classes a decade apart.

“The project really highlighted the diversity of the scholars and showcases how art inspired them and gave them a competitive edge in innovation or creativity in their own field,” Marquez said.

This idea grew from a previous Art State Arizona collaboration with Roche Tissue Diagnostics called *Uncommon Knowledge*, where artists told cancer survivors’ diagnostic stories. That exhibition later traveled to the Flinn Gallery.



Flinn Scholars gather to celebrate and support their peers featured in the exhibition, honoring creativity, connection, and shared experiences

“We want to push boundaries for where art can live, and connect arts to economic development,” she said.

“When we opened *The Art of Achievement* exhibit, we invited all the Flinn Scholars to come and bring their families and we had community members come as well. It allowed us to celebrate art and the scholars,” McLeod said. “And we’re keeping this exhibit up all year long.”

By turning the gallery into an evolving exhibition space, Flinn reimagines how cultural programming can interact with the public. It’s not merely a place for viewing but it becomes a platform for exchange, learning, and community storytelling.

Amanda Staples, Artistic Programs Manager of Art State Arizona said, “So many scholars started by saying, ‘I don’t know if my story is interesting,’ and then saw it reflected back through someone else’s creativity. It gave them a fresh perspective on their own journey and a deeper sense of pride in how far they’ve come.”

Scholar Perspective

Matt Rolland is no stranger to art’s transformative power. He graduated from the University of Arizona in 2009, where he studied economics and international studies. He toured for five years as a musician, performing nationwide as the bandleader and fiddle player for Tucson-based band Run Boy Run.

For *The Art of Achievement*, he composed music inspired by fellow scholar Roger Levy, now the head of MIT’s cognitive sciences department.

“One of the takeaways from the exhibition is that it’s very challenging to interpret someone else’s story,” Rolland said.

“We connected on music, on being Flinn and Fulbright Scholars,” Rolland said. “It was a neat way to start a friendship.”



Artist Anjola Ayodele unveils her artwork to Flinn Scholar Ravi Ram and his mother. Drawing from Ravi’s Indian heritage and the meaning of his name—“sun”—Anjola incorporated radiant colors and symbolic motifs that reflect his cultural roots and personal story

Rolland’s composition evolved like Levy’s journey, through pivots, risks, and growth. He crafted the melody to morph through the course of the song, reflecting Levy’s life changes.

“One of the highlights for me is the scholar community, they are some of the most passionate, driven and creative people I’ve ever met. Some of my lifelong friends I met in the Flinn community,” he said.

The exhibit’s diversity in medium and meaning underscored the range of interpretation: some artists were literal, others abstract. But all invited viewers to reflect on leadership, resilience, and personal evolution.

The Gallery Experience

Rather than a static show, *The Art of Achievement* felt like a living space, one that welcomed visitors to linger and return. Original works lined the walls, each paired with a Flinn Scholar’s story. The result: an immersive tapestry of sound, movement and color.

For many first-time visitors, the exhibit sparked not just appreciation but participation. The

stories behind each work invited guests to reflect on their own journeys and aspirations.

“Everyone can inject creativity into their life. The arts enhance our daily life,” said Rolland.

The exhibit marks the third collaboration between Flinn and SAACA/Art State Arizona. Past shows centered on the biosciences and cancer research.

Closing Reflection

As the gallery’s lights dim and visitors head home, the message lingers: when institutions invest in the arts, they’re investing in people, possibility, and the future of Arizona.

The exhibit reinforces the idea that leadership is not just about achievement, it’s also about expression, vision, and community. Through partnerships, storytelling, and creative risk-taking, Flinn and Art State Arizona show how the arts can spark deeper conversations about who we are and who we might become.

To learn more about how your business can partner with the arts to achieve greater success, and deepen your connection to the community, visit www.artstateaz.org.



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By Chelsey Killebrew

The Colorful Years:

Reimagining Aging Through the Arts

How the Pima Council on Aging is investing in humanity through creativity.

The Art of Aging

For centuries, the arts have brought vibrancy and meaning to life—especially in moments when we need it most. Think the Renaissance in Rome. Realism in France. Jazz. Jimi Hendrix.

It's no surprise that painting, performance, music, dance, and writing can also guide us through the later chapters of life. Aging can be full of color if we follow creativity where it's been calling us all along.

The benefits of creative aging aren't just intuitive—they're evidence-based. According to a comprehensive review by the National Institutes of Health, 31 peer-reviewed studies reported overwhelmingly positive cognitive, emotional, and quality-of-life outcomes from participatory arts programming. Americans for the Arts echoes these findings, showing tangible improvements for individuals living with dementia, PTSD, disabilities, memory loss, and even chronic loneliness.

But beyond the data, it's the stories that bring this work to life—and in Southern

Arizona, Pima Council on Aging (PCOA) is leading the way.

Artful Aging, Arizona Style

Established in 1967, PCOA is one of the longest running organizations of its kind in the country. Today, it's reshaping how aging looks and feels—placing arts and community connection at the heart of programs designed to enhance wellness and purpose.

"We support offering evidence-based programs because we know they're effective," said Sarah Spearman, Vice President of

Philanthropy and Communications at PCOA. "You really want to be where people are. Being accessible makes a big impact on reaching folks."

From their multiple offices in Tucson and Green Valley, PCOA collaborates with libraries, community centers, and creative organizations to reach older adults across the region. Programs range from movement-based wellness classes to arts-integrated social gatherings. A few examples:

- **Memory Café:** A welcoming space for engagement between elders and caregivers, featuring music, arts, and storytelling
- **Enhance Fitness & A Matter of Balance:** Empowering independence through stability-focused movement and guided exercise
- **Community Lunch Program:** Offering nutritious meals, connection, and live performances at 6+ locations
- **PCOA Helpline (520-790-7262):** Connecting older adults and caregivers to community resources and services

"We know that intergenerational connections are so important as we get older," said Spearman.

To foster these connections, SAACA/Art State Arizona and PCOA are collaborating on a new list of creative resources designed to link caregivers, residents, and healthcare partners with local events and arts opportunities through the PCOA Helpline.

“

Being accessible makes a big impact on being able to reach folks.”

Sarah Spearman, PCOA, Vice-President of Philanthropy and Communications



PCOA Programming in action

The Helpline receives dozens of calls each month from individuals seeking socialization opportunities—an expressed need this new resource aims to meet.

Memory Café

One of PCOA's most exciting initiatives incorporates arts in the Dementia Capable programs at various Southern Arizona locations and times throughout the month with Memory Cafés.

"You walk through the door and you're no longer the person living with dementia or the caregiver," said Harbhajan Khalsa, PCOA Dementia Capable Southern Arizona Director. You are a person hanging out to experience art and community, and are replacing isolation with inspiration.

"I've made so many friends here. This is what we need – a place where we're treated like everybody else," one participant said.

Another simply stated, "It gives me a feeling of home."

“

When we lose funding for these essential supports, we lose empathy and compassion.”

Kate Marquez, CEO & Founder, Art State Arizona

Memory Cafés empower people with dementia, as well as forms of mild cognitive impairment. It provides the space, entertainment, and opportunity to build close-knit groups, resulting in a shared sense of resilience.

First appearing in the Netherlands 1997 to provide a social, enjoyable place to join other families and caregivers, the concept only recently came to the U.S.

"We see how crucial social connection is for life," Khalsa said. "The Cafés are meant to be a vehicle for connection."

The arts paint these gatherings with meaning and bring deeper appreciation for time spent with one another, with programs like:

- Watercolor demonstrations
- Tucson Museum of Art presentations
- Ukulele singalongs
- Arts and Minds at home virtual calls
- Guided pen to paper arts classes, named Color Me Calm

"We've done a lot of different art modalities," Khalsa explained. "We want to bring as many different offerings to our Cafés to see what participants might find enjoyment in."

"Anytime we can include music, those tend to be very positive. Music is so ingrained in people's lives," said Khalsa.

Of her husband's experience, one attendee stated, "He loves music and it is great to come for the singalongs, because he still remembers the words to his favorite Beatles songs. That warms my heart."



Pima Council on Aging program participants

Memory Cafés brush beyond immediate circles, providing new mediums to give back to the community through partnerships.

Ben's Bells recently hosted a painting class for their signature kindness ornaments, which circulate around the world. Café attendees have heard presentations from The Gratitude Crew, a non-profit organization dedicated to teaching youth volunteers how to practice gratitude. When Rogue Theater actors performed, attendees enjoyed a dramatic reading and presentation from their play, but it also helped promote the theater and sell tickets.

"Partnerships help get the word out about these dementia resources beyond what we could do within our own walls," Khalsa said.

"My husband used to be an author, and now it is hard for him to talk—but, coming to Memory Cafés, he lights up. Even though he doesn't talk much, I can tell he is enjoying himself, and that makes me happy," one wife said. "I have made friends, too; it is nice to know that I am not alone in what we are going through. I have support that I didn't have before."

A Model Rooted in Community

PCOA's mission—"to promote dignity and respect for aging and to advocate for independence"—is brought to life through creative partnerships and grassroots solutions. PCOA's work is supported through a combination of federal, state, and local funding, alongside generous donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations.

But like many aging services, these vital funding streams are increasingly fragile and traditional means could disappear.

"We're a nonprofit," Spearman said. "We're

always looking for ways to partner with other community members to further our mission."

"Veterans. People with disabilities. Elders," said Kate Marquez, SAACA/Art State Arizona Executive Director. "These are the communities that DEI policies have and must continue to uplift. When we lose funding for these essential supports, we lose empathy and compassion."

Marquez adds: "We are at a crossroads where we must build new foundations at the community level. If we want these programs to flourish, the focus must be on our shared humanity."

To learn more, visit <https://pcoa.org>.

“

We see how crucial social connection is for life,” Khalsa said. “The Cafés are meant to be a vehicle for connection.”

Harbhajan Khalsa, PCOA Dementia Capable Southern Arizona Director.



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By **Monica Surfaro Spigelman**

On the Way Back Home:

Restoring Paths to Lost Foodways

Food is Memory, Medicine, and Art: Preserving Traditions for a More Nourished Future

At the foot of “A” Mountain where the desert meets memory, a revival is underway. Here – on land belonging to the Tohono O’odham Nation and at the site of Tucson’s birthplace – Mission Garden grows a living record of the desert’s oldest agricultural traditions.

On one blistering monsoon-season day, Mission Garden visitors huddle close, listening, reimagining. They’re learning that – what began in 2012 as the reconstruction of the Spanish Colonial walled garden of the San Agustín Mission with a planting of 130 heirloom trees by The Friends of Tucson’s Birthplace – is now tied to a larger, shared vision. Mission Garden today is a portal of an evolving Southern Arizona movement to revive ancestral knowledge and reestablish a way of life deeply rooted in culture and ecology.

The visitors gather in the Tohono O’odham demonstration garden, one of Mission Garden’s 25 agricultural plots created as an illustrated chronology of the desert’s native traditions and farming history. They’re absorbed in stories about I’itoi the Creator and dryland farming. They realize the stories aren’t just about folklore. They’re blueprints for sustaining health and reawakening responsibility to the land.

And like the season itself, the stories today are about water.

Seasons and Memory

Rain, increasingly unreliable due to climate change, still comes in bursts through these relentlessly searing months. But when it comes



Family gathers at the San Xavier Community

– with the sky gathering its power over the mountains – there are always those moments of memory as well as relief. We’re reminded this is the longest continuously cultivated area in North America for farming cultivation, more than 4,100 years. We’re reminded of how water shaped calendars, created ceremony and sustained life. We see why people settled in this spot.

The O’odham calendar begins in June, with the season of Ha: *şañ Bak Maşad*—the time for gathering *bahidaj*, the sweet fruit of the saguaro cactus. That harvest moment has passed, but the rhythm of the land continues. Each season brings with it intention, ceremony. These cycles are lived again at Mission Garden, adapted where needed, but always tethered to the land, the cultures and the people.

The Dry River

There’s a history to why regeneration is needed and why so many are now trying to revive the region’s food systems. The system that sustained this life was fractured more than a century ago.

In the 1880s, forced land allotments divided traditional farmlands into fragmented unsustainable plots. After allotment my community/family continued to farm and thrived, it wasn’t until the depletion of the Santa Cruz River that we could no longer farm. Decades of overdevelopment and groundwater extraction followed, draining the Santa Cruz and depleting aquifers. Traditional irrigation methods of the O’odham were set aside. Native crops gave way to commodity food programs. The loss was cultural as well as nutritional.

“Whole generations lost their way of life, their himdag, their wellbeing,” explains Dr. Jacelle Ramon-Sauberan, a Tohono O’odham Studies educator at Tohono O’odham Community College [TOCC] in Sells, the Tohono O’odham Nation Education Development Liaison for NSF NOIRLab-Kitt Peak National Observatory. She is a tribal member of the San Xavier District and comes from a family of farmers.

As access to traditional desert foods disappeared, more processed diets took hold. “Native foods provided us with higher nutritional value and lower amounts of sugar. When we were disconnected from that generations began to suffer devastating health impacts including diabetes.”

Reclaiming Foodways

There was a turning point in the 1980s, Dr. Ramon-Sauberan explains, when tribal elders began to stand up for their food sovereignty and water rights. The Southern Arizona Water Rights Settlement Act passed by Congress restored water access for the tribal community. With the return of the water came a closer look at ancestral knowledge about the land.

Elders were instrumental in founding the San Xavier Cooperative Farm, among the first major efforts to sustain the region’s Indigenous agriculture systems. The Farm grows drought-adapted native crops like beans, squashes and yellow-meat watermelon. It also has restored use of wild foods – like the prickly pear, cholla buds and mesquite – as foods as well as medicines.

“We’ve been utilizing t-jewedaga [our earth/land] for nourishment and to keep us healthy for thousands of years,” Dr. Ramon-Sauberan says. “And we want to continue that especially since many of our traditional foods such as cholla buds and mesquite have properties that regulate blood sugar levels and curb health issues. If we take care of the land, it will take care of us.”

A Monsoon Gift

In Cowlic, south of Sells, a 40-acre Alexander Pancho Memorial Farm respects the traditions that work with the desert. It operates using dry farming techniques which capture monsoon rains and store runoff. The Farm cultivates white and brown tepary beans (*bawi*) and 60-day corn (*hu: n*), among other crops. The farm also is a learning center, encouraging young tribal members to study ancestral farm techniques along with modern methods. Apprentices harvest native wild plants of cholla buds (*ciolim*) and saguaro fruit syrup (*sitol*).



Maegan Lopez Holding Tepary Beans at Mission Garden



Mission Garden

“It is our job to listen to the stories of our elders, learn from the landscape and bring back farming that yields delicious nutritious foods from both wild and cultivated plants,” says Jesús Manuel García of the Sells District, a graduate of the Farm’s apprenticeship program who now continues to pass the knowledge along to Sells student groups and Ajo beginning farmers.

Storytelling and Resistance

Felipe Molina, a deer singer, cultural teacher and elder of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, has spent decades chronicling Yoeme [Yaqui] traditional foodways, culture and stories. A native speaker of Yoem Noki-Yoeme language, Mr. Molina passes along knowledge through apprentices, school programs, collaborations with Pascua Yaqui Social Services Department and his writings. He grew up in the Yoem Pueblo, the Yaqui community in Marana. Along with his teachings and books, which blend oral history, scholarship and folk tradition, Mr. Molina has worked with the Southwest Folklife Alliance (SFA) and Yaqui communities in both Sonora and Arizona on initiatives that advance food sovereignty, economic development and cultural memory. Companion SFA programs, including the beloved 51-year-old Tucson Meet Yourself Folklife Festival (to be held October 17 through 19 in 2025) reinforce the interconnectedness of food, art and healing traditions.

“When folklorists study something – a basket, a song, an ancestor recipe, a home remedy or a story – they start to realize that it’s not just the one point-of-focus that matters,” says Dr. Maribel Alvarez, University of Arizona professor, anthropologist and SFA interim executive director. “The significance and true meaning live in the context – how everything is connected.”

Dr. Ramon-Sauberan agrees: the connection runs through art as well as agriculture.

“There is a great partnership between food and our arts, blending both beauty and purpose,” she says. “Our wild plants nourish us but also give us tools for harvesting. The baskets serve both practical and ceremonial. They’re containers for our water and food, yes, but they’re also an aesthetic expression of culture.”



Aranda\Lasch. Pictures of the Pancho farm courtesy of Terrol Dew Johnson

Weavers use beargrass and devil's claw to lace or braid stories of tradition into their basketry, she notes. The tradition-makers create basket designs for ceremonies or everyday use. Baskets reflect individual expression and carry a grandparent's story while holding the community's shared identity.

The plants feed in many ways – food, medicine, ceremony and arts.

Making Home

This interwoven perspective reached the national stage this year through a major exhibit at the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum. Called *We: sic 'em ki: "Everybody's Home,"* the installation was created by the architecture firm Aranda\Lasch in collaboration with the late Terrol Dew Johnson, the renown O'odham basket-weaver and founder of the nonprofit Tohono O'odham Community Action (TOCA).

We: sic 'em ki: "Everybody's Home" is a forward-looking home design featuring a traditional O'odham shade structure [*wa:ato*]. It pairs baskets by Mr. Johnson with other sculptural elements including desert papers, weaving fiber, desert food, farm materials, and historical photos from the Alexander Pancho Farm, which was started by the late Mr. Johnson's grandfather and now is run by another family member, Mr. Noland Johnson. The actual home will be found on Farm property in the O'odham Nation and is designed for members of the Johnson family. The Cooper Hewitt exhibit closes in August.

Community Revisioning

Closer to home, these ideas take root in the very real programs underway across the region:

At TOCC, elder farmer Clifford Pablo of the San Xavier District leads an internship program for young farmers which teaches traditional practices blended with modern technique on the campus farmland west of Sells. Mr. Pablo was one of the founders of the San Xavier Cooperative Farm, which now offers workshops for tribal members, as well as farm tours and a Farm shop with seasonal dried goods and supplies. A cater-

ing operation at the Farm cooks traditional and non-traditional offerings plus wild foods harvested locally. The Alexander Pancho Farm's outreach includes participation in local demonstrations and apprenticeships. A *Kaij ki* [seed house] is still offered weekly in Ajo or Sells, providing traditional O'odham seeds, products and information for backyard gardens.

Mr. Garcia, who helps run the *Kaij ki* program through the Ajo Center for Sustainable Architecture, began a community garden at the Sells Indian Hospital off Route 86 with a crew of local gardeners. The hospital garden will soon produce summer crops of peas, beans and squash. "The land is part of us. It is our future. It is demanding work. But this will help us return to the healthful ways of our ancestors. It's what we must do for the future," he says.

The practices are regenerating the soil and our culture, adds Dr. Ramon-Sauberan. "As we correct damage to all our collective resources, we know our health is part of the renewal," she says. "We're part of a system that's all related."

A Sense of Place, A Sense of Taste

Maegan Lopez, Gardener and Cultural Outreach Liaison at Mission Garden, is a Tohono O'odham tribal member of the Chukut Kuk District who remembers walking with her grandfather through the desert near the family farm in New Fields, 30 miles south of Sells. "My grandfather put me to work in his home gardens, in Sells, by teaching me how to water plants on very little water, dig holes, talk to the plants; he made me laugh with jokes he made. He spent all day outside, sitting, digging, talking, reading, building his tolerance to the seasonal heat, and enjoying the rain when it finally came," she says.

Other elders, including the late Mr. Bernard Siquieros, also reinforced the importance of the land. "He would tell us everything we need to live is out there," she remembers. "He told us stories— about which plants are food, which are medicine, which are for our baskets."

"These stories have instructions," Ms. Lopez notes. "They matter and need to be passed down, which is part of my work at Mission Garden. The stories help us keep the environment and our history in balance."

Collaborations continue, planting roots that link food sovereignty with climate resilience, integrative medicine and cultural tourism. Festivals like *Pueblos del Maíz* celebrate the role of native agriculture in Tucson's food history. The culinary heritage of Nation foodways also played a key role in Tucson's designation as the first American UNESCO City of Gastronomy in 2015.

"We're listening to the stories," says Dr. Ramon-Sauberan. "We're working together to restore our *himdag*—our healthful way of life."

And the desert, once fragmented, is knitting itself back together – story by story, seed by seed.

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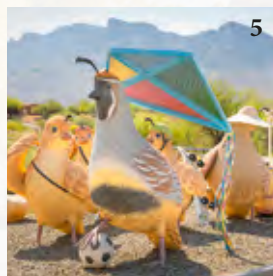
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1. Bruce LaFountain, *The Spirit Within*, bronze
2. Steve Holler, *Untitled*, acrylic on canvas
3. Pen Macias, *Welcome to Oro Valley*, mural
4. Anthony Bayne, *Joe Lupiani*, bronze
5. Summer Youth Art Project, *Quail Trail*, concrete

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Written By Jonathan Frahm

Theater as Sanctuary:

How Saguaro City Music Theater Cultivates Healing, Belonging, and Joy

“What makes us special makes us strong.”

The line is pulled from Saguaro City Music Theater’s production of *Shrek: The Musical*. What it means echoes far beyond the stage. In this moment, dozens of kids of all abilities beam under the stage lights at the Berger Performing Arts Center. What’s happening here, though, is more than musical theater—it’s a collective act of empowerment.

Founded in 2021 by Broadway veterans Drew Humphrey and Dena DiGiacinto, Saguaro City Music Theater has quickly become a powerful creative force in Southern Arizona. The company’s mission is threefold—to provide tuition-free arts education, to produce professional musicals, and to incubate new works like Cameron Hood’s *Voyagers*. Yet, these three pillars are rooted in a singular belief that creativity belongs to everyone.

Upon their arrival to Tucson, Drew and Dena immediately identified a missing piece in the

local arts ecosystem. “We saw an opportunity to serve Tucson through professional musical theater that truly included everyone,” Drew, Artistic Director at Saguaro City, shares. “We wanted to build something where kids and adults of all abilities, backgrounds, and identities could see themselves on stage, and behind the scenes, too.”

That vision became Saguaro City Music Theater, and pulses through every aspect of the non-profit’s mission. In only three and a half years, Saguaro City has grown to offer six education programs year-round, alongside large-scale musical productions, and partnerships with the University of Arizona and the Arizona Schools for the Deaf of Blind. It’s important to note that all of their youth programming remains tuition-free.

Saguaro City’s summer camp is now 61 students strong. The end result of this summer camp is participation in a fully

developed musical production.

“There’s something to be said about just having the opportunity to be put up on a stage and have a professional lighting designer create cues for them,” Dena, Managing Director and Director of Education, says. “Everyone matters the same.”

Through program strategies like one-on-one supports, collaboration with therapists, and a commitment to meeting students where they are, growth is nurtured over time, including over several seasons. Supporting students with disabilities is integral to Saguaro City. One of their mission’s flagpoles is to bring kids and adults of all backgrounds together on the same stage, on the same even playing field.

Dena continues, “We run everything in a very similar way as you would any educational program. What sort of makes us unique is offering the support that’s needed to help kids that might have higher care needs or challenges.”

The tuition-free nature of these programs is made possible by a mix of community support, private donations, foundational support, and grants. It is the piece that ties Saguaro City’s threefold mission together, offering every student—regardless of ability or financial background—to participate in just as meaningful of a way as their peers.

“The tuition-free aspect of it is so important to us, because not only are we creating an inclusive environment just for children with and without diagnosed challenges, but also those that would not have access to the arts if it came at a cost,” Drew says.

Dena shares, “The centerpiece really needed to be around inclusive arts education at a tuition-free model, to take away as many barriers as there could be between any child and the opportunity to enrich their lives through musical theatre.”

This extends beyond the stage. Students participate in collaborative programming



Saguaro City Musical Theatre Programs

like *Showtime*, where they help design props and costumes. In *Spotlight Series*, they are taught foundational skills like singing, dancing, and acting. Classes are scaffolded and flexible, with one-on-one support and sensory-friendly modifications built-in.

To Drew and Dena, the arts are a wellness practice. Dena reflects on an individual student, who first came to Saguaro City with a true love for musical theatre, but started uncomfortable with some elements of the process.

"It's such an awesome thing to see, that the student that I described, who two years ago had a really hard time being in the rehearsal room at all, is now almost always rehearsing with us. The growth is absolutely mind-blowing – and it is very moving to me. It really is."

From full-on stage productions to peer mentorship and classes and adaptations that are friendly for all audiences, and performers of all abilities, Saguaro City is helping people of all walks of life empathize with one another.

Drew shares, "To invite a group of strangers into the Berger Performing Arts Center and have them sit down and watch *Shrek*—a story about an ogre that doesn't believe that he deserves love, and a bunch of fairytale creatures that have been outcast because they're different—when we see that as an audience, we can say, '*This story that I've heard and laughed at for twenty years of my life is now hitting me in a different way, because it's being told by people that live that experience.*'"

Saguaro City thrives to create moments like these every day, in every space that they occupy. One of their greatest strengths is in creating new perspectives through performance. Through empowering people of all abilities and backgrounds to learn about theater and even take center stage, the company also invites audiences to connect more authentically with the production that they are enjoying. The stage becomes a mirror reflecting the shared humanity of all present. At its core, Saguaro City demonstrates that inclusivity isn't just an ideal—it's a driving force behind the arts' ability to resonate, inspire, and heal.

Learn more at <https://www.saguarocity.org/>



*Sandy M.
Resident at The Watermark at Morrison Ranch*

Where Inspiration Takes Flight

Sandy didn't have to look far to find inspiration for her next story. The ducks outside her window sparked the idea for her next picture book, a story that flew beyond the pages and landed on her community's bus.

Sandy reminds us there's always another story waiting to be told.



Discover more



Written By Jonathan Frahm

From Senegal to Tucson:

Healing Through Song with Elijah Ndoeye

Born and raised in Senegal and now based in Tucson, Elijah Ndoeye is a self-taught multi-instrumentalist whose work blends traditional African folk instrumentation with contemporary arrangements. He is well known for his performances with Jaliya, a Southern Arizona-based danceable music duo, and has recently become a published author with his debut memoir, *Dream On, Seydou*. Regardless of the hat he's wearing, Elijah's artistry is rooted in cultural storytelling with the intent to uplift communities.

At The Fountains at La Cholla, Elijah performs for residents in memory care and assisted living. Whether plucking the kora or engaging in conversation between songs, he strives to connect with residents on both physical and spiritual levels. His musical style bridges generations and geographies, tapping into the universal human desire for connection.

"When I walk in, I feel like I'm playing for my grandparents," Elijah says. "It's about respecting them. It's about how I can help someone feel better in that moment."

He carries a simple but profound belief—music is healing—into every performance.

"Every song I play has meaning," he shares. "Even if there are no words, I tell the story. I

ask people to share their own. It becomes a circle—what I give, they give back."

That philosophy extends to every aspect of his life. Elijah founded the nonprofit The Forgotten Children, which provides housing and education for children in Senegal. Creativity is not a side project for him, but a way of life and a means of service. Whether sharing his story on the page, performing at The Fountains or onstage with Jaliya, or directly supporting children abroad—each act weaves into his intentional, community-centered mission.

One moment that sticks with him is when a retired dancer stood up mid-performance and began to move.

"She gave me a dance while I was just talking to the group," he says. "She said I took her to places she had always wanted to go—places on her bucket list, even to visit her late husband. And all I did was play one song."

For Elijah, it was a confirmation of why he does this work.

"When they talk about music being healing and spiritual, that truly demonstrated it. This work is about what happens between people when you let the music do what it's supposed to do."



Elijah Ndoeye - Healing Artist, Writer & Musician



Elijah Ndoeye Performing

Learn more about Elijah's work at:
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Written By Jonathan Frahm

Dancesequences – *Motion* Is Memory

In Every Gesture, a Story: How Dancesequences Uses Dance to Restore Memory, Dignity, and Joy.

At The Gardens at La Cholla, two women gently guide a circle of older adults in wheelchairs through waves of movement, their hands curling like smoke in the air. The music is familiar—something they may have danced or sung along to decades ago. One woman laughs as her arms mimic the arc of a sculpture placed in the center of the room. Another follows, inspired, sparking a chain reaction.

Karenne Koo and Sabrina Geoffrion are the co-founders of Dancesequences, a Tucson-based movement collective that believes dance is a universal right. Everyone is welcome to use dance as a conduit for expression, connection and visibility. Sabrina, a trained dancer and longtime arts educator, and Karenne, whose career began in nonprofit dance administration, met through a shared passion for community-based movement.

What began as a dream to dissolve the barriers of age, skill and access has grown into a multilayered program serving children, elders, memory care residents—and even horses and cats. You'll find Dancesequences not on traditional stages, but in assisted living communities, public schools and makeshift dance floors—wherever the desire for connection arises. Through improvisational movement rooted in the Barbara Mettler tradition, their sessions invite participants to let their spirits respond to the stories they're feeling in the moment.



Dancesequences Healing Movement Program



Dancesequences Programming in Action

"We're not there to impose anything," Karenne said. "We're there to draw out what's already within each person and then help them discover how to move with someone else."

Dancesequences aims to bridge people from all walks of life through its inclusive approach to dance and movement. In assisted living communities, their sessions invite memory care residents to rediscover their identities through joyful movement.



Dancesequences Programming in Action

"You really have to be fully present in the moment," Sabrina said. "It shifts how you see your body in relation to everything around you. That kind of awareness—it heals."

She added, "They don't always remember who I am, but they all remember that they have a positive association with me."

"Everyone deserves to be visible and valued," Karenne said. "We literally dance with all bodies."

Dancesequences champions movement as an art form meant for everyone—a tool for wellness, expression, trust-building and authenticity. Their work affirms a powerful message: creativity heals, especially when it's shared.

To learn more, visit www.dancesequences.org.

Written By Laila Halaby

Meet Miranda Blakeslee, Full-Time Music Therapist at the Southern Arizona Veterans Administration

Anyone who has met Miranda Blakeslee knows immediately how much she loves her job; she emanates delight.

"I say I'm like one of the luckiest humans I know: I have a job that I love and I get to use music to help people. I don't know how that happened, but I'm just so grateful."

I had the distinct pleasure of talking with Miranda about the work she loves and has been doing for more than a decade, the last three years at the VA in Tucson.

Miranda comes from a family of musicians, so playing music was part of her growing-up vocabulary. It is no surprise that she received her undergraduate degree in music performance and spent years as a professional violist, often playing eight to 10 hours a day.

Her physical connection to music, however, is the root of her work today.

"I loved playing music. I loved the viola because it's a very mellow sound. I always liked the effect of sound on my body and on my brain."

"My parents tell me I came home one day and told them the viola sounds cool and they went out that day and got one for me. I didn't like the sounds of other things and as I grew up, I learned that I really liked kind of that just mellow grounding that the viola gives to my brain."



Award Winning Veteran displaying original works at the Catalyst Creative Collective in Tucson Arizona

How did she go from professional violist to Music Therapist?

"I loved playing, but I was missing the part of me that liked helping people. I was actually at the dog park one day and I met a girl who was receiving treatment in the hospital who wanted to pat my dog. I got to know her and by visiting her a few times I met a music therapist who was treating her, and I fell in love with this. I said that's what I want to do. I went back to school and studied music therapy."

What is Music Therapy?

"Music is a powerful tool to help all of us in health, but there's a difference between music in general to help support health and music therapy to support health. The difference comes in the training and how we really purposefully use that music to work on clinical goals. And that's what we're learning in school. We're learning about all of the different populations, the clinical goals that they might present with, and how to harness music and creativity to directly work on a musical goal, not just the overall benefits, but how to direct that care."

“A lot of people when they hear about music therapy, they picture someone going and singing for people, and that’s about it... I have veterans here that love to hear me come sing and play a little guitar and it can do great things — it can make the moment feel less hard; it can bring people together — but that’s not the only thing I do. I can break down music in so many ways.”

Miranda outlines how music is used in healthcare:

- Music Education - The goal might be for a patient to learn an instrument.
- Therapeutic Music - Musicians come to a therapeutic setting and play at lunch hour or lead a flute circle [patients can come and go; music is background]
- Performance - Musical groups come to a therapeutic setting and give a full performance in which patients are there from start to finish and can engage with the performers
- Music Therapy - Licensed therapists use music purposefully to achieve clinical goals.

Miranda supports all four components, but her job is music therapy.

What is a typical day for a music therapist at the VA?

Miranda rides her bike to work, changes clothes, checks emails, and reviews her schedule. She has a daily list of veterans she checks in with, especially in medical and hospice. One day a week is reserved for outpatient appointments, both virtual and in person.

Providers refer patients to Miranda and after an assessment, they build an action plan together. That might include regular group sessions within the VA or being referred to classes or other resources in the community.

The SAVAHCS campus spans 117 acres, so to make her job manageable, she rotates instruments using one set/type of instruments for the entire week. This week is



Army Veteran Serena “Angeline” Hernandez, Robert Gadsden, Air Force Veteran, and Miranda Blakeslee, a creative arts music therapist at the Tucson VA pose for a photo at the National Creative Arts Festival in Indianapolis. The festival provided a stage for Veterans from diverse backgrounds to showcase their artistic talents and connect over shared experiences.

drum week and she loaded her cart with “every drum you could imagine.” She has regularly scheduled groups across various units and leads one to three groups daily. She lets staff know she’s onsite and they encourage veterans to join.

I was not given permission to interview any of the veteran participants in her programs, but the feedback from her and from practitioners and staff is that her groups are very, very well attended and one of the reasons that many patients return.

“This week has been drum circle week, so I’ve led therapeutic drum circles all across campus, which is one, a cathartic experience, but two, connection with community. There are drum circles in the community, so veterans have that practice in-house and then have the ability to go try those skills in the community. It’s also a great way to kind of express without having to use words — which is really important for humans to be able to do — find a way to express whether it’s traditional or musical. And it’s also fun.”

What are some of the clinical goals the veterans are working on?

“I’ve done things where I will help people build playlists to work on a goal. Some

of the common goals I work on with the veterans are better sleep or stress management and pulling apart songs they love and figuring out how the elements of music are affecting our body and our brain and then building playlists to slowly transition our brain into a better space. I do that a lot with my outpatient veterans.”

“In a day I might work on completely radically different goals from the beginning to the end of the day, even if I’m using that same intervention and I love the way that makes my brain stay creative. You know, healthcare goals are really, really important things for all of us to think about, because we will all engage with the health care system. And I am so grateful that doctors and psychiatrists and psychologists and social workers and everyone else exists.”

Why the VA?

Miranda is not a veteran but does have many family members who are/were, dating back “a couple of centuries” on her mother’s side.

“It’s a population I’ve always wanted to support. This VA prior to my arrival had some music services brought in on a contract basis but didn’t have



In a two-day exhibition at SAVAHCS, Veterans staff and the community was invited to behold the wonder of Veterans creative expression.

an established Creative Arts or Music department or person. And so I really thought I could use my experience having worked for many years to really build a program that would support

veterans across the entire campus and that would inspire some change and some creativity-based care to add to our whole health model* I felt like that model of care would fit with music ther-

apy and having veterans throughout my family just made me feel like I was yeah, supporting all my ancestors and supporting people I care about."

*The VA's whole health model centers on what matters most to the veteran, approaching care holistically.

Is SAVAHCS typical of VAs nationally?

"The VA has been increasing its creative arts therapists throughout the system of care nationally... because it is a group of therapies that is cost effective, that is supportive of all populations of veterans, and that is proven to be helpful."

Where does SAACA/Art State Arizona come in?

In addition to providing judges for the arts competition, SAACA/Art State Arizona hosts a public gallery exhibition each August at their CATALYST Creative Collective art space in the Tucson Mall, showcasing the local first-place winners. The organization has partnered with the VA for over a decade, offering arts therapy, live music, and Veterans Day celebrations. But most meaningful to Miranda is the gallery at CATALYST, which gives veterans and their families—especially those who don't regularly visit the VA—a powerful space for connection and expression.

Southern Arizona Veterans Administration Creative Arts Competition

Every VA facility in the country can choose to hold an arts contest in the summer. Most do, though some of the smaller ones do not have the capacity. The top three winners in each category (there are more than 100) at all the local VA facilities are invited to attend the week-long national festival. Veterans can enter up to 10 items.

For Southern Arizona, SAACA/Art State Arizona connects Miranda with community artists to serve as judges and works as a "third leg in that beautiful stool" along with the VA and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Why is the contest important?

"The reason this exists is to keep veterans creating, even if they don't need specific music therapy or therapy; just to keep creating is a form of self and health care. One of the biggest rules to participate in this competition is you have to have created your entry within the last year. And that is so that veterans keep creating. We know that engaging in creativity is so good for our health. It's good for our state of mind. It's good for our emotional regulation. It's good for our community building. You're an artist, you know. It connects you with yourself and with the world around you and we want to promote veterans to keep doing this. It is also a great opportunity for me to be able to offer services to veterans who don't really need the therapy level of care but may benefit from motivation to continuing engaging in creativity."

If you have any questions about participation in the annual competition, please reach out to Creative Arts Therapist, Miranda Blakeslee miranda.blakeslee@va.gov



Veterans Art Competition at the Catalyst Creative Collective

What is Miranda's personal relationship with music these days?

"I have more or less retired from playing viola so I'm lucky I have a job where I am creating music all the time and while it's different to create music at work than for myself, I still get to be part of the beauty of music pretty much all day long."

"One of the things I do for my own self care is I try to learn a new instrument every year. Veterans love that cause it doesn't have to be an instrument but try learning something new. That's how we grow our creativity and that's how I have fun with music."

Local artists interested in volunteering with the VA or participating in the Creative Arts Competition can contact Miranda directly at miranda.blakeslee@va.gov.



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Written By Jonathan Frahm

Writing Toward Wholeness:

The Healing Power of Laila Halaby

Weaving Words into Wellness: How Laila Halaby Uses Storytelling to Spark Connection, Creativity, and Healing.

Laila Halaby has spent the past two decades braiding the threads of storytelling and mental health into a tapestry of different crafts. She is an award-winning author, poet, educator and psychosocial oncologist, to highlight just some of her background. Her work isn't easily defined by any one role or title, although it all falls under the same umbrella of the healing arts. She's just as likely to be leading a poetry walk through downtown Tucson as she is guiding a memory care group through collaborative storytelling practices—or developing her next piece of fiction or poetry.

"There's something really sacred about watching someone—especially someone who's been told their whole life they're not creative—light up when they write something honest and beautiful," says Laila, reflecting on a recent class with memory care residents at Hacienda at the Canyon. Her voice gained a cheerful lilt when she recalled a participant who, after inadvertently starting a poetic chain of words with fellow residents, burst into laughter. "That moment, when someone sees themselves as creative, maybe for the first time—that's everything."

Laila's bicultural background—she was born in Beirut to an American mother and a Jordanian father—shaped her sensitivity and natural inclination toward narrative nuance. "Writing is translating," she says. "You're translating an experience, a feeling, so someone else can understand it."

When Laila works in creative aging programs, she reflects on how her programming is less about the final product and more about building confidence and community through artistic expression. A writing class with Laila might begin



Laila Halaby

with an interactive discussion or even a handful of paint chip samples from the local Home Depot. Their fancy names become the seeds of a collaborative group story with Hacienda residents, sparking creativity through fun and collaboration.

Art has been with Laila from the very beginning, and she works with others to help them find wholeness through it. She believes that creativity is not a luxury or an extra-curricular activity, but a birthright that we are all entitled to.

"Art is play. It's meaningful. It's connection," Laila says. "In a writing class, if you feel safe, you'll share deep, profound, private things. That's how we create belonging. That's how we remember who we are."

Learn more at www.lailahalaby.net

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 annhoff.com
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Undercover Arts Magazine celebrates Arizona's creative economy by spotlighting the artists, makers, and cultural businesses who shape our communities. The 2025 Creative Economy Listings continue that mission—offering not just a directory, but a path for discovery with more than 2,000 listings from across the state. From visual artists and performers to culinary innovators and arts educators, this guide connects readers to the people and places driving creativity across the state. With a special focus on Arts & Wellness, this year's edition explores how art supports healing, connection, and community well-being. Wheth-

er you're here to find collaborators, explore new creative spaces, or understand the diversity of Arizona's cultural sector, this is your invitation to dive in. The stories here are just the beginning.

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 risa@risawaldtfineart.com
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Isaac Caruso

isaacncarus.com
 isaac@isaacncarus.com
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McCann Sisters Violin & Bass Duo

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Rachel Nelson Art

rachelnelsonartist.com
rachelnelsonartist@gmail.com
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D, Art Therapy

Robert Streit

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tds@thedrawingstudio.org
Visual Arts & Galleries, Education & Youth Arts, Creative Aging

The Land With No Name Sanctuary

thelandwithnoname.org
totheland@gmail.com
Other: Visual & Traditional Arts, Cultural Development, Artist Residency

Theater Arts with Sarah Bayze

s.brown339@gmail.com
Theatre, Creative Movement, Education and Classes

Unscrewed Theater

unscrewedtheater.org
unscrewedtheater@gmail.com
Improv Comedy, Theatre, Education and Classes

Writers of Oya

writersofoya.com
writersofoyal7@gmail.com
Expressive Writing and Poetry, Trauma-Informed Arts Practices

Art Institute at the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum

desertmuseumarts.com
arts@desertmuseum.org
Gallery, Garden, Maker Space, Museum, Photography Studio

Art Mixer

artmixer.net
artmixertucson@gmail.com
Painting, Visual Art Classes, Creative Aging

Art Verve Academy

artverve.org
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Visual Arts, Adult Education, Hands-On Learning

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lisaswanson@artmobilevan.org
Arts & Wellness, Inclusion, Mobile Programming

Arts Express Theatre

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Musical Theater, Theatre, Education and Classes

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audreyalkoinva.com
audreyalkoinva@gmail.com
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BA Studios - A Dance & Fitness Boutique

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Dance, Education and Classes, Ballet

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Cultural Traditions, Dance

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Ballet, Dance, Education and Classes

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Bharatanatyam Indian Classical Dance

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Visual Art, Arts & Crafts, Community Arts

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Maker Space, Event Space, Workshop Studio

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Candi Carrell

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broadjamcomposer@gmail.com
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thecreativemedicinepath.com
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Visual Art Classes, Therapeutic / Wellness, Adaptive & Inclusive

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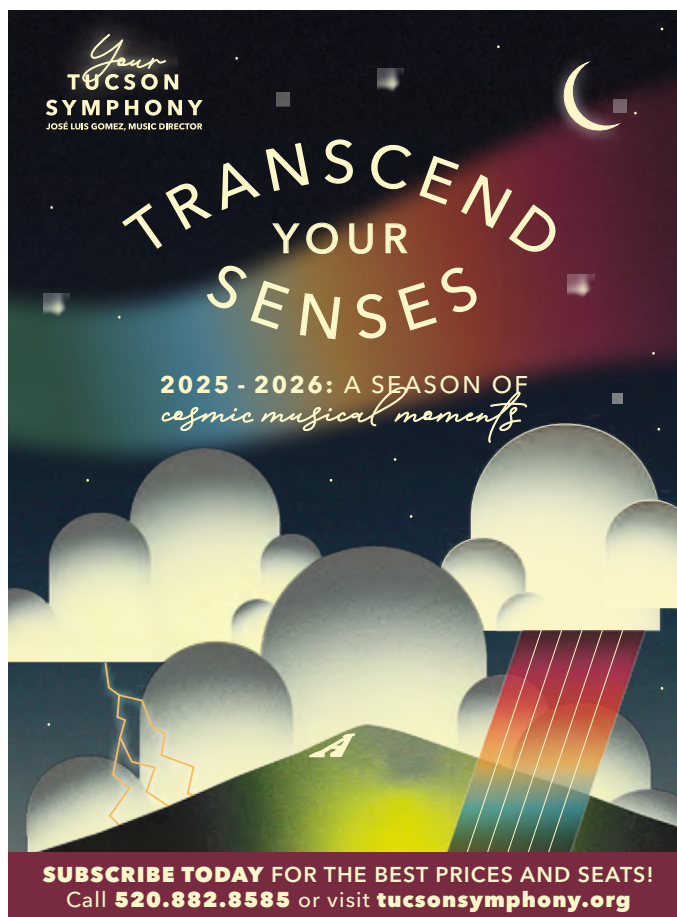
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lrbuchness@gmail.com
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rlschultz41@aol.com
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rosepetal@lynnraelowe.com
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saguarocity.org
info@saguarocity.org
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scheduler@sardasa.org
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Artist Studios, Event Space, Gallery

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Youth Education, Creative Aging, Circus Arts

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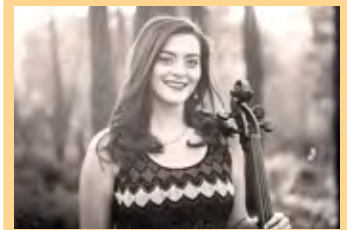
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info@thelocalcoopaz.com
Food Hub, Food Access, Community Agriculture

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grace@themusicroomaz.com
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STEAM Education, Youth Education, Wellness

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tracyannholmes@gmail.com
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info@trickyroyalty.com
Barista, Social & Civic Engagement, Empowerment Café

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executivedirector@tubacarts.org
Performing Arts, Visual Arts & Galleries, Education & Youth Arts

Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus

boyschorus.org
shaneboyd@boyschorus.org
Choral/Choir, Music Ensemble, Education & Youth Arts

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(520) 202-3888
Arts & Cultural Development, Visual Arts & Galleries, Folk & Traditional Arts

Tucson Handweavers and Spinners Guild

thsg.org
publicity@thsg.org
Art Society / Guild, Folk & Traditional Arts, Fiber Arts

Tucson Jazz Institute

tucsonjazzinstitute.com
tucsonjazzinstitute@gmail.com
Music Instruction, Youth Education

UA School of Music

music.arizona.edu
info@music.arizona.edu
Choral, Opera, Education

Unscrewed Theater

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unscrewedtheater@gmail.com
Improv Comedy, Theatre, Education and Classes

Virginia Cannon

virginiacannonpresents.com
virginiacannon14@gmail.com

Vocal Technique Studio

janicejarrett.com
jjjazz@mac.com
Music Instruction

WHAM Art Associatoin

wham-art.org
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Visual Arts & Galleries, Literary Arts & Literacy Groups, Education & Youth Arts

Willcox Theater and Arts

willcoxtheater.com
willcoxtheater@gmail.com
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womankraftaz@gmail.com
Visual Arts & Galleries, Folk & Traditional Arts, Art Classes

Young Artists' Community Ballet Academy of Dance

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nick@yacbdance.com
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Young Rembrandts of Tucson

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tucson@youngrembrandts.com
Visual Art, Youth Education

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zuzisphere@gmail.com
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Amanda Ma

thecreativemedicinepath.com
hello@thecreativemedicinepath.com
Artist Management, Event Planning & Design

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heidi.yribar@antsy-nancy.com
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Event Planning, Production Servic-
es, Community Engagement

Party Paints

partypaintsevents.com
mariam@partypaintsaz.com
Face Painting, Balloon Art, Chil-
dren's Entertainment

Paul Livingston

phlnew64@gmail.com
Photography, Event Photography,
Aerial photo & Video

Pizza Party Productions

itsapizzaparty.com
azpizzaparty@gmail.com
Film, Photography, Media
Production

Priya McCulloch

designsbypriya.com
priya@designsbypriya.com
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Professional Bartenders Unlimited

probartenders.net
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Hospitality

R-Galaxy

r-galaxy.com/comics
rgmail@r-galaxy.com
Comic Book Shop, Retail, Pop
Culture

Rachel Marie Photography

rachelmarie.photography
info@rachelmarie.photography
Photography, Video, Body Posi-
tivity

RBT Designs

rbtdesigns.com
roni@rbtdesigns.com
Jewelry Design, Metalsmithing,
Artisan Craft

Regole Design

regole.com
don@regole.com
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Marketing

Reptile Adventure Party

cressi.ueniweb.com/services/
animal-shelter-services/reptile-ad-
venture-birthday-parties-26607192
soazreptilerescue@yahoo.com
Animals/Reptiles, Education, Event
Services

Rhythm and Roots Concert Series - Tucson

rhythmmandroots.org
susan@rhythmmandroots.org
Marketing, Talent Booking, Event
Promotion

Sad Girl Society

melodramaticsadgirls@gmail.com
Marketing, Talent Booking, Artist
Management

Sarah Batchelder

raspiralpath.com
raspiralpath@gmail.com
Textiles, Spinning/Weaving, Book
Arts

Seamstress Juliette

(616) 485-4966
Dressmaking/Tailoring, Textiles,
Clothing Design

Señorita Art & Culture

etsy.com/shop/senoritamad
senoritamadart@gmail.com
Decor, Cultural Heritage, Visual
Arts

Sherri Graves Photography

sherrigraves.com
sherri@sherrigraves.com
Photography, Portraiture, Studio
Work

Signature Models and Talent

signaturemodelsandtalent.com
mailbox@signaturemodelsandtal-
ent.com
Talent Agency, Film, Modeling

Sky Island Design Research LLC

skyislanddesignresearch.com
drkenroark@skyislanddesignre-
search.com
Film, Audio/Visual, Design
Research

Sonoran Stitch Factory

sonoranstitch.com
sonoranstitch@gmail.com
Fashion Design, Clothing
Production, Textiles

Southern Arizona Video Productions

southernarizonavideo.com
nick@southernarizonavideo.com
Film, Video Production, Event
Services

SpryTime

sprytime.com
jmiller@sprytime.com
Photography, Commercial
Photography, Branding

Squeeze Films

moresqueeze.com
sam@moresqueeze.com
Video, Film, Marketing

Stage Director and Arts Educator

rlschultz41@aol.com
Public Art, Strategic Planning, Arts
Education

Sun City Oro Valley Arts and Crafts Festival

suncityorovalley.com
scovgiftshop@gmail.com
Festival, Visual Arts, Artisan Craft

Sun City Oro Valley Gift Shop

suncityorovalley.com
scovgiftshop@gmail.com
Gift Shop, Retail, Artisan Goods

Swoon Media

getswooned.com
info@getswooned.com
Marketing, Photography, Content
Creation

The Barefoot Bootique

thebarefootbootique.com
barefootbootique@gmail.com
Jewelry, Artisan Craft, Accessories

The Broken Circle Soap Co

brokencirclesoap.com
tahnee@brokencirclesoap.com
Body Products, Holistic Wellness,
Artisan Craft

The Gloo Factory

thegloofactory.com
info@thegloofactory.com
Printing, Graphic Design,
Community Engagement

The Lost Quail Co.

thelostquail.com
thelostquailco@gmail.com
Decor, Woodworking, Custom
Engraving

The Phabric Pharmacy

thephabricpharmacy@gmail.com
Decor, Textiles, Quilting

The Stolar System

nysnee@gmail.com
Marketing, Artist Management,
Clothing

The Tucson Tasty Show

thetastyshow.com
wesleysorce@thetastyshow.com
Marketing, Video, Podcasting

TLR Media

tlrmedia.com
[520] 955-2264
Photography, Video, Graphic
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Tony G DJ and Karaoke Services

tonygdj.com
tonyg@tonygdj.com
DJ Services, Event Entertainment,
Music

Tucson Balloon Lady

tucsonballoonlady.com
balloonlady@gmail.com
Decor, Event Services, Balloons

Tuning Fork

tuningforkprojects.com
team@tuningforkprojects.com
Arts Consulting, Marketing, Artist
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Virginia Cannon Presents

virginiacannonpresents.com
virginiacannon14@gmail.com
Artist Management, Talent
Booking, Performance Coaching

Wild Horizons Publishing, Inc. dba

Wild Horizons Productions
wildhorizons.com
tom@wildhorizons.com
Film, Photography, Educational
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Culinary Arts

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connect@poppedartisan.com
Purveyor, Vegan, Snack Food
Tucson, AZ

3 Margarita's Kitchen

maryjacqui29@gmail.com
Restaurant, Mexican, Sonoran
Street Food
Tucson, AZ

3sheets/cre8

instagram.com/3sheets.cre8
newtonfortdrum@aol.com
Purveyor, Dessert, Alcohol-Infused
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algustocoffeeco.com
brstrategies@yahoo.com
Food Truck, Barista, Espresso
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alafiacuisine@gmail.com
Restaurant, African, West African
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nick@arcadiameatmarket.com
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sions, Butchery Classes
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arizonamargaritarental.com
arizonamargaritarental@gmail.com
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Margarita Machine Rental
Tucson, AZ

Arizona Pasta Pasta

arizonapastapasta.com
arizonapastapasta@outlook.com
Purveyor, Vegan, Plant-Based Pasta
Mesa, AZ

Baja Cafe

bajacafetucson.com
bajacafetucson@gmail.com
Restaurant, Breakfast & Brunch,
Southwestern Cuisine
Tucson, AZ

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lovebaked@yahoo.com
Baker, Artisan Bread, Home Bakery
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aj@barnyardaz.com
Restaurant, American, Multi-Cuisine
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info@sedonabeerco.com
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blackjackinfusions@gmail.com
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bluenaadaasweets@gmail.com
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15203277577
Restaurant, American, Breakfast
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mh@borderlandspirits.com
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chris@cactuscorn.com
Food Truck, Snack Food,
Southwest Popcorn
Phoenix, AZ

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cactusjackpv@gmail.com
Purveyor, Vegan, Pickled Vegetables
Tucson, AZ

Caduceus Cellars

caduceus.org
{928} 639-9463
Vintner, Wine, Arizona Winery
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Caffe Torino

caffetorinotucson.com
caffetorinoaz@gmail.com
Restaurant, Casual Fine Dining,
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Tucson & Oro Valley, AZ

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callaghanvineyards.com
callaghanvineyards@gmail.com
Vintner, Wine, Arizona Winery
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carolinaschocolate.com
ltoon2@cox.net
Purveyor, Chocolatier, Southwest
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catalinacraftpizza.com
tonyjacobsen90@gmail.com
Restaurant, Pizza, Live Music Venue
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Chef Redd's Kitchen

chefreddskitchen@gmail.com
Personal Chef, Cajun / Creole,
Stuffed Turkey Legs
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Chef Rob Murillo

Personal Chef, International, Catering
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Cheri's Desert Harvest

cheridesertharvest.com
cheri@cheridesertharvest.com
Purveyor, Organic, Prickly Pear
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Tucson, AZ

Chocolate 66

chocolate66tucson@gmail.com
Purveyor, Chocolatier, Artisan
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chocolatree.com
chocolatreeoasis@gmail.com
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colmustardsfood.com
colmustardsfood@gmail.com
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communitygardensoftucson.org
admin@communitygardensoftuc-
son.org
Purveyor, Gardening, Food
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coronettucson.com/cafe
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Cafe, American, Craft Dining
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debbiejelder.com
info@debbiejelder.com
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cuteandclassykrispies@gmail.com
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dantesfireaz@gmail.com
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delcielotamal.com
delcielotucson@gmail.com
Restaurant, Vegan, Mexican
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Tucson, AZ

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desertharvesters@gmail.com
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dirtyttamarindo.com
dirtyttamarindo@gmail.com
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Tucson, AZ

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https://flavormadesimple.com
sales@flavormadesimple.com
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elcisnerestaurant.com
elcisnetucson@gmail.com
Restaurant, Fine Dining, Mexican
Cuisine
Tucson, AZ

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sales@elginwines.com
Winery, Distillery, Arizona-Made
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Elgin, AZ

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enchiladitosphxaz@gmail.com
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fiammewoodfired@gmail.com
Pizza, Italian Cuisine, Wood-Fired
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Fiesta Filipina Asian Express

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cessions
thelma.fiestafilipina@gmail.com
Catering, Filipino Cuisine, Asian
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Flowers and Bullets

flowersandbullets.com
flowers.bullets@gmail.com
Urban Farm, Community Garden,
Cultural / Heritage-Based Cuisine
Tucson, AZ

Fork & Fire Smokehouse + Taproom

forknfire.com
smokehouse@forknfire.com
Smokehouse, Barbecue, Food
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Oro Valley, AZ

Four 8 Wineworks

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Winery, Food Truck, Arizona-Made
Beverages
Cottonwood, AZ

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fruitshacksmoothies.com
fruitshack05@gmail.com
Smoothies & Juices, Superfoods,
Health & Wellness
Tucson, AZ

Ghinis French Caffe

ghiniscafe.com
chefghini@ghiniscafe.com
French Cuisine, Brunch, Cafe
Tucson, AZ

Go Go Joe's

gogojoesaz.com
gogojoesaz@gmail.com
Comfort Food, Catering, Barbecue
Phoenix, AZ

Good Eats Catering

goodeatscaterings@yahoo.com
Catering, Barbecue, Vegetarian
Bisbee, AZ

Gourmet Girls Gluten Free Bakery/Bistro

gourmetgirlsglutenfree.com
gourmet.girls@live.com
Bakery, Gluten-Free, Breakfast &
Brunch
Tucson, AZ

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healwithjuice.com
donna@healwithjuice.com
Cold-Pressed Juice, Plant-Based,
Organic
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High Desert Sauce Co

hdsauceco.com
info@hdsauceco.com
Hot Sauce, Artisan Food, Condiments
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Hot Flash Chile Products

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hotflashchileproducts@gmail.com
Condiments, Vegetarian, South-
west-Inspired Cuisine
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I & C Kitchen

facebook.com/iandckitchen
gonzalez614@aol.com
Fry Bread, Indigenous Cuisine,
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Jackrabbit Lounge

thejackrabbitlounge.com
info@thejackrabbitlounge.com
Lounge, Cocktails, Late Night
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jasp.prod@gmail.com
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deliciouskettlelicious.com
kettleliciousllc@outlook.com
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Kindelay

instagram.com/kindelayaz
[480] 435-4169
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lb-farm.com
landbminiranch@yahoo.com
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labotanagrill@gmail.com
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labufadoratucsonaz.com
lg@la-bufadora.com
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Tucson, AZ

Licks Ice Cream & Coffee

licksicecreamtucson.com
lickscatalina@gmail.com
Ice Cream, Coffee, Vegan
Tucson, AZ

Mafia Kitchen

instagram.com/mafia-kitchentucson
mafia.kitchen21@gmail.com
Italian Desserts, Food Truck,
Specialty Sweets
Tucson, AZ

Mane-Lan Kitchen DBA of Edwardsix, LLC

manelankitchen.com
edwardandi@icloud.com
Caribbean, Personal Chef, Catering
Phoenix, AZ

Maui Wowi of Tucson

mauiwowi.com/locations/us/
arizona/tucson/1793
scotty460@aol.com
Smoothies, Coffee & Tea, Beverages
Tucson, AZ

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hotelcongress.com/restaurants/
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Cottonwood, AZ

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milknkookies@gmail.com
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Tucson, AZ

Milly Moon Kombucha

millymoonkombucha.com
millymoonkombucha@gmail.com
Beverages - Kombucha, Vegan,
Local
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missiongarden.org
info@missiongarden.org
Event and Festival Production,
Heritage & Historic Preservation,
Education & Youth Arts
Tucson, AZ

Mouth of the South Salsa Co., LLC

getsumsalsa@gmail.com
Catering, Latin, Vegan
Tucson, AZ

Mr. K's Cookies

mrkscookies.com
carlo@mrkscookies.com
Catering, Baker
Scottsdale, AZ

Mujer Bonita Catering

mujerbonitacatering.com
mlculinary@gmail.com
Catering, Latin, Heritage
Phoenix, AZ

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tucsonpoblano.com
hanna@tucsonpoblano.com
Latin, Street Food, Heritage
Tucson, AZ

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ziparizona.com/pepper-sauce-kitchen.html
[520] 308-9350
American, Outdoor Dining, Destination Dining
Oracle, AZ



Phoenix Culinary Collective

phxculinarycollective.com
tim@phxculinary.co
Personal Chef, Food Truck, Vegan
Phoenix, AZ

Presta Coffee Roasters

prestacoffee.com
curtis@prestacoffee.com
Barista, Coffee Roaster, Fast Casual
Tucson, AZ

Prickly Paradise Elderberry

pricklyparadise.co
pricklyparadiseelderberry@gmail.com
Artisan Food, Wellness Products,
Local Ingredients
Tucson, AZ

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[520] 861-6112
Beverage Catering, Event Services,
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prooftucson.com
https://www.prooftucson.com/
contact
Pizza, Italian, Outdoor Dining
Tucson, AZ

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pupuseria.rositas.com
martinmtz64@gmail.com
Catering, Food Truck, Salvadoran
Cuisine
Tucson, AZ

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Prepared Meals, Asian
Tucson, AZ

Purple Devil Donuts

purpledevildonuts@gmail.com
Donuts / Specialty Sweets, Food
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Tucson, AZ

Purple Tree Organic Acai

purpletreetruck.com
purpletreetruck@gmail.com
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queenbvinyllcafe.com
Cafe, Wine Bar, Barista
Cottonwood, AZ

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rbbqtucson.com
robertamos1@hotmail.com
Barbecue, Catering, Personal Chef
Tucson, AZ

Real Fruit Raspados

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php?id=100093482331292
milynegrete@yahoo.com
Dessert - Shaved Ice, Latin, Street
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reformatucson.com
https://www.reformatucson.com/
contact
Mexican, Bar, Fine Dining
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Sakura Tea Circle

instagram.com/sakurateacircle
sakurateacircle@gmail.com
Cultural Group, Arts & Cultural
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Tucson, AZ

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sanxaviercoop.org
sxca@sanxaviercoop.org
Wild Harvest, Heritage, Catering
Tucson, AZ

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sbljerky.com
lsantana@sbljerky.com
Artisan Food, Specialty Sauces,
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Sedona Beer Company

sedonabeerco.com
info@sedonabeerco.com
Brewery, Brewpub, Sustainable
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Sedona, AZ

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shiftflg.com
info@shiftflg.com
Restaurant, American Shared
Plates, Contemporary Dining
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Simple Swirl

simpleswirl.com
simpleswirl@protonmail.com
Food Truck, Frozen Desserts,
Specialty Sweets
Phoenix, AZ

Sona Tortillas

sonatortillas.com
sonatortillas@gmail.com
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taniasongrande.com
rudylira33@me.com
Deli, Heritage, Plant-Based
Comfort Food
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Taqueria Alamos

taqueriaalamos.com
taqueriaalamos1@gmail.com
Food Truck, Cultural / Heritage-
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Tucson, AZ

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theblacktopgrill.com
theblacktopgrill@outlook.com
Food Truck, Culinary Experience,
Gourmet Street Food
Tucson, AZ

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info@thelocalcoopaz.com
Food Hub, Food Access, Commu-
nity Agriculture
McNeal, AZ

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theroastedchile.com
theroastedchileaz@gmail.com
Distribution, Vegan, Southwest
Flavors
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theroyalroomtucson@gmail.com
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The Shop Beer Co.

theshop.beer
info@theshop.beer
Brewery, Community Engagement,
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The Spice Jam

thespicejam.com
thespicejam2020ab@gmail.com
Baker, Artisan Food, Jam Maker
Tucson, AZ

The Toffee Merchant

thetoffeemerchant.com
info@thetoffeemerchant.com
Gourmet Food, Confections,
Specialty Foods
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thetastyshow.com
wesleysorce@thetastyshow.com
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Vail, AZ

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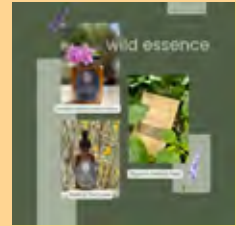
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youslydogtucson@gmail.com
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linktr.ee/yum_yum_pocha
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Performing Arts, Event Production,
Literary Arts

Kim Bussing

Atelle LLC
kim-bussing.com
kim@atelle.co
Author, Branding / Marketing,
Public Speaking

Kyle Chansley

(602) 486-5608
Author, Creative Writing, Public
Speaking

Wes Choc

weschoc.com
w@chocs.us
Author, Public Speaking, Memoir
Writing

Jan Cleere

Jan Cleere, Author
jancleere.com
jan@jancleere.com
Author, Public Speaking, History
Writing

Bridgette Crosby

True Nature Media
truenature.media and bridgette-crosby.com
bridgette@truenature.media
Author, Copywriting, Marketing

Lora Durance

Guard Tree Publishing
riverkscott.com
Author, Publisher, Storytelling

Dr. Amy Eisenberg

Center for World Indigenous
Studies, UA
universityofarizona.academia.edu/
amyeyenbergphd@gmail.com
Author, Ethnoecology, Scientific
Research

Nancy Elliott

Nancy Elliott, Author
nancyelliottmusic.com
(520) 705-5901
Author, Poet, Storytelling

Jonathan Frahm

jfracm.com
jfracmwriter@gmail.com
Journalism, Digital Storytelling,
Music Writing

Rita Goldner

Rita Goldner Books
ritagoldnerbooks.com
ritagoldner@msn.com
Digital Art, Drawing, Illustration

Álvaro Guevara Vázquez

Álvaro Guevara Vázquez,
Composer BMI
broadjam.com/alvaroguevara
broadjamcomposer@gmail.com
Classical, Piano, Musical Theater

Víctor Gutiérrez Gándara

amazon.com/author/vicggan
victor.gut.gan@gmail.com
Author, Editor, Creative Writing

Laila Halaby

lailahalaby.net
lailahalaby1@gmail.com
Author, Creative Writing, Public
Speaking

Angela Hill

Ash Hooke: Visual and Literary
Artist
sites.google.com/view/artist-ash-hooke
ashhooke@gmail.com
Drawing, Oil, Watercolor, Illustration

Doug Hocking

Buckland Abbey L.L.C. dba Doug
Hocking
doughocking.com
dhocking@centurylink.net
Author, History Writing, Cultural
Research



Ann Hoff

Ann Marie Hoff - Author, Artist,
Animal Communicator & Intuitive
Medium
annhoff.com
annmariehoff@aol.com
Author, Public Speaking, Spiritual
Writing, Hospice

James Keenan

American Society of Bookplate
Collectors & Designers
bookplate.org
info@bookplate.org
Visual Arts & Galleries, Literary
Arts, Museums

Donna Krutka

donna_krutka@yahoo.com
Author, Creative Writing, Fantasy Writing

Mavis Lamb

Mambo Productions/The Intuitive Story Wrangler
mamboproductions.com
[206] 755-2471
Author, Ghostwriting, Public Speaking

Lourdes Leiner

Lourdes Leiner Poetry
feralghoulfriend.com
lourdesleiner218@gmail.com
Author, Poet, Education

Michaele Lockhart

michaelelockhart.com
ml2son2@gmail.com
Author, Editor, Fiction Writing

Leigh Madrid

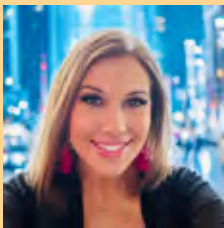
L.L. Madrid
llmadridwrites.com
llmadridwrites@gmail.com
Author, Creative Writing, Book Readings

Evan Mann

Arizona Book Publishing
arizonabookpublishing.com
arizonabookpublishing@gmail.com
Book publisher, Literary arts, Publishing services

Lisa McGraw

Wondering Willow Books
wonderingwillowbooks.com
lisa@wonderingwillowbooks.com
Author, Science Writing, Illustration

**Debbie Medina-Gach**

Southside Media
onebottleatatimebook.com
deb@senorrio.com
Author, Culinary Writing, Cocktails and Tequila

Carolyn Niethammer

cniethammer.com
carolyn@cnithammer.com
Author, Culinary Writing, Cultural Writing

Jane Peterson

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[520] 594-5671
Education, Literacy, Lifelong Learning

Elaine A. Powers

elaineapowers.com
iginspired@gmail.com
Author, Science Writing, Children's Literature

Germaine Shames

germainewrites.wixsite.com/buzz
germainewrites@gmail.com
Author, Playwriting / Scriptwriting, Librettist / Lyricist

Monica Surfaro Spigelman

tucsoncowgirl.com
monicassurfaro@gmail.com
Editor, Ghostwriting, Storytelling

Jennifer J. Stewart

jenniferjstewart.com
jennifer@jenniferjstewart.com
Author, Children's Literature, Public Speaking

Beth Surdut

bethsurdut.com
info@bethsurdut.com
Author, Storytelling, Environmental Education

Tucson Festival of Books

tucsonfestivalofbooks.org
executivedirector@tucsonfestivalofbooks.org
Literary Arts, Community Engagement, Festival

K L Thompson

K L Thompson Publishing
klthompsonpublishing.com
klthompsonwrites@gmail.com
Author, Creative Writing, Children's Literature

Rick Wamer

a3dimpressions.com
rick@a3dimpressions.com
Author, Publisher, Performing Arts

Thomas Wiewandt

Wild Horizons Publishing, Inc. dba Wild Horizons Productions
wildhorizons.com
tom@wildhorizons.com
Film, Photography, Educational Media

Robert Zucker

Southwest Alternatives Institute, Inc.
emol.org/sai
publisher@emol.org
Fiscal Sponsorship, Community Development, Social Justice Initiatives

Musicians and Bands

2 Dogs Quartet

twodogsmusic@yahoo.com
Bluegrass, Folk, Country

A-Song-For-You

andymcd5@gmail.com
Pop, Swing, Singer

Abby Walker

abby-walker.com
abbywalkermusic@gmail.com
Singer, Songwriter, Acoustic

Act 3

kathybudway@gmail.com
Folk

Ada Redd Austin

adaaustin@yahoo.com
Blues, Jazz, Singer

Adam Townsend

adamtownsendmusic.com
adamtownsendmusic@gmail.com
Soul, Top 40, Easy Listening

Adkins Anderson Duo

adkins-anderson.constantcontact-sites.com
adkinsandersonduo@gmail.com
Cover Band, Vocal, Oldies

After 7 Tucson

after7tucson.com
after7tucson@gmail.com
Rock, Pop, Country

AJ & The Black Jacks 21

ajbejarano51@gmail.com
Latin, Swing, Jazz

AJ Odneal

ajodneal@icloud.com
Folk, Songwriter, Jazz

Al Rodriguez Trio

alrodriguez2.epk.fm
alrod1@hotmail.com
Instrumental, Jazz

Alejandro Rowinsky

alejandro-rowinsky.com
amphy80@gmail.com
Classical, Latin, Guitar

**All in Achord**

gstorms1@comcast.net
Choral/Choir, A Capella, Barber-shop

Álvaro Guevara Vázquez, Composer BMI

broadjam.com/alvaroguevara
broadjamcomposer@gmail.com
Classical, Piano, Musical Theater

Amber Norgaard

ambernorgaard.com
office@ambernorgaard.com
Singer, Songwriter

Andrea Hoag

andreaHoag.com
andrea@andreaHoag.com
Fiddling, Swedish, Jazz

Angel Diamond & the Gemtones

angeldiamondandthegemtones.com
pluko70@gmail.com
Blues, Soul, Rock

Annie Anna

annieannamusic.com
annieannamusic@gmail.com
Folk, Rock, Songwriter

Apocalypso

pankids.com
cy@pankids.com
Caribbean, Instrumental

Ariel Miranda

arielmirandamusic.com
arielmirandamusic@gmail.com
Pop, Singer, Songwriter

Arizona Balalaika Orchestra

azbalalaika.org
miagay7@icloud.com
Folk Music, Cultural Heritage, Slavic

Arizona Repertory Singers

arsingers.org
info@arsingers.org
Music, Performing Arts, Choral Ensemble

Arizona Women's Chorus

azwomenschorus.org
terriel@azwomenschorus.org
Choral/Choir

Asphalt Astronaut

asphaltastronaut.com
asphaltastronautmusic@gmail.com
Folk, Singer, Songwriter

Aurelia Anne Cohen

aureliacohen.com
aureliaannecohen@gmail.com
Folk, Country, Songwriter

Austin B. Sweeney

austinbsweeney.com
bestcoastbooking@gmail.com
Americana, Country

Autumn Cooper Music

autumncooperartist@gmail.com
Americana, Folk, Country

Aztral Folk

aztralfolk.com
aztralfolk@gmail.com
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robertfrankot@msn.com
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Baba Marimba

babamarimba.com
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World Music, Dance Band, Afrobeat

Bad Cactus Brass Band

badcactusbrass.com
benjiemesser@gmail.com
Funk, Jazz, New Orleans

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badnewsbluesband.com
mikeblommer@cox.net
Blues, R & B, Soul

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bajacaravanband.com
bajacaravanband@gmail.com
Pop, Rock, Reggae



Barnaby and the Butcher

barnabyandthebutcher.com
andrea@kindlingfirespromotions.com
Alt Country, Americana, Roots Rock

Ben Tully

linktr.ee/bentullymusic
bentully31@gmail.com
Songwriter, Oldies, Guitar

Benjie Messer

benjiemesser.com
benjiemesser@gmail.com
Folk, Singer, Songwriter

Bill Ganz

bganz1@comcast.net
Country, Guitar, Oldies

Black Cat Bones

facebook.com/blackcatbonestucson
jefftucson@aol.com
Blues, Rock

Blondie All Over

linktr.ee/blondieallover
blondieallover@gmail.com
Pop, Rock, Dance Band

Blue Prairie Dogs

danovedmusic.com
cactusdan14@gmail.com
Country Rock, Western

Bo Shimmin, Tenor

boshimmin123@gmail.com
Opera, Classical, Singer

Bobbo Byrnes

bobbobyynes.com
Americana, Folk, Rock

Bobby Freeman

bobbyfreeman88.com
bobbyfreeman88@yahoo.com
Piano



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Folk, Instrumental, Traditional

Bouncing Czechs Band

bouncingczechs.homestead.com
jprokop@comcast.net
Dance Band, Instrumental, German

Brett Dooley

brettdooley.com
Country, Folk, Songwriter

Brian Berggoetz

brianberggoetz.com
brianberggoetzmusic@gmail.com
Singer, Songwriter

Brian Gregor

briangreg.wix.com/brian-gregor
briangreg@outlook.com
Easy Listening, Singer, Songwriter

Brian Luce

brianluce.com
brian@brianluce.com
Classical, Contemporary, Instrumental

Bryan Dean Trio

bryandeantrio.com
bryandeantrio@aol.com
Blues, R&B, Rock

Bunny Kirby

bunnykirbymusic.com
bunnykirbysings@gmail.com
Folk, Americana

Cactus Craig

cactuscraig.com
craiggreen6@gmail.com
Americana, Rock, Soul

Caila Elle

performanceartpunk.com/home
performanceartpunk@gmail.com
Electronic, Pop, Electropunk

Cameron Hood & Lisa Gollenberg

cameronandlisa.com
hood@ryanhood.com
Acoustic, Pop, Americana

Carlos Arzate

arzatemusica.com
carlosandroid@gmail.com
Folk, Soul, Rock

Carmina Robles

carminaro85@gmail.com
Folk

Carol Markstrom

carolmarkstrommusic.com
carol@carolmarkstrommusic.com
Folk, Singer, Songwriter

Carol Pacey & the Honey Shakers

carolpaceyandthehoneyshakers.com
info@carolpaceyandthehoneyshakers.com
Rock, Singer, Songwriter

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Performance and Teaching
bocalsoup.com
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catmountain.us
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Folk, Rock, Songwriter

Chalako the Band

chalakotheband.com
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Dance Band, Latin, Pop

Charles Lolmaugh

reverberation.com/keilacharles
charleslolmaugh@gmail.com
Songwriter, Easy Listening, Country

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Steel Drum

Chris Kern

kernchris80@gmail.com
Country, Folk, Rock"

Chris Logan, The Border Town Kid

chrisloganfromtheborder@gmail.com
Country, Folk, Latin

Christie Huff

christiehuff.com
christiehuffmusicbooking@gmail.com
Country, Pop, Songwriter

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craiggreen6@gmail.com
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Cynthia Hilts

cynthiahilts.com
bcp@cynthiahilts.com
Piano

Damon McLaughlin

redstarrebellion@gmail.com
Guitar, Rock, Songwriter

Dan Levenson and The Cat Mountain Rounders

clawdan.com
clawdan1@gmail.com
Folk, Appalachian Old-Time

Dan McCorison

danmccorison.com
danmccorison@yahoo.com
Folk, Americana

Dash Pocket

reverbnation.com/dashpocket
diffin11@gmail.com
Folk, Americana

David Fields

davidallanfields@gmail.com
Oldies, Rock

David Rose - Guitarist

davidroseguitar.com
dave@davidroseguitar.com
Guitar, Instrumental

Daytrails

daytrailsband.com
daytrailsband@gmail.com
Pop, Rock

DC and Company

kade06@msn.com
Dance Band, Originals, All Decades

Denise Hennington

denisehennington@yahoo.com
Singer, Songwriter, Swing

Denise Lane

dlcarves@gmail.com
Country, Folk, Songwriter



Derdog

youtube.com/@derdogmusic
derdog.music@gmail.com
Contemporary, Rock, Acoustic

Desert Drummer

reverbnation.com/carlossolorzano
desert.drumming@gmail.com
Percussion, World, Rhythm

Desert Music Project

desertmusicproject.com
contact@desertmusicproject.com
Easy Listening, Instrumental, Rock

Desert Myth

desertmyth.com
desertmythmusic@gmail.com
Singer, Songwriter, Americana

Desert Polka Party

desertpolkaparty.com
benjiemesser@gmail.com
Jazz, Waltz, German

Desert Treasure

joeyddrummer@gmail.com
Blues, R & B, Rock

Desert Undertones

desertundertones.com
desertundertones@gmail.com
Pop, Rock, Surf

Desert Winds Steel Orchestra

steelsoundarizona.com
jerrylopatin@hotmail.com
Caribbean, Instrumental, Orchestra

Doc Rolland & Fiddle-ology

thefreshapplesband.com
peterrolland@gmail.com
Bluegrass, Americana, Folk

Don Armstrong and the Whiskey-palians

armstrong.dv@gmail.com
Folk, Americana, Songwriter

Dropped By Birds

carnivaleros.com
gmack@carnivaleros.com
Dance Band, Songwriter, Americana

Duane Reilley

Blues, Jazz, Soul

Duo Bellissimo

sandyschwoebel.com
duobellissimo@gmail.com
Chamber Music, Classical, Wedding

EarthPicks of Cochise County

earthpicks@gmail.com
Blues, Folk, Western

Eduardo Costa

guitarimpact.com
guitarimpact@gmail.com
Spanish, Classical, Latin, Jazz, Contemporary Guitar

Égide Duo

egideduo.com
gardnerclarinets@gmail.com
Chamber Music, Classical, Instrumental

El Surco

elsurcotucson.com/el-surco
max.lar.guit@gmail.com
Folk, Latin, Singer

Elisabeth Geel

elisabethgeel.com
elisabethgeel@gmail.com
Jazz, Singer, Songwriter

Elizabeth Sullivan

elizabethsullivanmusic.com
elizabethsullivanmusic@gmail.com
Music Educator, Singer, Songwriter

Engel Indo

engelindomusic@gmail.com
Easy Listening, Latin, Pop

Entropy Low

jesseroberstaz82@gmail.com
Folk, Americana, Rock, Blues

Eric Charles

soulessential.dance/epk
eric.charles.music@gmail.com
Blues, Guitar, R & B

Eric Douglas

ericdouglasmusic.com
ericdouglas17@gmail.com
Blues, Folk, Songwriter

Eric Ferris

soulessential.dance/epk
amyvirlnelson1@gmail.com
R & B, Singer, Soul

Eric Ramsey

ericramsey.net
erramz@gmail.com
Blues, Folk, Songwriter

Eric Schaffer

theothertroublemakers.com
Folk, Country, Songwriter

Erika D Segura

erikadsegura.com
erikadsegura@gmail.com
Jazz, Soul, Pop

Erika May

erikamaymusic.com
erikamay@erikamaymusic.com
Jazz, Singer, Classical

Evan Dain

evandain@yahoo.com
Bluegrass, Dance Band, Jazz

Febbo Fuentes

markanthonyfebbo.com
markanthonyf@gmail.com
Americana, Songwriter

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Folk, Harmony, Singer

Freddy Parish

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freddyparish@gmail.com
Bluegrass, Country, Folk

FRESH APPLES

thefreshapplesband.com
thefreshapplesband@gmail.com
Bluegrass, Folk, Country

Funky Bonz Saguaville Dust

funkybonz.com
kortb@yahoo.com
Funk, Guitar, Rock

Gabriel Ayala

gabrielayala.com
ayalaguitarist@gmail.com
Classical, Jazz, Latin

Gabrielle Pietrangelo

gabriellepietrangelo.com
gabriellepietrangelo@gmail.com
Folk, Spiritual, Songwriter

Garrett James and The Wanderers

garrettjamesmusic.com
garrettjamesguitar@gmail.com
Blues, Oldies, Rock

Gary Rodriguez

reverbnation.com/garyerodriguez
garyrodriguezguitar@gmail.com
Folk, Guitar, Songwriter

GertieNtheT.O.Boyz - Tohono

O'odham Waila Music
gertieswailamusic.com
gertientheboyz@gmail.com
Big Band, Dance Band, Waila

Gigi & The GLOW

gigianttheglow.com
gigianttheglow@gmail.com
Dance Band, Jazz, Rock

Good Trouble

goodtroubletucson.com
bergs3232@gmail.com
Dance Band, R & B, Rock

Gordon Fuller

fullergh@gmail.com
Folk, Protest Songs, Singer-Songwriter

Grams & Krieger

gramsandkrieger.com
grams.steve@gmail.com
Americana, Roots Rock

Grand Dorado

granddorado.com
jeremy.gilliam@yahoo.com
Country, Rock, Songwriter

Greg LaCosse

greglacossemusic.com
greglacossemusic@gmail.com
Blues, Folk, Irish

GRL PWR

brockpro.org/shows
lynzee@brockpro.org
Cover Band, Rock

Groovy Grove Music School

elidb173@gmail.com
Folk, Jazz, Rock

Grupo Arizona

grupoarizonamusic@gmail.com
Latin, Jazz, Chamber Music

Grupo Estilo

pattyduarte2012@hotmail.com
Latin, Pop, Rock, Variety

Grupo Tradiciones

jacoboandes@gmail.com
Folk, Latin, World

Harpist Dr. Christine Vivona

christinevivona.com
chrisvivona@comcast.net
Classical, Instrumental, Jazz

Harpist Rebecca Foreman

rebeccaforeman.com
forharp@earthlink.net
Harp, Classical, Pop

Harpist Vanessa Myers

harpimages.com
harpimages@comcast.net
Easy Listening, Jazz, Pop

Hatpin Duo

mmccammondmusic.com/hatpin-duo
hatpinduo@gmail.com
Contemporary, Folk, Pop

Heart of the Matter Music

heartofthematterschoolofmusic.com
heartofthemattermusic@gmail.com
Music Education

Heather Lil' Mama Hardy

heatherlilmamahardy.com
heatherlilmamahardy@yahoo.com
Blues, Jazz

Henry Canitz

hcanitz@msn.com
Big Band, Dance Band, Jazz

Holly R Jebb

hollyrjebbmusic@yahoo.com
Americana, Alt-Country, Songwriter

HumanJones Review

bryanfishkind@gmail.com
Folk, Singer, Songwriter

Igor Jazz Cowboy

igorsjazzcowboys.com
igorsjazzcowboys@yahoo.com
Folk, New Orleans, Western Swing

Ivan Harshman

ivanharshman.com
ivanharshman@yahoo.com
Rock, Singer, Songwriter

J P and the RIXX

polley.john@yahoo.com
Country, R & B, Southern Rock

Jacob Acosta

jacobacostamusic.com
jacobacostamusic@gmail.com
Americana, Pop, Latin

Jacob Reinartz

linktr.ee/jacobreinartz
Americana, Pop, Songwriter

Jácome Flamenco

jacomeflamenco.com
chris@chrisburtonjacome.com
Flamenco

Jake Williams

jakewilliamsguitar.com
jakewilliams3@gmail.com
Guitar, Instrumental, Rock

Jaliya World Contemporary Music

jaliyaworldmusic.com
elou73@gmail.com
Contemporary, Drumming, Instrumental

Jam Pak Band

jampak.org
jampakband@gmail.com
Performing Arts, Bluegrass, Youth

Jamie & Mark

jamiesgang.com
azmbv@cox.net
Country, Folk, Rock

Jamie O'Brien

launies.com
jamieobrienmusic@gmail.com
Irish, Singer, Hawaiian

Jamie's Gang

jamiesgang.com
mbugaz@cox.net
Blues, Country, Rock

JC & Laney

jcandlaney.com
jcandlaney@gmail.com
Folk, Rock, Songwriter

Jeff Bloomberg and Church Avenue

jeffrybloomberg@gmail.com
Country, Folk, Songwriter

Jeff Carlson

jeffcarlsonband.com
ebonstanley1@yahoo.com
Rock, Singer

Jeff Senour and CTS

ctsmusic.com
jetcentral@msn.com
Rock, Country, Songwriter

Jeordie

jeordie.com
music.jeordie@gmail.com
Folk Rock, Songwriter, Americana

Jesus Jacquez

jesusjacquezmusic@gmail.com
Conductor

Jimmy and the Jitterbugs

aemstucson@hotmail.com
Dance Band, Jazz, Swing

Joe Bourne

joebourne.com
joebourne@comcast.net
Jazz, Pop, Singer

Joe Bucci

[520] 877-3531
Bluegrass, Country, Oldies

Joe Weinberg

m.youtube.com/@jwguitar
joeweinbergguitar@gmail.com
Guitar, Jazz

John Coinman

johncoinman.com
johncoinman@gmail.com
Singer, Songwriter, Americana

John Hughes Music LLC

jmhsaxman@hotmail.com
Instrumental, Jazz, R & B

John Mitchell & Friends

johnmitchellkeys.com
johnmitchellkeys@gmail.com
Jazz, Piano, Fusion

John Monfore Music

[520] 780-8374
Jazz, Pianist, Songwriter

Johnnie and The Rumlbers

jrumblers.com
jrumblers@aol.com
Classic Rock, 1950s, Cover Band

Joseph Gently

heathencall.com/joseph-gently
gjoey.brown@gmail.com
Folk, Singer, Songwriter

Joshua McCormack

joshuamccormack.com
josh@joshuamccormack.com
Rock, Singer, Songwriter

Josler Tudisco

joslertudisco.com
Folk, Songwriter, Pianist

JT Sheets

jtsheetsmusic.com
jtsheetsmusic1@gmail.com
Country, Folk, Songwriter

Judy Parsons - Talent & Entertainment Agent

safarijazz3@gmail.com
Variety, Dance Band, Jazz

K.C. Price

youtube.com/@kc_price
crashodst2@gmail.com
Singer, Songwriter, Americana

Kayla Von der Heide

kaylavonderheidemusic@gmail.com
Easy Listening, Folk, Guitar

Keith Perrillo

reverbnation.com/keithperrillo9
keithp1759@gmail.com
Folk Rock

Kelsea Robin

kelsearobin.com
kelsea2013@gmail.com
Orchestral Pop, Indie, Songwriter

Kevin Pakulis and his Band

facebook.com/kevinpakulisofficial
kevinpakulis4@gmail.com
Folk, Rock, Songwriter

Kids Unlimited

kustars.com
kidsunlimitedbookings@gmail.com
Choral/Choir, Performing Arts,
Education & Youth Arts

Klezmerkaba

klezmerkaba@cox.net
Folk, Klezmer

Koda Krause

kodakrauseguitar@gmail.com
Blues, Folk, Songwriter

KT Klassics

ktklassics.com
kevin@ktklassics.com
Guitar, Rock, Singer

La Cerca

lacerca.net
lacercaband@gmail.com
Guitar, Pop, Rock

La Fibra

santapachita@gmail.com
Guitar, Latin, Variety

La Fibra Impasible

miguelgomezreyes@hotmail.com
Latin

Lance Swaim

lancecswaim@gmail.com
Folk, Songwriter, Jazz

Lara Ruggles

lararuggles.com
lararugglesmusic@gmail.com
Electronic, Folk, Jazz

Las Azaleas

lasazaleasmusic.com
info@lasazaleasmusic.com
Mariachi

Latin Guitars - Guitarras Latinas

latinguitars-az.com
ken@latinguitars-az.com
Latin, Guitar, Pop

Laura Jean Band

laurajeand.com
info@laurajeand.com
Country, Folk, Americana

Legion of Mario

legionofmario.com
Rock, Soul, R&B

Leila Lopez

leilalopezsongs.com
Guitar, Singer, Songwriter

Lew Lepley

lewlepley.com
lewlepley@gmail.com
Big Band, Country, Jazz, Rock

Linda Louise Reed

lindaloureed@gmail.com
Folk, Country, Blues

Lisa G, Singer and Entertainer

singrun39@gmail.com
Big Band, Jazz, Singer

Lisa Mitts

lisamittsmusic.com
lisa@lisamittsmusic.com
Americana, Indie, Singer-Song-
writer, Keyboard

Little House of Funk

conniebrannockband.com
conniebrannock@gmail.com
Funk, Blues, R&B, Cover Band

Little Wing

littlewingtucson@gmail.com
Folk Rock, Easy Listening, Singer

Littlest Big Band

littlestbigband.com
littlestbb@gmail.com
Big Band, Rock, Swing

Liz & Pete's Sparrows

sparrowsmusic.com
booking@lizandpetemusic.com
Folk, Guitar, Americana

Lizzie

linktr.ee/lizziesmusics
lizziesmusics@gmail.com
Folk

Lost Hombres

nuclearkathy@hotmail.com
Folk, Americana

Lost in the Sixties

chuckhaz@comcast.net
Oldies, Rock

Lucy Hrin and The Grackles

lucyhrin@gmail.com
Dance Band, Classic Rock, Soul

LuftBassoons

luftbassoons.weebly.com
luftbassoons@gmail.com
Chamber Music, Classical, Bassoon

Luis Martinez

luismartinezguitar.com
luismartinezguitar@gmail.com
Instrumental, Latin, R & B

Lydian Osman

lydianosman.bandcamp.com
Indie Rock, Alternative, Reggae

Mack Hooligan

reverbnation.com/mackhooligan
mmagoo@mac.com
Blues, Folk, Rock

**Mamma Coal Solo & Band**

mammacoal.com
mammacoal@gmail.com
Bluegrass, Country, Songwriter

Manny Herrera - Singer/ Entertainer

entertainmentbymannyherrera.com
herrera.manny@yahoo.com
Big Band, Oldies, Rock, Singer

Mariachi Agave de Tucson

facebook.com/mariachisnearme
mariachiagavedetucson@gmail.com
Mariachi

Mariachi Alas de Phoenix

mariachiaz.com
reservations@mariachiaz.com
Mariachi, Latin, Cultural Heritage

Mariachi Alma Tucsonense

alma.tucsonense@gmail.com
Mariachi

Mariachi and Baile Folklorico Society

mariachifolkloricosociety.org
mbfs@lafrontera.org
Cultural Traditions, Dance, Youth
Theatre

Mariachi Aztlán de Pueblo High School

mariachiaztlandepueblohs.com
john.contreras@tusdl.org
Mariachi, Education & Youth Arts,
Performance

Mariachi Innovación

mariachi.innovacion@gmail.com
Mariachi

Mariachi Los Changuitos Feos

changuitos.org
mariachi.loschanguitosfeos@
gmail.com
Mariachi, Education & Youth Arts,
Performance

Mariachi Luz de Luna

mariachiluzdeluna.com
rm.luzdeluna@gmail.com
Mariachi, Youth, Folk

Mariachi Oro de Arizona

azfolklorico.com
music@azfolklorico.com
Mariachi

Mariachi Panteras de Oro (Maryvale High School)

mdominguez@phoenixunion.org
Mariachi, Education & Youth Arts,
Performance

Mariachi Pasion

mariachipasion.com
bmatwick@gmail.com
Mariachi

Mariachi Penumbra

{520} 313-9089
Mariachi

Mariachi Sones Del Desierto (Desert Sounds)

desertsounds.org
info@desertsounds.org
Mariachi, Education & Youth Arts,
Performance

Mark Berenson

markberensonmusic.com
maverick.guitar@me.com
Folk, Blues, Songwriter

Mark Turner

markturnermusic.weebly.com
banjo5655@gmail.com
Folk, Country, Jazz

Martin Carl

martincarl@outlook.com
Americana, Folk, Songwriter

Marty Flashman

m_flashman@yahoo.com
Folk, Blues, Songwriter

Marty Province

mrphfl@gmail.com
Folk, Gospel, Storytelling

Matt Mitchell

mattmitchellguitar.com
matt@mattmitchellguitar.com
Classical, Guitar, Jazz

McCann Sisters Violin & Bass Duo

mccannsisters3@gmail.com
Instrumental, Oldies, Classics

Melody Louise Kolb

melodylouise@yahoo.com
Pop, Jazz, Songwriter

Mesquite Shade Band

philipfranchine.com
philipfranchine@gmail.com
Oldies, Pop, Rock

Metropolis Man & Metro Shows

linktr.ee/metropolisman
alexmetropolisofficial@gmail.com
Americana, Soul, Blues

Michael Anderson

reverbnation.com/bluesman-
mikethebluesreviewband
thebluesreviewband@cox.net
Blues, R & B, Soul

Midnight Classics Band

midnightclassicsband@gmail.com
Blues, Country, Rock

Miguel Melgoza (MiggyMel)

miguelmelgoza.com
melgoza.miguel@gmail.com
Pop, Soul

Mike Goodrick

mikegoodrick.com
info@mikegoodrick.com
Rock, Singer, Emo

Minute 2 Minute

m2mtucson.com
m2mtucson@gmail.com
Folk, World, Live Music

Mitzi Cowell

mitzicowell.com
mcowell13@gmail.com
Folk

Mr. Boogie Woogie

mrboogiewoogie.com
mrboogiewoogieaz@gmail.com
Blues, Piano, Boogie Woogie

Ms. Stevie Woods & Co.

facebook.com/mssteviewoods
steviewoods824@gmail.com
Jazz

mudwerks

mudwerks.bandcamp.com
mudwerks@gmail.com
Electronic, Guitar, Rock

Music on the Road

sobrien@arizona.edu
Country, Folk, Oldies

Music On The Road - Digital Accordion Duets

sobrien@ag.arizona.edu
Folk, Oldies, Instrumental

Mustang Corners

reverbnation.com/
mustangcorners
timdaldrup2@gmail.com
Folk, Rock, Songwriter

My Other You

myotheryouofficial@gmail.com
Singer, Songwriter, Indie

Naim Amor

naimamor.net
naim.amor@gmail.com
Jazz, Pop, Instrumental

Nancy Elliott

nancyelliottmusic.com
nancyelliottmusic@gmail.com
Folk, Songwriter, Americana



Our Gallery is at La Encantada
2905 E. Skyline Drive; Suite 141
Tucson, AZ 85718 (On the first level)
(520) 437-7820

We Invite you to join our 350-plus members:

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Nancy McCallion

nancymccallion.com
nancy@nancymccallion.com
Folk, Singer, Songwriter

Nathaniel Burnside & Palo Seco

nathanielburnside.com
nathanielburnside@yahoo.com
Guitar, Instrumental, Flamenco

Nathaniel Zoret-Russell

zoret.nathan@gmail.com
Blues, Folk, Rock

Neil McCallion

neilmccallion.com
neilmccallion2@gmail.com
Guitar, Singer, Songwriter

Nico Aldridge

bandmix.com/nicomusic
nicoaldrige57@gmail.com
Guitar, Instrumental, Songwriter

NOLAtude

noethenbutjazz.com
mark@noethenbutjazz.com
Blues, Jazz, Pop

Nossa Bossa Nova

nossabossanova.com
nossabossanova@gmail.com
Jazz, Latin, World

Ocotillo Rain

ocotillorain.com
h.d.tours@q.com
Bluegrass, Country, Pop

Of Kith & Kin

brendanhoconnor@gmail.com
Bluegrass, Folk, Songwriter

Old Pueblo Brass Band

oldpueblobrassband.org
oldpueblobrassband@gmail.com
Performing Arts, Cultural Group,
Music Ensemble

Oms

warren-thomas-fenzi.pixpa.com
wtfenzi@gmail.com
Electronic, Experimental, Indie

One Man Banjo Band

khevinbarnes.com
kevinbarnes62950@aol.com
Folk, Bluegrass, Oldies

OnesAll Band

onesallband.com
info@onesallband.com
Dance Band, Funk, Rock

Orchadia

orchadiaband.com
business@orchadiaband.com
Other

Oro Valley Jazz Band

tonycyrus207@gmail.com
Big Band, Jazz, Swing

Oscar Fuentes

fuentesoscar@hotmail.com
Latin, Rock, Americana

Outer Horizon

psukaye@gmail.com
Jazz, Big Band

Outside the Line

outsidethelinemusic.com
outsidethelinemusic@gmail.com
Dance Band, Soul, Top 40

Pablo & The Pour Decisions

ptrmusic1@gmail.com
Pop, Americana, Indie

Paradise Winds Reed Quintet

paradisewinds.org
theparadisewinds@gmail.com
Chamber Music, Classical,
Instrumental

Patrick Kelly

patrick.kelly@cox.net
Guitar, Songwriter

Paul Martin

paujomar.com
paujomar@icloud.com
Folk, Singer/Songwriter, Pop

Paul Opocensky Project

poproject.co
contact@poproject.co
Folk, Rock, Songwriter

Payton Goldston

linktr.ee/paytonrefocus
paytonrefocuspodcast@gmail.com
Gospel, Soul, Songwriter

Pelican Museum

pelicanmuseum.com/epk
pelicanmuseummusic@gmail.com
Americana

People Who Could Fly

peoplewhocouldfly.com
info@peoplewhocouldfly.com
Dance Band, Pop, Top 40

Permafrost Road Bluegrass Band

kenbrown44444@gmail.com
Bluegrass

Pete Sun

petesundt@gmail.com
Folk, Oldies, Singer

Peter Biedermann

biedermannmusic.com
meowpb@aol.com
Guitar, Instrumental, Fingerstyle

Peter McLaughlin

petermclaughlin.info
petersmclaughlin@gmail.com
Bluegrass, Folk, Songwriter

Pick & Holler

pickandholler.com
pickandholler@gmail.com
Bluegrass, Folk, Appalachian
Old-Time

Pineross

pineross.com
pineross@gmail.com
Folk, Experimental, Songwriter

Pluckaroo

Folk, Guitar, Songwriter

Pop Up Rebellion

popuprebellion.com
Pop, Rock

Porch Rockers

123stp@gmail.com
Blues

PretendAZ, Tribute to the Pretenders

pretendaz.com
Rock

Púca and the Wild Ones

clairezu247@gmail.com
Folk, Instrumental, Irish

Quantum Nites

quantumnites@gmail.com
Jazz

Rachael Snyder

rachaelsnydermusic.com
rachaelesnydermusic@gmail.com
Folk, Country, Songwriter

Rae.L

linktr.ee/raemakesmusic
Pop, Singer, Songwriter

Raggedy Edge

raggedyedgemusic.com
raggedyedgemusic@gmail.com
Contemporary, Rock, Songwriter

Rave Review

barriobarri@gmail.com
Folk, Instrumental, Swing

Ray Anthony Music

rayanthonymusic.com
preciado.ray@gmail.com
Easy Listening, Guitar, Instrumental

Retro Swing 7

facebook.com/people/retro-swing-7/61577755327434
jnoff73@gmail.com
Jazz, Singer, Swing

Rezonators Brass Band

danielbrowntuba@gmail.com
Funk, Jazz, New Orleans

Ric Volante & Vicky Smith

ricandvic.com
twsmith@gmail.com
Bluegrass, Irish, Americana

Rich Rodriguez

tucsonrichrod.com
azrichrod@gmail.com
Guitar, Pop, Rock

Rick Bolash

rickbolash@gmail.com
Piano, Jazz

Rising Sun Daughter

risingsundaughter.com
gracerolland@gmail.com
Folk, Singer, Songwriter

**RISO**

risoband.com
risoband@gmail.com
Folk, Singer, Songwriter

Rob Wanczyk

robwtaz@aol.com
Classic Rock, Dance Band, Country

Robert Bauer

rpbauer.com
bob@rpbauer.com
Instrumental, Jazz

Robert Resetar

resetar.com
robert@resetar.com
Easy Listening, Jazz, Pianist

Robert Streit

robertgstreit@gmail.com
Songwriter, Americana, Art Therapy

Rock & Roll Revival

rockandrollrevival520@gmail.com
Classic Rock, Dance Band, Cover
Band

Ron Pandy

ronpandy.com
ronpandy@gmail.com
Folk, Songwriter, Youth

Roth Dlux

instagram.com/roth_dlux
daniel.roth@m3eng.com
Folk, Funk, Pop

Roxanna Baker

roxannabaker@yahoo.com
Accordion, Traditional, Oldies

Run Boy Run

runboyrunband.com
band@runboyrunband.com
Bluegrass, Country, Folk

Ruta Verbena

facebook.com/rutaverbenamusic
flautistameli@gmail.com
Latin

Ryan David Green

ryandavidgreen.com
ryan@ryandavidgreen.com
Folk, Instrumental, Songwriter

Ryan David Orr

ryandavidorr.com
contact@ryandavidorr.com
Americana, Folk

Sabra Faulk

sabrafaulk.com
sabra@sabrafaulk.com
Americana, Country, Songwriter

SaddleBrooke Garage Band

vanbrocklinj@msn.com
Big Band, Instrumental, Swing

SaddleBrooke Winds and Strings

saddlebrookewindsandstrings.org
Classical, Contemporary, Orchestra

Safety Orange

reverbnation.com/rpk/814
info@safetyorange.com
Rock, Reggae, Tribute Band

Sagrario Ventura

sagrarioventura13@gmail.com
Latin, Pop, Songwriter

Sandoli Trio

sandyschwoebel.com
sandyschwoebel@aol.com
Chamber Music, Classical, Instrumental

**Sandy Hathaway**

sandyhathaway.com
hathaway_music@yahoo.com
Songwriter, Folk, Easy Listening

Santa Pachita

santapachita@gmail.com
Latin, Reggae, Ska

School of Rock Tucson House Band

schoolofrock.com/locations/tucson
jsacia@schoolofrock.com
Guitar, Rock

Scott Robb

scottrobbsmusic.com
srobbsmusic@gmail.com
Country, Folk, Americana

Sean Lewis Music

seanlewismusic.com
Guitar, Singer, Songwriter

Secret Harbor

secretharbormusic.com
secretharbormusic@gmail.com
Folk, Songwriter, Nautical

Sedona Crossing

pamnelson.com
partibey1@gmail.com
Country, Rock, Songwriter

Seneca Drive

wbdevinney@gmail.com
Country, Easy Listening, Oldies

Serena Nicolle Band - Acoustic Duet

serenanicollemusic.com
serenanicollemusic@gmail.com
Pop, Jazz

Seven Strings

daanlaut@gmail.com
Guitar, R & B, Folk

Shaun Harris

linktr.ee/shaunharrisraps
shaunharrisraps@gmail.com
Hip-Hop, Spoken Word, Rap

Sheryl Ann Mckinley

sheryl.a.mckinley@gmail.com
Jazz, Pop, Swing

Sheilyn Jaymes & D'HaRT

sheilynjaymes.com
sheilynjaymesmusic@yahoo.com
Country, Easy Listening, Oldies

Ship Happens

brockpro.org/shows
lynzee@brockpro.org
Cover Band, Soft Rock, 1970s

Shirley OBrien

sobrien@arizona.edu
Country, Folk, Oldies

Silk and Soul Band

fortheluvvamusica@gmail.com
Jazz, Pop, R & B

Skyline Flutes

skylineflutes@gmail.com
Classical, Instrumental, Chamber Music

Slim Edelman

sedelmannk@outlook.com
Folk, Bluegrass, Jazz

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wraymp3@gmail.com
Dance Band, Pop, Rock

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sophiarankin@sophiarankin.com
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SoSco Duo

soscoduo.com
alex-laura@soscoduo.com
Classical, Contemporary, Acoustic

Soul Essential

soulessential.dance
soulessential.music@gmail.com
Funk, R & B, Soul

Soul Hive

christianmohermd@gmail.com
Rock, Desert

Southbound Pilot

southboundpilot.com
southboundpilot@gmail.com
Folk, Americana, Blues

Southern Arizona Flute Orchestra

tucsonfluteclub.org
tucsonfluteclub@gmail.com
Chamber Music, Classical, Instrumental

Southern Arizona Symphony Orchestra

sasomusic.org
info@sasomusic.org
Conductor, Orchestra, Symphony

Split Decision

jfrost16@cox.net
Classic Rock, Dance Band, Pop

Strike Your Fancy!

youtu.be/z7lyh1awnek
reinskmr@gmail.com
Irish

Sue Schnitzer

sueschnitzermusic.com
musicbysue@gmail.com
Folk, Songwriter

Suerte Musical

suertemusical.com
bsauced@msn.com
Big Band, Latin

Sunset Red

sunsetredtheband.com
sunsetred04@gmail.com
Rock, Country, Dance Band

Swing Memories Big Band

swingmemories.com
swingmemories@yahoo.com
Big Band, Swing

Tango Guitar Project

maxilarrea.com
max.lar.guit@gmail.com
Guitar, Latin, Tango

Tanya Tassi

tanyatassi.com/vocalist-biography
tanyatassi@gmail.com
Cover Band, Rock

Tater and the Tokers

reverbnation.com/taterhogan-songs
joshhoganson@gmail.com
Country, Folk, Southern Rock

Taylor Tunes

taylortunes.link
taylortunesaz@gmail.com
Rock, Singer, Songwriter

Ted Ramirez

tedramirez.com
ted@tedramirez.com
Easy Listening, Folk, Songwriter

Ten Dollar Wedding

tendollarwedding.com
tendollarwedding@gmail.com
Bluegrass, Folk

**Tesoro**

tesorotuxon.com
booking@tesorotuxon.com
Guitar, Instrumental, Latin

The Beatle Brothers Acoustic Beatles Tribute

beatlebrothers.com
beatlebrothersaz@gmail.com
Tribute Band, Classic Rock

The Blood Feud Family Singers

bloodfeudfamilysingers.com
marc.oxborrow@gmail.com
Americana, Rock, Country

The Broke Down Boys

mcglam53@yahoo.com
Bluegrass, Country, Folk

The Classless Chaps

theclasslesschaps.com
theclasslesschaps@yahoo.com
Rock

The Cornerstone Band and Duo

bruceguercio.me
tucsoncornerstoneband@gmail.com
Blues, R & B, Rock

**The Dream Scene**

thedreamscenemusic@gmail.com
Rock, Post-Hardcore

The Drift

midi1954@gmail.com
Jazz, Soul, Rock

The Egg Thieves

elko333@yahoo.com
Bluegrass, Folk, Jazz

The Foothills Philharmonic

foothillspiltucson.com
phil@foothillspiltucson.com
Performing Arts, Social & Civic Engagement, Orchestra

The Good Old Daze

wjc1947@outlook.com
Blues, Oldies, Rock

The Illumin80s - 80's Rock Party and Dance Band

illumin80s.com
info@illumin80s.com
Dance Band, Pop, Rock

The J & R BAND

jameswain@cox.net
Oldies, Pop, Rock

The Jane Heirs

thejaneheirs@gmail.com
Blues, Country, Folk

The Larry Redhouse Trio / Redhouse Family Jazz Band

larryredhouse.com
jazz@larryredhouse.com
Jazz, Latin, Contemporary

The Lost Hombres

thefolkshop.com
gigsparks@hotmail.com
Americana, Bluegrass, Country

The McCallion Band

nancymccallion.com
nancy@nancymccallion.com
Country, Folk, Rock

The Midnight Blue Band

paulgreenblues.com
paulgreen@comcast.net
Blues, R & B

The Mighty Maxwells

neilmccallion.com
neilmccallion2@gmail.com
Americana, R&B, Rock

The Nevermores (Sabra Faulk & Nancy McCallion)

sabra@sabrafaulk.com
Folk, Americana, Singer, Songwriter

The Out of Kilters

barriobarri@gmail.com
Irish

The Paul Green Jazz/Blues Quartet

paulgreenblues.com/home
paulgreen@comcast.net
Blues, Jazz, R & B

The PJ Bidwell Band

thepjbidwellband@gmail.com
Americana, Country, Songwriter

The Raytones

raytonesbandtucson@gmail.com
Blues, Rock, Jazz

The Secret Trails

thesecrettrails.net
contact@ryandavidorr.com
Americana, Folk, Songwriter

The Speedway Brothers Band

thardwater@yahoo.com
Bluegrass, Country, Oldies

The Stardusters

roxannabaker@yahoo.com
Dance Band, Oldies, German

The Tumbleweeds

tumbleweedsband.com
tumbleweedsmusic@gmail.com
Country, Western Swing, Bluegrass

Thistle & Bear

mmccammondmusic.com/thistle-bear
thistleandbearduo@gmail.com
Folk, Irish

TMI (Too Much Information)

tmi-band.net
garys0828@gmail.com
Dance Band

Tom Walter

thomas.f.walter@gmail.com
Country, Folk, Songwriter

Tommy Tucker

tommytucker.com
tommytuckerblues@gmail.com
Blues, Jazz, Rock

Tony Corrales Band

tonycorrales.com
trcorrales@cox.net
Country

Total Recall Band

total-recall.bandmule.com
totalrecallbandaz@gmail.com
Rock

Totally Exalting the Anointed Messiah (T.E.A.M.) City Choir

teamcitychoir.org
smithmarana@aol.com
Religious, Choral/Choir

Traveler

scottjefferstraveler.com
scottjefferstraveler@gmail.com
Folk, Irish, World

True Concord Voices & Orchestra

trueconcord.org
admin@trueconcord.org
Performing Arts, Choral/Choir

True Flavor Blues

thesweetfinger@yahoo.com
Blues, Jazz

Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus

boyschorus.org
shaneboyd@boyschorus.org
Choral/Choir, Music Ensemble, Education & Youth Arts

Tucson Barbershop Sunshine Chorus

tucsonbarbershopharmony.org
frank.hartline@comcast.net
Barbershop, Choral/Choir

Tucson Concert Band

tucsonconcertband.org
info@tucsonconcertband.org
Classical, Instrumental, Symphony

Tucson Dulcimer Ensemble

tucsondulcimerensemble.com
tucsondulcimerensemble@gmail.com
Traditional, Instrumental, Dulcimer

Tucson Duo Project

tucsonduoproject.square.site
tucsonduoproject@gmail.com
Classical, Instrumental, Chamber Music

Tucson Flute Club

tucsonfluteclub.org
tucsonfluteclub@gmail.com
Arts & Cultural Development, Flute, Music Education



*rose
collins*

Visual Artist

www.rosecollinsartist.com

Tucson Girls Chorus

tucsongirlschorus.org
info@tucsongirlschorus.org
Choral/Choir, Youth, Education

Tucson Klezmerados

lisafein.siegel@gmail.com
Klezmer
Tucson Masterworks Chorale
tucsonmasterworkschorale.org
info@tucsonmasterworkschorale.org
Choral Arts, Music Ensemble, Community Engagement,

Tucson Philharmonia Youth Orchestra

tpyo.org
info@tpyo.org
Youth Music, Education, Symphony Orchestra

Tucson Pops Orchestra

tucsonpops.org
info@tucsonpops.org
Performing Arts, Orchestra

Tucson Repertory Orchestra

tucsonrepertoryorchestra.org
trorchestra@gmail.com
Music, Performing Arts, Orchestra

Tucson Sunshine Barbershop Chorus & Quartets

tucsonbarbershopharmony.org
frank.hartline@comcast.net
Barbershop

Tucson Symphony Orchestra

tucsonsymphony.org
pmeecham@tucsonsymphony.org
Music, Performing Arts, Community Outreach

Tucson Women's Chorus

tucsonwomenschorus.org
tucsonwomenschorus@gmail.com
Choral Arts, Community Engagement, Women's Voices

Tucson's Little Big Band

tucsonlbb.com
brian@tucsonlbb.com
Blues, Rock, Dance Band

Tucsonics

facebook.com/tucsonics
ncoventry@gmail.com
Swing, Western

Tutt & Co. Band

terietutt@gmail.com
R&B, American Songbook, Jazz

Two Cent Revival

twocentrevival.com
twocentrevival@gmail.com
Folk, Indie, Singer/Songwriter

Two Fools on Stools

twofoolsonstools@gmail.com
Americana, Latin, Acoustic

Tyler Gummersall

tyllermusic.com
booking@tyllermusic.com
Country, Americana

Uncommon Crossroads

uncommoncrossroads.com
uncommoncrossroads@gmail.com
Americana, Folk, Rock

Us Too

ustoomusicduo.com
ustoomusicduo@gmail.com
Blues, Country, Pop

Vinyl Grooves

vinylgroovestucson.com
hspianogirl@msn.com
Rock

Wally Lawder

wallylawder.com
booking@wallylawder.com
Folk

Wayback Machine (Wayback Trio)

waybackmachineband.com
jimlipson@yahoo.com
Folk / Blues, Reggae, Grateful Dead

Whiskey & Wine Acoustic Duo

whiskeyandwineacoustic@gmail.com
Country, Pop, Top 40

Wild Ride

wildrideband.com
nancylaviola@gmail.com
Rock, Country, Dance Band

William Devinney

wbdevinney@gmail.com
Bluegrass, Country, Dance Band

WomanSong

417grace@gmail.com
Folk, Americana

World Gone Plaid - 90s Rock Tribute

worldgoneplaid.com
booking@worldgoneplaid.com
Rock, Dance Band

Your Money's Worth Classic Rock Band

romero.gl@comcast.net
Oldies, Rock, Classic Rock

ZeeCeeKeely

zeeceekeely@gmail.com
Reggae, Roots Rock

Zelf

rumble.com/user/zdmt
creality9@gmail.com
Electronic, Guitar, Singer

Znora

znoraband.com
znoraband@gmail.com
Rock, Guitar

Nonprofits

All-A-Glow Artisans of Sedona

allaglowsedona.com
allaglow62@gmail.com

American Society of Bookplate Collectors & Designers

bookplate.org
info@bookplate.org
Visual Arts & Galleries, Literary Arts, Museums

Arivaca Human Resource - Plaza de la Amistad

arivacahr.com
arivacahr@gmail.com
Health & Wellness, Human Services, Community Support

Arizona Balalaika Orchestra

azbalalaika.org
miagay7@icloud.com
Folk Music, Cultural Heritage, Slavic

Arizona Blues Hall of Fame

azblueshof.com
abhof.webmaster@gmail.com
Music, Cultural Heritage, Recognition & Education

Arizona Citizens for the Arts

azcitizensforthearts.org
info@azcitizensforthearts.org
Arts & Culture, Advocacy, Public Policy

Arizona Friends of Chamber Music

arizonachambermusic.org
office@arizonachambermusic.org
Music, Chamber Ensemble, Education & Outreach

Arizona Historical Society

arizonahistoricalociety.org
news@azhs.gov
Heritage & Historic Preservation, Education & Youth Arts, Museums

Arizona Repertory Singers

arsingers.org
info@arsingers.org
Music, Performing Arts, Choral Ensemble

Arizona Stitch Lab

azstitchlab.org
info@azstitchlab.org
Workforce Development, Vocational Training, Sewing & Textiles

Art Verve Academy

artverve.org
info@artverve.org
Visual Arts, Adult Education, Hands-On Learning

ArtMobile-AZ, Inc

artmobilevan.org
lisaswanson@artmobilevan.org
Arts & Wellness, Inclusion, Mobile Programming

Arts Express Theatre

arts-express.org
info@arts-express.org
Musical Theater, Theatre, Education and Classes

Ballet Folklorico Tapatio

mariachifolkloricosociety.org/
ballet-folklorico-tapatio
bftapatio@gmail.com
Cultural Traditions, Dance

Ballet Tucson

ballettucson.org
operations@ballettucson.org
Ballet, Dance, Education and Classes

Beading Divas to the Rescue

beadingdivasbracelets.com
info@beadingdivasinc.org
Animal Welfare, Fundraising, Jewelry Arts

BICAS Art

bicas.org/art
art@bicas.org
Visual Arts, Sustainability, Community Education

Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum

bisbeemuseum.org
info@bisbeemuseum.org
History, Cultural Heritage, Tourism

Blue Lotus Artists' Collective

blactucson.com
info@bluelotusartistscollective.com
Gallery, Community Arts Space, Nonprofit Venue

Borderlands Theater

borderlandstheater.org
milta@borderlandstheater.org
Theatre, Cultural Traditions, Public Speaking

Children's Museum Oro Valley at Tohono Chul

childrensmuseumtucson.org/
cmov-at-tohono-chul
cmovtc@childrensmuseumtucson.org

Literary Arts & Literacy Groups, Education & Youth Arts, Gardens

Children's Museum Tucson

childrensmuseumtucson.org
cmt@childrensmuseumtucson.org
Literary Arts & Literacy Groups, Education & Youth Arts, Museums

City Psalms

citypsalms.com
brian@citypsalms.com
Performing Arts, Arts & Cultural Development, Event & Festival Production

**Civic Orchestra of Tucson**

cotmusic.org
manager@cotmusic.org
Classical, Orchestra, Youth Education

Community Gardens of Tucson

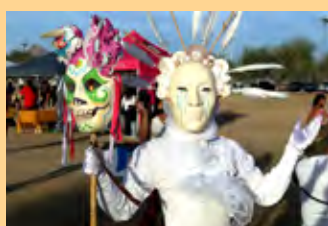
communitygardensoftucson.org
admin@communitygardensoftucson.org
Purveyor, Gardening, Food Resilience

Community Performance and Art Center

performingartscenter.org
info@cpacfoundation.org
Performing Arts, Visual Arts & Galleries, Education & Youth Arts

Compañía de Danza Folklórica Arizona

cdfatucson.com
cdfatucson@gmail.com
Dance, Cultural Traditions, Education and Classes

**Cultural Coalition, Inc.**

culturalcoalition.com
carmen@culturalcoalition.com
Performing Arts, Event And Festival Production, Folk & Traditional Arts

Culture Connects Studio

cultureconnectsaz.org
cultureconnectsaz@gmail.com
Dance, Cultural Traditions – Global, Education and Classes

Dance Sequences Inc.

dancesequences.org
dancesequences@gmail.com
Dance, Education and Classes, Public Speaking

Desert Bluegrass Association

desertbluegrass.org
desert.bluegrass.president@gmail.com

Arts & Cultural Development, Event And Festival Production, Folk & Traditional Arts

Desert Harvesters

desertharvesters.org
desertharvesters@gmail.com
Nonprofit, Sonoran Desert Foods, Education

Desert Winds Steel Orchestra

steelsondarizona.com
jerrylopatin@hotmail.com
Caribbean, Instrumental, Orchestra

Discover Marana/Town of Marana

discovermarana.org
Event And Festival Production, Heritage & Historic Preservation

Duke's Car Club of Tucson

daddyals39@hotmail.com
Cars, Social Club, Lowriders

Easterseals Blake Foundation

easterseals.com/blakefoundation
events@blake.easterseals.com
Adaptive Arts, Vocational Arts Programs, Community Inclusion

Emergency Circus

emergencycircus.com
emergencycircus@gmail.com
Circus Arts, Education and Classes, Special Acts

ENCORE Fine Arts Foundation

encorefineartsfoundation.org
info@encorefineartsfoundation.org
Performing Arts, Arts Advocacy & Policy Education & Youth Arts

Esperanza Dance Project

esperanzadanceproject.org
esperanzadanceproject@gmail.com
Dance, Public Speaking, Education and Classes

Fiber Arts Center AZ

fiberartscenteraz.org
debra@fiberartscenteraz.org
Arts & Cultural Development, Visual Arts & Galleries

Flam Chen

flamchen.com
info@flamchen.com
Aerial, Circus Arts, Special Acts

Flowers and Bullets

flowersandbullets.com
flowers.bullets@gmail.com
Urban Farm, Community Garden, Cultural / Heritage-Based Cuisine

Fox Tucson Theatre

foxtucson.com
bryxton@foxtucson.com
Performing Arts, Arts & Cultural Development, Concerts

Free Arts for Abused Children

freeartsaz.org
bhalvorson@freeartsaz.org
Arts & Cultural Development, Education & Youth Arts

Friends of Canoa Heritage Foundation Inc

visitcanao.com
inspired@visitcanao.com
Cultural Preservation, Heritage Tourism, Community Engagement

Friends of the Oro Valley Public Library

orovalleyfriends.org
[520] 594-5671
Education, Literacy, Lifelong Learning

Funhouse Movement Theater

educatingsherry@gmail.com
Dance, Education and Classes, Youth Theatre

Galeria Mitotera

galeriamitotera.com
galeriamitotera@gmail.com
Gallery, Workshop Space, Store/Retail Space

Groundworks Tucson

groundworkstucson.com
info@groundworkstucson.com
Performing Arts, Visual Arts & Galleries, Education & Youth Arts

Hey Productions

heyproductions.org
heyproductionsorg@gmail.com
Musical Theater, Youth Theatre, Education and Classes

In Concert Music Association

inconcerttucson.com
dgest52@yahoo.com
Performing Arts, Event And Festival Production, Folk & Traditional Arts

Jam Pak Band

jampak.org
jampakband@gmail.com
Performing Arts, Bluegrass, Youth

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kustars.com
kidsunlimitedbookings@gmail.com
Choral/Choir, Performing Arts,
Education & Youth Arts

Koru Multicultural and Diverse Library

librarykoru.com
korulibrary@yahoo.com
Arts & Cultural Development, Education & Youth Arts, Library

KXCI Community Radio

kxci.org
community@kxci.org
Arts & Cultural Development,
Education & Youth Arts, Arts & Health/Wellness

Lajkonik Polish Folk Ensemble

lajkoniktucson.com
lajkoniktucson@outlook.com
Polish Folk Dance, Special Acts,
Music Performance

Live Theatre Workshop

livetheatreworkshop.org
info@livetheatreworkshop.org
Theatre, Education and Classes,
Public Speaking

Mariachi and Baile Folklorico Society

mariachifolkloricosociety.org
mbfs@lafrontera.org
Cultural Traditions, Dance, Youth Theatre

Mariachi Aztlán de Pueblo High School

mariachiaztlandepueblohs.com
john.contreras@tusd1.org
Mariachi, Education & Youth Arts,
Performance

Mariachi Los Changuitos Feos

changuitos.org
mariachi.loschanguitosfeos@gmail.com
Mariachi, Education & Youth Arts,
Performance

Mariachi Panteras de Oro (Maryvale High School)

mdominguez@phoenixunion.org
Mariachi, Education & Youth Arts,
Performance

Mariachi Sones Del Desierto (Desert Sounds)

desertsounds.org
info@desertsounds.org
Mariachi, Education & Youth Arts,
Performance

Mariposas Sin Fronteras

mariposassinfronteras.com
mariposassinfronteras@gmail.com
LGBTQ+ Support, Migrant Justice,
Health & Healing

Mission Garden - Friends of Tucson's Birthplace

missiongarden.org
info@missiongarden.org
Event and Festival Production,
Heritage & Historic Preservation,
Education & Youth Arts

MOCA Tucson (Museum of Contemporary Art)

moca-tucson.org
info@moca-tucson.org
Venues - Event, Contemporary,
Gallery

Museum of Northern Arizona

musnaz.org
info@musnaz.org
Visual Arts & Galleries, Heritage & Historic Preservation, Museums

Musical Instrument Museum

mim.org
(480) 478-6000
Global Music Traditions, Music Performance, Education and Classes

Odaiko Sonora Rhythm Industry

tucsontaiko.org
info@tucsontaiko.org
Japanese Traditions, Taiko Drumming, Education and Classes

Odyssey Storytelling

odysseystorytelling.com
stories@odysseystorytelling.org
Storytelling, Community Engagement, Performing Arts

Old Pueblo Brass Band

oldpueblobrassband.org
oldpueblobrassband@gmail.com
Performing Arts, Cultural Group,
Music Ensemble

Oracle Piano Society

oraclepianosociety.org
cook@oraclepianosociety.org
Performing Arts, Arts & Cultural Development, Education & Youth Arts

Oro Valley Historical Society

ovhistory.org
devonsloan@comcast.net
Heritage & Historic Preservation, Museums, Gardens

Oro Valley Jazz Band

tonycyrus207@gmail.com
Big Band, Jazz, Swing

Our Safe Space

oursafespaceus.org
oursafespaceus@gmail.com
Education & Youth Arts, Arts & Health/Wellness, Health & Wellness

Patronato San Xavier

patronatosanxavier.org
info@patronatosanxavier.org
Arts & Cultural Development,
Heritage & Historic Preservation

Postal History Foundation Inc

postalhistoryfoundation.org
info@phftucson.org
Museums, Education & Youth Arts,
History

Presidio San Agustín del Tucson Museum

tucsonpresidio.com
info@tucsonpresidio.com
Event And Festival Production,
Heritage & Historic Preservation,
Museums

Reid Park Zoo

reidparkzoo.org
info@reidparkzoo.org
Science & Nature, Education &
Youth Arts, Animal Conservation

Romero House Ceramics Studio

romerohouseceramics.org
helpmail@romerohousepotters.org
Visual Arts, Ceramics, Arts Education

Rose Petal Foundation

lynnraelowe.com/rose-petal-foundation
rosepetal@lynnraelowe.com
Arts & Cultural Development,
Community Engagement, Artist
Support

SaddleBrooke Winds and Strings

saddlebrookewindsandstrings.org
Classical, Contemporary,
Orchestra

Saguaro City Music Theatre

saguarocity.org
info@saguarocity.org
Musical Theater, Youth Theatre,
Education and Classes

Sakura Tea Circle

instagram.com/sakurateacircle
sakurateacircle@gmail.com
Cultural Group, Arts & Cultural
Development, Heritage & Historic
Preservation

San Xavier Co-Op Farm

sanxaviercoop.org
sxca@sanxaviercoop.org
Economic Development, Heritage
& Historic Preservation, Education
& Youth Arts

Santa Cruz Shoestring Players

santacruzshoestringplayers.org
azshoestringplayers@gmail.com
Theatre, Youth Theatre, Education
and Classes

Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area

santacruzheritage.org
info@santacruzheritage.org
Economic Development, Heritage
& Historic Preservation, Social &
Civic Engagement

Santa Theresa Tile Works

santatheresatileworks.com
customerservice@santatheresa-
tileworks.com
Arts & Cultural Development,
Visual Arts & Galleries, Education &
Youth Arts

Sculpture Tucson

sculpturetucson.org
sculpturetucson@gmail.com
Arts & Cultural Development,
Event And Festival Production,
Visual Arts & Galleries

Solar Culture Gallery

solarculture.org
kati.astraeir@gmail.com
Arts & Cultural Development,
Event And Festival Production,
Visual Arts & Galleries

Sonora Arts & Music Initiative

sonoraarts.org
sonoraartsandmusic@gmail.com
Music, Cultural Exchange, Artist
Support

Sonoran Glass School

sonoranglass.org
info@sonoranglass.org
Visual Arts & Galleries, Education &
Youth Arts, Creative Aging / Older
Adult Services

Sonoran Plein Air Painters

sonoranpleinairpainters.com
info@sonoranpleinairpainters.com
Art Society / Guild, Visual Arts &
Galleries, Social & Civic Engage-
ment

Southern Arizona Blues Heritage Foundation, Inc.

azblues.org
info@azblues.org
Performing Arts, Event And Festival
Production, Education & Youth Arts

Southern Arizona Film Society

soazfilm.org
info@soazfilm.org
Media Arts & Film, Education &
Youth Arts, Professional
Development

Southern Arizona Flute Orchestra

tucsonfluteclub.org
tucsonfluteclub@gmail.com
Chamber Music, Classical,
Instrumental

Southern Arizona Japanese Cultural Coalition

southernazjapan.org
communications@southernazja-
pan.org
Heritage & Historic Preservation,
Cultural Group, Social & Civic
Engagement

**Southern Arizona Symphony Orchestra**

sasomusic.org
info@sasomusic.org
Conductor, Orchestra, Symphony

Southern Arizona Watercolor Guild

southernazwatercolorguild.com
president@southernazwater-
colorguild.com
Visual Arts, Watercolor, Artist
Community

Southwest Alternatives Institute, Inc.

emol.org/sai
publisher@emol.org
Fiscal Sponsorship, Community
Development, Social Justice Initiatives

Southwestern Fair Commission Inc, dba Pima County Fair

pimacountyfair.com
julia@pimacountyfair.com
Festival, Visual Arts, Fine Arts

Square and Round Dance Association of Southern Arizona (SARDASA)

sardasa.org
scheduler@sardasa.org
Folk Dance, Community Engage-
ment, Cultural Preservation

Startup Tucson

startuptucson.com
info@startuptucson.com
Entrepreneurship, Economic Devel-
opment, Innovation Ecosystem

The Circus and Aerial Academy of Tucson, INC

circusacademytucson.com
info@circusacademytucson.com
Youth Education, Creative Aging,
Circus Arts

The Drawing Studio

thedrawingstudio.org
tds@thedrawingstudio.org
Visual Arts & Galleries, Education &
Youth Arts, Creative Aging

The Foothills Philharmonic

foothillsphtucson.com
phil@foothillsphtucson.com
Performing Arts, Social & Civic
Engagement, Orchestra

The Land With No Name Sanctuary

thelandwithnoname.org
totheland@gmail.com
Other: Visual & Traditional Arts,
Cultural Development, Artist Resi-
dency

The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures

theminitimemachine.org
[520] 881-0606
Visual Arts & Galleries, Education &
Youth Arts, Museums

The Rialto Theatre

rialtotheatre.com
[520] 647-4123
Performing Arts, Arts & Cultural
Development, Heritage & Historic
Preservation

The Scoundrel and Scamp Theatre

scoundrelandscamp.org
director@scoundrelandscamp.org
Theatre, Youth Theatre, Education
and Classes

Treasures 4 Teachers of Tucson

t4teachers.org
admin@t4teachers.org
Education & Youth Arts

True Concord Voices & Orchestra

trueconcord.org
admin@trueconcord.org
Performing Arts, Choral/Choir

Tubac Center of the Arts

tubacarts.org
executivedirector@tubacarts.org
Performing Arts, Visual Arts &
Galleries, Education & Youth Arts

Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus

boyschorus.org
shaneboyd@boyschorus.org
Choral/Choir, Music Ensemble,
Education & Youth Arts

Tucson Astrologers' Guild

tucsonastrologersguild.org
info@tucsonastrologersguild.net
Astrological Education, Spiritual &
Wellness

Tucson Botanical Gardens

tucsonbotanical.org
marketing@tucsonbotanical.org
Visual Arts & Galleries, Education &
Youth Arts, Gardens

Tucson Chinese Cultural Center

tucsonchinese.org
info@tucsonchinese.org
Arts & Cultural Development,
Cultural Group

Tucson Concert Band

tucsonconcertband.org
info@tucsonconcertband.org
Classical, Instrumental, Symphony

Tucson Desert Art Museum

tucsondart.org
[520] 202-3888
Arts & Cultural Development,
Visual Arts & Galleries, Folk &
Traditional Arts

Tucson Festival of Books

tucsonfestivalofbooks.org
executivedirector@tucsonfesti-
valofbooks.org
Literary Arts, Community Engage-
ment, Festival

**Tucson Festival of Books --
Entertainment Committee**

tucsonfestivalofbooks.org
entertainment@tucsonfestivalof-
books.org
Performing Arts, Event And Festival
Production, Literary Arts & Literacy
Groups

**Tucson Festival of Books -- Literary
Awards & Masters Workshop**

tucsonfestivalofbooks.org
masters@tucsonfestivalofbooks.org
Arts & Cultural Development,
Event And Festival Production,
Literary Arts & Literacy Groups

Tucson Flute Club

tucsonfluteclub.org
tucsonfluteclub@gmail.com
Arts & Cultural Development, Flute,
Music Education

Tucson Fringe

tucsonfringe.org
tucsonfringe@gmail.com
Theatre, Event and Festival
Production, Performing Arts

Tucson Girls Chorus

tucsongirlschorus.org
info@tucsongirlschorus.org
Choral/Choir, Youth, Education

Tucson Guitar Society

tucsonguitarsociety.org
tucsongs@gmail.com
Music Ensemble, Education &
Youth Arts, Performing Arts

**Tucson Handweavers and
Spinners Guild**

thsg.org
publicity@thsg.org
Art Society / Guild, Folk & Tradi-
tional Arts, Fiber Arts

Tucson Jazz Music Foundation

tjmfdn.org
tucsonjazzmusicfdn@gmail.com
Performing Arts, Arts & Cultural
Development, Education & Youth
Arts

**Tucson Jewish Museum &
Holocaust Center**

tjmhc.org
museum@tjmhc.org
Cultural Group, Heritage & Historic
Preservation, Historic Space

**Tucson Kitchen Musicians
Association (Tucson Folk Festival)**

tucsonfolkfest.org
president@tucsonfolkfest.org
Festival, Songwriting, Concerts

Tucson Masterworks Choral

tucsonmasterworkschorale.org
info@tucsonmasterworkscho-
rale.org
Choral Arts, Music Ensemble,
Community Engagement

**Tucson Museum of Art and
Historic Block**

tucsonmuseumofart.org
info@tucsonmuseumofart.org
Visual Arts & Galleries, Heritage &
Historic Preservation, Museums

Tucson Musicians Museum

tucsonmusiciansmuseum.org
info@tucsonmusiciansmuseum.org
Arts & Cultural Development,
Heritage & Historic Preservation,
Museums

**Tucson Philharmonia Youth
Orchestra**

tpyo.org
info@tpyo.org
Youth Music, Education, Symphony
Orchestra

**Tucson Poetry Festival / Ocotillo
Literary Endeavors**

tucsonpoetryfest.org
tucsonpoetryfestival@gmail.com
Performing Arts, Event And Festival
Production, Literary Arts & Literacy
Groups

Tucson Pops Orchestra

tucsonpops.org
info@tucsonpops.org
Performing Arts, Orchestra

Tucson Quilters Guild and Fiesta

tucsonquiltersguild.com
Fiber Arts, Visual Arts, Community
Engagement

Tucson Repertory Orchestra

tucsonrepertoryorchestra.org
trorchestra@gmail.com
Music, Performing Arts, Orchestra



AIDING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

~~~~~ WITH ART ~~~~~

This fall, the University of Arizona is launching a new campuswide initiative that supports student mental health by prescribing arts and cultural experiences as part of their wellness journey.

Led by Arizona Arts — in collaboration with Campus Health, Student Success and Retention Innovation, Student Affairs and the Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine, plus local arts organizations— the program connects students with personalized arts experiences at no cost to them, designed to reduce stress, foster connection, and promote well-being.



azart.fyi/StudentHealth

**Tucson Scottish Rite Cathedral**

tucsonscottishrite.org  
 specialevents@tucsonscottishrite.org  
 Education & Youth Arts, Historic  
 Space, Special Event Venue

**Tucson Symphony Orchestra**

tucsonsymphony.org  
 pmeecham@tucsonsymphony.org  
 Music, Performing Arts, Community  
 Outreach

**Tucson Women's Chorus**

tucsonwomenschorus.org  
 tucsonwomenschorus@gmail.com  
 Choral Arts, Community Engage-  
 ment, Women's Voices

**UA School of Music**

music.arizona.edu  
 info@music.arizona.edu  
 Choral, Opera, Education

**Unscrewed Theater**

unscrewedtheater.org  
 unscrewedtheater@gmail.com  
 Improv Comedy, Theatre, Educa-  
 tion and Classes

**Untitled Gallery Tucson**

untitledgallerytucson.com  
 info@untitledgallerytucson.com  
 Visual Arts, Artist-Run Space, Gallery

**Vail Preservation Society**

facebook.com/vailpreservation-  
 society  
 vailpreservationsociety@gmail.com  
 History, Cultural Preservation,  
 Community Engagement

**Vessel**

vesselproject.org  
 rachel@vesselproject.org  
 Site-Specific Theatre, Physical  
 Theatre, Immersive Performance

**Western National Parks**

wnpa.org  
 bret.muter@wnp.org  
 Science & Nature, Education &  
 Youth Arts, National Parks

**WHAM Art Association**

wham-art.org  
 [623] 584-8311  
 Visual Arts & Galleries, Literary Arts  
 & Literacy Groups, Education &  
 Youth Arts

**Willcox Theater and Arts**

willcoxtheater.com  
 willcoxtheater@gmail.com  
 Performing Arts, Event and Festival  
 Production, Youth Arts Education

**Winterhaven Festival of Lights**

winterhavenfestival.org  
 winterhavenoffice@gmail.com  
 Festival, Community Engagement,  
 Cultural Tradition

**Womankraft Art Center**

womankraft.org  
 womankraftaz@gmail.com  
 Visual Arts & Galleries, Folk &  
 Traditional Arts, Art Classes

**Xerocraft Makerspace**

xerocraft.org  
 info@xerocraft.org  
 STEAM Education, Community  
 Development, Makerspace

**Young Artists' Community Ballet Academy of Dance**

yacbdance.com  
 nick@yacbdance.com  
 Performing Arts, Education &  
 Youth Arts, Professional Develop-  
 ment Services

**Yun Gee Park Gallery & Atelier**

yungeepark.com  
 info@yungeepark.com  
 Gallery, Cultural Organization,  
 Contemporary

**Arts Express Theatre**

arts-express.org  
 info@arts-express.org  
 Musical Theater, Theatre,  
 Education and Classes

**Aurelia Anne Cohen**

aureliacohen.com  
 [541] 261-6558  
 Aerial, Circus Arts, Spoken Word

**BA Studios - A Dance & Fitness Boutique**

ba-studios.com  
 bastudiosaz@gmail.com  
 Dance, Education and Classes,  
 Ballet

**Ballet Folklorico Tapatio**

mariachifolkloricosociety.org/  
 ballet-folklorico-tapatio  
 bftapatio@gmail.com  
 Cultural Traditions, Dance

**Ballet Tucson**

ballettucson.org  
 operations@ballettucson.org  
 Ballet, Dance, Education and Classes

**Bendy Educator**

bendyeducator.com  
 info@bendyeducator.com  
 Aerial, Circus Arts, Special Acts

**Benny James - Actor, Magician, Dance Instructor, Content Creator**

beacons.ai/bennyjames  
 benny.fitsofdancellc@gmail.com  
 Actor, Magic, Dance

**Bharatanatyam Indian Classical Dance**

rajitha.niran@gmail.com  
 Dance, Cultural Traditions,  
 Education and Classes

**Borderlands Theater**

borderlandstheater.org  
 milta@borderlandstheater.org  
 Theatre, Cultural Traditions, Public  
 Speaking

**Catalinas Community Chorus**

catalinascommunitychorus.org  
 ccchorusaz@gmail.com  
 Choral, Musical Theater, Education  
 and Classes

**Circus Sanctuary**

circusanctuary.com  
 circusanctuary@gmail.com  
 Aerial, Circus Arts, Education and  
 Classes

**Cirque Collective**

cirquecollective.com  
 cirquecollective@yahoo.com  
 Aerial, Circus Arts, Fire Arts

**Compañía de Danza Folklórica Arizona**

cdfatucson.com  
 cdfatucson@gmail.com  
 Dance, Cultural Traditions,  
 Education and Classes

**Culture Connects Studio**

cultureconnectsaz.org  
 cultureconnectsaz@gmail.com  
 Dance, Cultural Traditions – Global,  
 Education

**Dance Fusion**

dancefusionaz.com  
 [480] 625-3900  
 Dance, Ballet, Musical Theater

**Dance of Arabia / Star of Arabia Dance Troupe**

danceofarabia.com  
 15204610801  
 Dance, Cultural Traditions –  
 Middle Eastern, Special Acts

**Dancesequences Inc.**

dancesequences.org  
 dancesequences@gmail.com  
 Dance, Education and Classes,  
 Public Speaking

**Desert Embers Belly Dance**

letsbellydanceusa.com  
 letsbellydance@hotmail.com  
 Dance, Cultural Traditions –  
 Middle Eastern, Special Acts

**Emergency Circus**

emergencycircus.com  
 emergencycircus@gmail.com  
 Circus Arts, Education and Classes,  
 Special Acts

**Esperanza Dance Project**

esperanzadanceproject.org  
 esperanzadanceproject@gmail.com  
 Dance, Public Speaking, Education  
 and Classes

**Flam Chen**

flamchen.com  
 info@flamchen.com  
 Aerial, Circus Arts, Special Acts

**Funhouse Movement Theater**

educatingsherry@gmail.com  
 Dance, Education and Classes,  
 Youth Theatre

## Performance and Experiential Arts

**A Moveable Beast Poetical Cabaret**

sonorousanchorite@gmail.com  
 Spoken Word, Cultural Traditions,  
 Special Acts

**Amy Crater**

imdb.me/amycrater  
 amycrater@gmail.com  
 Actor, Theatre, Public Speaking

**AR Flamenco**

arflamenco.com  
 angelina@arflamenco.com  
 Dance, Cultural Traditions, Educa-  
 tion and Classes

**Arizona Arts Live, the University of Arizona**

arizonaartslive.com  
 arizonaartslive@arizona.edu  
 Theatre, Dance, Special Acts

**Arizona Folklórico Dance Studio**

azfolklorico.com  
 dance@azfolklorico.com  
 Dance, Cultural Traditions,  
 Education and Classes



**SASO**  
SOUTHERN ARIZONA  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
LINUS LERNER, MUSIC DIRECTOR

**2025/2026  
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[sasomusic.org](http://sasomusic.org)  
(520) 308-6226

**Guest Artists**

Holly Mulcahy, violin  
Erin Hannigan, oboe  
Ira Bertman, soprano  
Barbora Kubíková, guitar

Ethan Schmeisser, Conductor  
Jose Antonio García, bass  
Marco Schiavo and  
Sergio Marchegiani, pianos  
Tucson Girls Chorus

**Grupo Folklorico Miztontli**

uamiztontli.com  
uamiztontli@gmail.com  
Dance, Cultural Traditions –  
Mexican, Education

**Halau Hula O Ualani and her  
Menehune Dancers**

hhoutucson.com  
hhou.az@gmail.com  
Dance, Cultural Traditions –  
Polynesian, Education

**Hey Productions**

heyproductions.org  
heyproductionsorg@gmail.com  
Musical Theater, Youth Theatre,  
Education and Classes

**High Note LLC and Party On Ice**

highnotehits.com  
www.partyonice.com  
beachsk8r@aol.com  
Dance, Ice Skating Performance,  
Special Acts

**Ken Koshio & Kenzoo**

kenkoshio.com  
info@kenkoshio.com  
Japanese Traditions, Taiko Drum-  
ming, Education and Classes

**Kids Unlimited**

kustars.com  
(520) 293-1225  
Musical Theater, Youth Theatre, Dance

**Lajkonik Polish Folk Ensemble**

lajkoniktucson.com  
lajkoniktucson@outlook.com  
Polish Folk Dance, Special Acts,  
Music Performance

**Live Theatre Workshop**

livetheatreworkshop.org  
info@livetheatreworkshop.org  
Theatre, Education and Classes,  
Public Speaking

**Loop Rawlins - Western  
Entertainment**

looprawlins.com  
loop@looprawlins.com  
Western Performance, Trick  
Roping, Whip Cracking

**Manuel Intertribal Dancers**

redroad4.cm@gmail.com  
Indigenous Dance, Special Acts,  
Cultural Traditions

**Mariachi and Baile Folklorico  
Society**

mariachifolkloricosociety.org  
mbfs@lafrontera.org  
Cultural Traditions, Dance, Youth  
Theatre

**Mermaid Odette**

facebook.com/mermaidodette  
info@mermaidodette.com  
Mermaid Performance, Costume  
Character, Storytelling

**Mr. Hocus**

mrhocus@yahoo.com  
Magic, Balloon Twister, Special  
Acts

**Musical Instrument Museum**

mim.org  
[480] 478-6000  
Global Music Traditions, Music  
Performance, Education

**Odaiko Sonora Rhythm Industry**

tucsontaiko.org  
info@tucsontaiko.org  
Japanese Traditions, Taiko Drum-  
ming, Education and Classes

**Odyssey Storytelling**

odysseystorytelling.com  
stories@odysseystorytelling.org  
Storytelling, Community Engage-  
ment, Performing Arts

**Opal Moon Facepaint**

facebook.com/opalmoonfacepaint  
(520) 975-8743  
Face Painting, Henna Art, Special  
Acts

**Reconnect to Africa LLC**

shanaleigh424@gmail.com  
African Dance, Cultural Education,  
Storytelling

**Red Herring Puppets**

redherringpuppets.com  
lisa@redherringpuppets.com  
Puppetry, Education and Classes,  
Youth Theatre

**Richard Schultz - Stage Director  
and Arts Educator**

rlschultz41@aol.com  
Theatre, Musical Theater,  
Education and Classes

**Safos Dance Theatre**

safosdance.org  
safosdance@gmail.com  
Dance, Contemporary Dance,  
Borderlands Culture

**Saguaro City Music Theatre**

saguarocity.org  
info@saguarocity.org  
Musical Theater, Youth Theatre,  
Education and Classes

**Saguaro Strutters**

(520) 327-9445  
Line Dance, Dance, Community  
Performance

**Samba Southwest - Brazilian Dance Performance & Instruction**  
 sambasouthwest.com/index.html  
 professoracocada@gmail.com  
 Brazilian Dance, Drumming and Percussion, Cultural Traditions

**Santa Cruz Shoestring Players**  
 santacruzshoestringplayers.org  
 azshoestringplayers@gmail.com  
 Theatre, Youth Theatre, Education and Classes

#### **Sonoran Dreams**

[602] 762-9624  
 Romani Dance, Belly Dance, Cultural Traditions

#### **Sound of Thunder Korean Drum and Dance**

annklocko@gmail.com  
 Korean Dance, Korean Drumming, Cultural Traditions

#### **Sparkled Wings Face and Body Painting**

sparkledwings.com  
 sparkledwingsfp@gmail.com  
 Face Painting, Body Art, Special Acts

#### **Suzuyuki-Kai Traditional Japanese Dance**

suzuyuki@aol.com  
 Japanese Dance, Cultural Education, Dance

#### **The Jane Heirs**

thejaneheirs@gmail.com  
 Music Performance, Folk Music, Roots Music

#### **The Rogue Theatre**

theroguetheatre.org  
 [520] 551-2053  
 Theatre, Education and Classes, Community Engagement

#### **The Scoundrel and Scamp Theatre**

scoundrelandscamp.org  
 director@scoundrelandscamp.org  
 Theatre, Youth Theatre, Education and Classes

#### **Theater Arts with Sarah Bayze**

s.brown339@gmail.com  
 Theatre, Creative Movement, Education and Classes

#### **Tucson Fringe**

tucsonfringe.org  
 tucsonfringe@gmail.com  
 Theatre, Event and Festival Production, Performing Arts

#### **Unscrewed Theater**

unscrewedtheater.org  
 unscrewedtheater@gmail.com  
 Improv Comedy, Theatre, Education and Classes

#### **Vessel**

vesselproject.org  
 rachel@vesselproject.org  
 Site-Specific Theatre, Physical Theatre, Immersive Performance

#### **Vic Roych**

nogeek.roych@gmail.com  
 Spoken Word, Theatre, Storytelling



#### **Viva Performing Arts**

vivaperformingarts.com  
 [520] 310-1866  
 Folklórico Dance, Latin Dance, Cultural Traditions

#### **VSD: Cinega High School Music**

chs.vailschooldistrict.org/page/fine-arts  
 baileyr@vailschooldistrict.org  
 Band Performance, Youth Arts Education, Choral

#### **WamerMime**

wamermime.com  
 ricgeocap@icloud.com  
 Mime, Poetry Performance, Theatre

#### **Willcox Theater and Arts**

willcoxtheater.com  
 willcoxtheater@gmail.com  
 Performing Arts, Event Production, Youth Arts Education



#### **Wolfe Bowart's Spoon Tree Productions**

spoonstree.com  
 info@spoonstree.com  
 Circus Arts, Magic, Visual Theatre

#### **Yvonne Montoya**

yvonnemontoya.co  
 yvonne@yvonnemontoya.co  
 Dance, Public Speaking

## Venues, Galleries, and Art Spaces

#### **Absolutely Art Gallery & Gifts**

absolutelyartgallery.com  
 absolutelyartgallery@gmail.com  
 Gallery, Event Space, Special Event Venue  
 Catalina, AZ

#### **Affeldt Mion Museum**

ammwsa.com  
 director@ammwsa.com  
 Gallery, Historic Space, Hotel, Museum  
 Winslow, AZ

#### **Antsy Nancy**

antsy-nancy.com  
 heidi.yribar@antsy-nancy.com  
 Artist Studios, Event Space, Maker Space, Special Event Venue  
 Tucson, AZ

#### **Art & Home**

ericjablonerart.com  
 ericjabloner@gmail.com  
 Gallery, Artist Studios, Studio  
 Tucson, AZ

#### **Art Institute at the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum**

desertmuseumarts.com  
 arts@desertmuseum.org  
 Gallery, Garden, Maker Space, Museum, Photography Studio  
 Tucson, AZ

#### **Artists & Makers Studios Oro Valley**

artistsandmakersstudios.com  
 manager@artistsandmakersstudios.com  
 Artist Studios, Gallery, Maker Space  
 Oro Valley, AZ

#### **Arts Express Theatre**

arts-express.org  
 info@arts-express.org  
 Musical Theater, Theatre, Education and Classes  
 Tucson, AZ

#### **BICAS Art**

bicas.org/art  
 art@bicas.org  
 Visual Arts, Sustainability, Community Education  
 Tucson, AZ

#### **Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum**

bisbeemuseum.org  
 info@bisbeemuseum.org  
 History, Cultural Heritage, Tourism  
 Bisbee, AZ

#### **Blue Lotus Artists' Collective**

blactucson.com  
 info@bluelotusartistscollective.com  
 Gallery, Community Arts Space, Nonprofit Venue  
 Tucson, AZ

#### **Board & Brush Oro Valley**

boardandbrush.com/orovalley/  
 #calendar-workshop  
 orovalley@boardandbrush.com  
 Maker Space, Event Space, Workshop Studio  
 Tucson, AZ

#### **Borderlands Theater**

borderlandstheater.org  
 milta@borderlandstheater.org  
 Theatre, Cultural Traditions, Public Speaking  
 Tucson, AZ

#### **Brother John's Beer, Bourbon & BBQ**

brotherjohns.com/brother-johns-beer-bourbon-bbq/private-dining-events  
 catering@brotherjohns.com  
 Event Space, Reception Hall, Restaurant / Bar  
 Tucson, AZ

#### **Button Brew House**

buttonbrewhouse.com  
 drink@buttonbrew.com  
 Special Event Venue, Community Center, Brewery  
 Tucson, AZ

#### **Cactus Wren Art Gallery**

cactuswrenart.gallery  
 gale@cactuswrenart.gallery  
 Gallery, Jewelry, Artist Studios  
 Tubac, AZ

#### **Casa Montaña**

alejandraarte.com  
 casamontanogallery@gmail.com  
 Artist Studios, Gallery, Historic Space  
 Tucson, AZ

#### **Catalina Craft Pizza**

catalinacraftpizza.com  
 tonyjacobsen90@gmail.com  
 Restaurant, Pizza, Live Music  
 Venue  
 Catalina, AZ

#### **Catalyst Creative Collective**

Catalyst: artstateaz.org  
 kevin@saaca.org  
 Event Space, Artist Studios, Nonprofit Collaboration  
 Tucson, AZ

## ChocolaTree Organic Oasis

chocolatree.com  
chocolatreeoasis@gmail.com  
Restaurant, Vegetarian, Organic Meals  
Sedona, AZ

## Community Performance and Art Center

performingartscenter.org  
info@cpacfoundation.org  
Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Galleries,  
Education & Youth Arts  
Green Valley, AZ

## Crystal Courtyard

brotherjohns.com/the-crystal-court-  
yard  
catering@brotherjohns.com  
Event Space, Reception Hall, Special  
Event Venue  
Tucson, AZ

## Culinary Curator, LLC

debbiejelder.com  
info@debbiejelder.com  
Event Space, Culinary Consultant,  
Photography Studio  
Fountain Hills, AZ

## Etherton Gallery

ethertongallery.com  
info@ethertongallery.com  
Photography, Visual Art, Contem-  
porary Art  
Tucson, AZ

## Flam Chen

flamchen.com  
info@flamchen.com  
Aerial, Circus Arts, Special Acts  
Tucson, AZ

## Fox Tucson Theatre

foxtucson.com  
bryxxton@foxtucson.com  
Performing Arts, Arts & Cultural  
Development, Concerts  
Tucson, AZ

## Galeria Mitotera

galeriamitotera.com  
galeriamitotera@gmail.com  
Gallery, Workshop Space, Store/  
Retail Space  
Tucson, AZ

## Groundworks Tucson

groundworkstucson.com  
info@groundworkstucson.com  
Performing Arts, Visual Arts &  
Galleries, Education & Youth Arts  
Tucson, AZ

## Koru Multicultural and Diverse Library

librarykoru.com  
korulibrary@yahoo.com  
Arts & Cultural Development,  
Education & Youth Arts, Library  
Tucson, AZ

## Las Milpitas Community Farm

communityfoodbank.org/locat-  
ions/las-milpitas-community-farm  
gsaavedra@communityfood-  
bank.org  
Community Garden, Event Space,  
Outdoor Venue  
Tucson, AZ

## Last Exit Live

lastexitlive.com  
Music Venue, Concert Hall, Event  
Space  
Phoenix, AZ

## Live Theatre Workshop

livetheatreworkshop.org  
info@livetheatreworkshop.org  
Theatre, Education and Classes,  
Public Speaking  
Tucson, AZ

## Madaras Gallery

madaras.com  
gallery@madaras.com  
Gallery, Visual Art, Southwest Art  
Tucson, AZ

## Marymar Events

marymarevents.com  
marymareventstucson@gmail.com  
Event Space, Reception Hall,  
Special Event Venue  
Tucson, AZ

## Milkweed Arts

milkweedartsaz.com  
Artist Studios, Maker Space, Glass  
Art, Classes  
Phoenix, AZ

## Mission Garden - Friends of Tucson's Birthplace

missiongarden.org  
info@missiongarden.org  
Heritage & Historic Preservation,  
Food Systems, Education & Youth Arts  
Tucson, AZ

## MOCA Tucson (Museum of Contemporary Art)

moca-tucson.org  
info@moca-tucson.org  
Venues - Event, Contemporary, Gallery  
Tucson, AZ

## Monterey Court

montereycourtaz.com  
office@montereycourtaz.com  
Live Music, Special Events, Artisan  
Market  
Tucson, AZ

## Museum of Northern Arizona

musnaz.org  
info@musnaz.org  
Visual Arts & Galleries, Heritage &  
Historic Preservation, Museums  
Flagstaff, AZ

## Musical Instrument Museum

mim.org

[480] 478-6000  
Global Music Traditions, Music  
Performance, Education and Classes  
Phoenix, AZ

## National Mercantile

thenationaltucson.com  
info@thenationaltucson.com  
Event Space, Cultural Center, Wine  
Shop  
Tucson, AZ

## Neopragma LLC

lnicolette.faso.com  
malunicolette@gmail.com  
Artist Studios, Gallery, Glass Art  
Tucson, AZ

## Nopalera Studios

nopalerastudios.org  
nopalerastudios@gmail.com  
Artist Studios, Event Space, Arts  
Education  
Green Valley, AZ

## Oracle Center for the Arts

oraclepianosociety.org/gallery  
opinsky@oraclepianosociety.org  
Gallery, Concert Hall, Music Venue  
Oracle, AZ

## Patronato San Xavier

patronatosanxavier.org  
info@patronatosanxavier.org  
Arts & Cultural Development,  
Heritage & Historic Preservation  
Tucson, AZ

## Philabaum Glass Gallery

philabaumglass.com  
gallery@philabaumglass.com  
Gallery, Glass, Store/Retail Space  
Tucson, AZ

## Photo Studio Tucson

https://www.peerspace.com/  
pages/listings/672437205945531b-  
75f0fe30  
Photography Studio, Film / Videog-  
raphy / Television, Event Space  
Tucson, AZ

## Presidio San Agustín del Tucson Museum

tucsonpresidio.com  
info@tucsonpresidio.com  
Heritage, Museums, Event And  
Festival Production  
Tucson, AZ

## Reid Park Zoo

reidparkzoo.org  
info@reidparkzoo.org  
Science & Nature, Education &  
Youth Arts, Animal Conservation  
Tucson, AZ

## Roosevelt ArtWorks

kristinwesley.com

kristinwesley@cox.net

Artist Studios, Art Therapy, Tattoo  
Studio  
Phoenix, AZ

## San Xavier Co-Op Farm

sanxaviercoop.org  
sxca@sanxaviercoop.org  
Cultural Center, Event Space,  
Garden  
Tucson, AZ

## Santa Theresa Tile Works

santatheresatileworks.com  
customerservice@santatheresa-  
tileworks.com  
Arts & Cultural Development,  
Visual Arts, Education & Youth Arts  
Tucson, AZ

## Savoy Opera House in Trail Dust Town

savoyoperahouse.com  
office@savoyoperahouse.com  
Event Space, Reception Hall,  
Historic Space  
Tucson, AZ

## Sculpture Tucson

sculpturetucson.org  
sculpturetucson@gmail.com  
Arts & Cultural Development,  
Event Production, Gallery  
Tucson, AZ

## Solar Culture Gallery

solarculture.org  
kati.astraeir@gmail.com  
Arts & Cultural Development,  
Event Production, Gallery  
Tucson, AZ

## Sonora Arts & Music Initiative

sonoraarts.org  
sonoraartsandmusic@gmail.com  
Music, Cultural Exchange, Artist  
Support  
Tucson, AZ

## Southern Arizona Watercolor Guild

southernazwatercolorguild.com  
president@southernazwater-  
colorguild.com  
Visual Arts, Watercolor, Artist  
Community  
Tucson, AZ

## Temple Arts Collective

templeartscollective@gmail.com  
Artist Studios, Event Space, Gallery  
Tucson, AZ

## The Arivaca Dancehall

arivacadancehall.com  
arivacadancehall@gmail.com  
Dance Studio, Music Venue, Event  
Space  
Arivaca, AZ

**The Century Room at Hotel Congress**

centuryroomtucson.com  
centuryroom@hotelcongress.com  
Music Venue, Event Space, Jazz  
Tucson, AZ

**The Drawing Studio**

thedrawingstudio.org  
tds@thedrawingstudio.org  
Visual Arts & Galleries, Education &  
Youth Arts, Creative Aging  
Tucson, AZ

**The Gaslight Music Hall in Oro Valley**

gaslightmusichall.com  
[520] 529-1000  
Concert Hall, Event Space, Music  
Venue  
Tucson, AZ

**The Gaslight Theatre**

thegaslighttheatre.com  
[520] 886-9428  
Theatre, Concert Hall, Music  
Venue  
Tucson, AZ

**The Grand Tucson**

thegrandtucson.com  
info@thegrandtucson.com  
Event Space, Reception Hall,  
Special Event Venue  
Tucson, AZ

**The Historic Y**

thehistoricity.com  
katrina@thehistoricity.com  
Community Center, Event Space,  
Gallery  
Tucson, AZ

**The Land With No Name Sanctuary**

thelandwithnoname.org  
totheland@gmail.com  
Visual & Traditional Arts, Cultural  
Development, Artist Residency  
Tucson, AZ

**The Lost Barrio Gallery**

lostbarriogallery.com  
[520] 623-9856  
Gallery, Artist Studios, Music Venue  
Tucson, AZ

**The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures**

theminitimemachine.org  
[520] 881-0606  
Visual Arts & Galleries, Education &  
Youth Arts, Museums  
Tucson, AZ

**The Rialto Theatre**

rialtotheatre.com  
[520] 647-4123  
Performing Arts, Arts & Cultural  
Development, Concerts  
Tucson, AZ

**The Rubi House**

brotherjohns.com/the-rubi-house  
catering@brotherjohns.com  
Event Space, Historic Space,  
Special Event Venue  
Tucson, AZ

**The Scoundrel and Scamp Theatre**

scoundrelandscamp.org  
director@scoundrelandscamp.org  
Theatre, Youth Theatre, Education  
and Classes  
Tucson, AZ

**The Teapot | Historic House Event Space in Downtown Phoenix**

theteapotus.com  
info@theteapotus.com  
Event Space, Historic Space,  
Reception Hall  
Phoenix, AZ

**Tubac Center of the Arts**

tubacarts.org  
executivedirector@tubacarts.org  
Performing Arts, Visual Arts &  
Galleries, Education & Youth Arts  
Tubac, AZ

**Tucson Botanical Gardens**

tucsonbotanical.org  
marketing@tucsonbotanical.org  
Visual Arts & Galleries, Education &  
Youth Arts, Gardens  
Tucson, AZ

**Tucson Chinese Cultural Center**

tucsonchinese.org  
info@tucsonchinese.org  
Arts & Cultural Development,  
Cultural Group  
Tucson, AZ

**Tucson Desert Art Museum**

tucsondart.org  
[520] 202-3888  
Arts & Cultural Development,  
Galleries, Folk & Traditional Arts  
Tucson, AZ

**Tucson Jewish Museum & Holocaust Center**

tjmhc.org  
museum@tjmhc.org  
Cultural Group, Heritage & Historic  
Preservation, Historic Space  
Tucson, AZ

**Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block**

tucsonmuseumofart.org  
info@tucsonmuseumofart.org  
Visual Arts & Galleries, Heritage &  
Historic Preservation, Museums  
Tucson, AZ

**Tucson Scottish Rite Cathedral**

tucsonscottishrite.org  
specialevents@tucsonscottish-rite.org  
Education & Youth Arts, Historic  
Space, Special Event Venue  
Tucson, AZ

**Union Public House**

uniontucson.com  
[520] 329-8575  
Music Venue, Restaurant / Bar,  
Event Space  
Tucson, AZ

**Untitled Gallery Tucson**

untitledgallerytucson.com  
info@untitledgallerytucson.com  
Visual Arts, Artist-Run Space, Gallery  
Tucson, AZ

**WHAM Art Association**

wham-art.org  
[623] 584-8311  
Visual Arts & Galleries, Literary  
Arts, Education & Youth Arts  
Surprise, AZ

**Wilde Meyer Gallery - Scottsdale**

wildemeyer.com  
sm@wildemeyer.com  
Gallery, Contemporary Art, Fine Art  
Scottsdale, AZ

**Wilde Meyer Gallery - Tucson**

wildemeyer.com  
sm@wildemeyer.com  
Gallery, Contemporary Art, Fine Art  
Tucson, AZ

**Willcox Theater and Arts**

willcoxtheater.com  
willcoxtheater@gmail.com  
Performing Arts, Event and Festival  
Production, Youth Arts Education  
Willcox, AZ

**Womankind Art Center**

womankind.org  
womankraftaz@gmail.com  
Visual Arts & Galleries, Folk &  
Traditional Arts, Art Classes  
Tucson, AZ

**Worlds of Words Center**

wowlit.org  
wow@arizona.edu  
Museum, Education and Classes,  
Children's Literature  
Tucson, AZ

**Xerocraft Makerspace**

xerocraft.org  
info@xerocraft.org  
STEAM Education, Community  
Development, Makerspace  
Tucson, AZ

**Yun Gee Park Gallery & Atelier**

yungeepark.com  
info@yungeepark.com  
Gallery, Cultural Organization,  
Contemporary,  
Tucson, AZ

## Visual Artists

**Geri Acosta**

geriacosta.com  
geriacosta@comcast.net  
Oil, Painting

**Nathanael Addison**

Tu Kaets Studios  
tukaets.com  
tukaets@gmail.com  
Ceramics, Stoneware, Sculpture

**Maxie Adler**

maxieadler.com  
maxieadler@gmail.com  
Mural, Spinning & Weaving, Textiles

**Abel (Pato) Aguilar**

aguilarncompany@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Drawing, Mural

**Hikmat Ahmad**

Southwest Treasure Inc  
southwesttreasuresart.com  
hikmat.n.ahmad@gmail.com  
Metal

**Andres Ahuactzin**

Lupitas Metal Art  
hemy1723@gmail.com  
Metal

**Edwina Alarcon**

Edwina the Artist  
edwinatheartist.com  
edwinatheartist@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Digital Art, Mural

**Scott Olga Aldrich**

Lotion In A Bar  
lotioninabar.com  
aldrich@lotioninabar.com  
Beauty Products, Craft Arts

**Raul Alejandro**

Thread Design by Raul  
threaddesignbyraul.com  
raul.galejandro@gmail.com  
Fiber Art, Mixed Media 2D/3D

**Alix Alejandro**

Loyal Bird  
loyalbird.org  
https://www.loyalbird.org/contact  
Fiber Art, Embroidery, Mural

**Lindsey Alexander**

Copper Lizard Creations  
copperlizardcreations@gmail.com  
Fiber, Glass, Specialty Gifts

**Sara Altieri**

Green Heart Community Art  
greenheartgallery.com  
Acrylic

**Marcela Alvarado**

Nuestro Tienda Caballo  
nuestrotiendacaballo@gmail.com  
Clothing



**Cirque Collective**

Fire  
Aerial  
Stilting  
Acro Yoga  
LED Props

Available for Hire  
**CirqueCollective@Yahoo.com**  
**www.CirqueCollective.com**

**Judith Amiel-Bendheim**

Ceramics by Judith  
ceramicsbyjudith.com  
yamiel75@gmail.com  
Ceramics, Jewelry

**Tamara Scott Anderson**

Tamara Scott Anderson Designs  
tamaraartist.com  
tamaralee1220@gmail.com  
Fiber Art, Sculpture, Textiles

**Susan Anderton**

Westerly Gems  
anderton.susan@gmail.com  
Jewelry, Handmade Craft Jewelry

**Tony Andrulis**

andrulisart.com  
tony@andrulisart.com  
Oil, Pen & Ink, Watercolor

**Jack Armstrong**

Shark Fin Gear Company  
sharkfingear.com  
jack@sharkfingear.com  
Specialty Gifts, Fiber

**Kathleen Arthur**

K. Arthur Art  
karthurart.com  
arthurk33@yahoo.com  
Mixed Media

**Maria Arvayo**

Maria Arvayo Fine Arts  
maria.arvayo@gmail.com  
Encaustic, Oil, Watercolor

**Robert Ashbaugh**

Robert Ashbaugh Digital Design  
robertashbaughdigitaldesign.com  
rashbaugh@aol.com  
Digital Art, Photography, Book Binding

**Kati Astraier**

astraeir.com  
kati.astraeir@gmail.com  
Drawing, Mural, Oil

**Corinne Babcock**

Corie Sue's Creations  
coriesuescreations.com  
coriesuescreations@gmail.com  
Jewelry, Fiber Art, Mixed Media 2D/3D

**Rhonda Bair**

Rhonda's Ornaments  
rbairtaz@aol.com  
Painting

**David Baker**

DJB Woodshed  
djdibaker@gmail.com  
Wood, Specialty Jewelry, Specialty Gifts

**Carrie Barcom**

The Silver Hive  
thesilverhive.com  
thesilverhiveaz@gmail.com  
Jewelry

**Linda Bayne**

Elbes Jewelry  
facebook.com/elbesjewelry  
lindab121@gmail.com  
Jewelry

**Michelle Beaumont Owens**

Artifact Photography Studio  
artifactps@gmail.com  
Digital Art, Photography

**Ryan Beckman**

Beckman Built Boards  
beckmanbuiltboards.com  
(785) 643-2236  
Wood

**RA Beeler-Sturgill**

RA Sturgill Fine Art  
beelersturgill@gmail.com  
Oil

**Karen Bellamy**

Karen Bellamy, Architect  
karenbellamyarchitect.com  
karbellam@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Pen & Ink, Watercolor

**John Benedict**

Some Distant World  
somedistantworld.com  
somedistantworld@gmail.com  
Metal, Mixed Media

**Zalman Berkowitz**

zalMania  
zalman.me  
zal@zalman.me  
Acrylic, Oil, Pen & Ink

**Leslie Berry**

leslieberryfineart.com  
leslieb8605@gmail.com  
Oil, Watercolor

**Nancy Biggins**

Copper Hummingbird by Nancy Biggins®  
copperhummingbird.com  
copperhummingbird@gmail.com  
Metal, Functional Art

**Sky Black**

skyblackart.com  
sky@skyblackart.com  
Acrylic, Digital Art, Oil

**Julie Bonner**

Julie Originals LLC  
julieoriginals.com  
julie@julieoriginals.com  
Acrylic

**Odell Borg**

Odell Borg - High Spirits Flutes  
highspirits.com  
odell@highspirits.com  
Flute, Woodworking, Musical Instruments

**Nina Borgia-Aberle**

ninaborgiaaberle.com  
info@ninaborgiaaberle.com  
Ceramics, Sculpture, Public Art

**Tina Bosey**

Mama Bear AZ  
mamabearaz.com  
mamabearaz1@gmail.com  
Drawing, Manipulated Digital Imagery, Candles

**Joe Bourne**

joebourne.com  
joebourne@comcast.net  
Acrylic, Encaustic

**BG Boyd**

BG Boyd Photography LLC  
bgboydphoto.com  
info@bgboydphoto.com  
Photography, Video, Drone

**Jacqueline Bradley**

Chrystal Canyon Creations  
jacquelinebradley.com  
jblazer123@aol.com  
Jewelry, Metalwork

**Rodney Brean**

R and W Gifts  
wandabrean@gmail.com  
Sculpture, Specialty Gifts, Furniture

**Geri Bringman**

Geri Bringman Fine Art  
flickr.com/photos/geribringman  
geribring@msn.com  
Acrylic, Giclee

**Nate Brown**

Nate's Art  
natesart1997@gmail.com  
Digital Art, Giclee

**Tracy Brown**

Tracy Brown Art  
tracybrownart.com  
tracybrownartist@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Drawing, Mural

**Dale Bruder**

dalebruder.com  
info@dalebruder.com  
Drawing

**Margarethe Brummermann**

Brummermann's Art and Science  
margarethebrummermannwater-  
colors.blogspot.com  
mbrummermann@comcast.net  
Watercolor

**Maureen Brusa Zappellini**

MBZStudioart  
mbzstudioart.com  
mbzmetals724@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Jewelry, Oil

**Ren Buchness**

renbuchness.carbonmade.com  
lrbuchness@gmail.com  
Watercolor, Collage

**Penny Buckley**

Penny Buckley Art  
pennybuckleyart.com  
pjb@pennybuckleyart.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Photography,  
Print Making

**Martha Burgess**

Flor de Mayo LLC  
[520] 907-9471  
Watercolor, Calligraphy, Collage

**Angela Burton**

Art Mixer  
artmixer.net  
artmixertucson@gmail.com  
Painting, Visual Art Classes,  
Creative Aging

**Heather Buton**

19 Nighthawk Designs  
hbuton@hotmail.com  
Specialty Gifts, Mixed Media,  
Framed Artwork

**Michelle Caillet**

CB+CO studio  
cbcostudio.etsy.com  
Jewelry, Textiles, Beading

**Michelle Caillet**

Greyt Escape  
greytescape.com  
Crafts, Textiles, Fiber

**Annette Campbell**

Metisse Designs by Annette Campbell  
metisse-designs-by-annette.square.site  
adcampbell@comcast.net  
Jewelry, Metalwork

**Shawn Campbell**

Udderly Natural Products  
udderlynaturalproducts.com  
shawn@udderlynaturalproducts.com  
Beauty Products, Embellished  
Clothing

**Sean Cannon**

seanjohncannon.com  
seanjohncannon@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Oil, Pen & Ink

**Virginia Cannon**

Cannon Fine Art, LLC  
virginiacannon.com  
virginia@virginiacannon.com  
Glass, Oil, Sculpture

**Robert Cao-Ba**

rcaoba@gmail.com  
Digital Art, Oil, Photography

**Carolina Caples**

Carolina Caples Art  
carolinacaples.com  
calizca@outlook.com  
Oil

**Veta Carney**

Carney Art Glass  
carneyartglass.com  
vetajohn@mac.com  
Glass, Jewelry

**Candi Carrell**

candicarrell.art  
azfairyduster@msn.com  
Ceramics, Metalwork, Sculpture

**Isaac Caruso**

Isaac Caruso  
isaacncarus.com  
isaac@isaacncarus.com  
Acrylic, Mural, Sculpture, Trauma  
Informed Art Classes

**Rachel Castillo**

Rachel Marie Photography  
rachelmarie.photography  
info@rachelmarie.photography  
Photography

**Jerry Cave**

jerrycaveart.com  
Acrylic

**Summer Celeste**

Summer Celeste Porcelain Art  
summerceleste.com  
summerceleste@aol.com  
Acrylic, Watercolor, Ceramic

**Ashley Chamberlain**

AC Design Etc  
acdesignetc.com  
acdesignetc@comcast.net  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Woodwork

**Chris Chamberlain**

Chris Chamberlain Photography  
chrischamberlainphotography.com  
chrischamberlain.smugmug.com  
cchamberlain365@gmail.com  
Photography, Printmaking, Framed  
Artwork

**Jacqueline Chanda**

Jacqueline Chanda Fine Art  
jacquelinechanda.com  
chandajl40@gmail.com  
Oil

**Kyle Chansley**

creality9@gmail.com  
Drawing, Mural, Sculpture

**Christopher Chapman**

Chappily.com  
chappily.com  
chappy@chappily.com  
Oil

**Linda Chappel**

Linda L Chappel Art LLC  
lindalchappel.com/artist  
llchappel@gmail.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Oil, Print  
Making

**Debborah Charboneau**

debborahcharboneau.com  
dcharboneauart@gmail.com  
Oil, Pastel

**Jodie Chertudi**

JLewers Design  
jlewers.com  
design@jlewers.com  
Digital Art, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Mural

**Casey Cheuvront**

Casey Cheuvront Fine Art  
caseychevront.com  
cheuvrontart@gmail.com  
Oil, Watercolor, Pen & Ink

**Kim Chiappetti**

KChi Clay/Phun Potz  
kchiclay.com etsy.com/shop/  
phunpotz  
kchiclay@gmail.com  
Ceramic

**Annette Cicconetti**

Baggonetti  
baggonetti@outlook.com  
Fiber Art

**Susan Clark**

susanclarkart.com  
susanclarkf@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Oil Pastel

**Rebecca Clark Andrino**

RC Photo Studio  
rcphotostudio.com  
rcphotostudio74@yahoo.com  
Photography

**Bill Colligen**

billcolligen.com  
billcolligen@gmail.com  
Gourd

**Rose Collins**

Rose Collins Artist  
rosecollinsartist.com  
rcollinsartist@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Oil

**Jeanne Conant Kramer**

Jeanne Conant Kramer Fine Art  
Studio  
artjconant.com  
jeanne@artjconant.com  
Pastel

**Lee Ann Conlan**

leeannconlan.art  
leeann@leeannconlan.com  
Acrylic, Charcoal, Collage

**Alisha Conner**

Desert Dots Art Studio  
desertdotsartstudio.com  
desertdotsartstudio@gmail.com  
Acrylic

**Morgiana Correa**

Macs Upcycle  
macs4arizona@gmail.com  
Sculpture

**Juliette Cowall**

Seamstress Juliette  
juliettecowall@gmail.com  
Fiber Art, Textiles, Garments

**Rex Cowan**

Sarkany's Rising, LLC  
sarkanysrising.com  
info@sarkanysrising.com  
Crafts, Woodwork

**David Craig**

David Craig Designs  
desertindecay.com  
Sculpture

**Diana Creighton**

Diana Creighton Studio  
dianacreightonart.com  
dianacreightonart@gmail.com  
Charcoal, Oil, Acrylic

**Cris Crichton**

cc@designtimestwo.com  
Felting, Fiber Art, Spinning &  
Weaving

**Jamie Crooks**

TAG Custom Laser Engraving, LLC  
tagcustomlaserengraving@gmail.com  
Specialty Gifts, Craft Arts,  
Upcycled / Recycled

**James Crosby**

Peppermint Jim  
peppermintjim.com  
Craft Arts, Beauty Products

**Kirk Cross**

Igneous  
rustbewithus@gmail.com  
Glass, Metalwork, Welded Steel

**Jill Crozier**

HPSilver, LLC.  
hpsilver.com  
jill@hpsilver.com  
Jewelry, Metalwork

**Geoff Culbertson**

Culbertson Art  
culbertsonart.com  
gculbert70@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Encaustic



**Leander D'Ambrosia**

leanderdambrosia.com  
wearables@leanderdambrosia.com  
Jewelry

**Ami Dalal**

ami.persona.co  
amidstl@gmail.com  
Ceramics, Collage, Print Making

**Dedrea Danilov**

Dedreajewels Designs/Earthlove Bags  
dedreajewelsdesigns.com  
dedreajewels@gmail.com  
Jewelry

**Lorraine DarConte**

darcontephotoart.etsy.com  
darconte@mac.com  
Collage, Ceramics, Photography

**Mary Davis**

marydavisart.com  
mary@okcoachme.com  
Acrylic, Photography, Watercolor

**Robert Davis**

Ironhorse Salvage Art  
ironhorsesalvageart.com  
ethylbob@gmail.com  
Metal

**LJ De La Rosa**

The Rat Shop  
Acrylic, Spinning & Weaving, Craft Arts

**Guadalupe De la Torre**

guadalupe.delatorreart.com  
gdelatorre1@yahoo.com  
Acrylic, Sculpture, Watercolor

**Enrique De los Angeles**

De Los Angeles Weaving  
rickweaving@gmail.com  
Fiber

**Donna Deaver**

Donna Deaver Art  
donnaeaver.com  
donna@donnaeaver.com  
Fiber Art, Textiles, Watercolor

**Alonso Delgadillo**

alonsodelgadillo.com  
alonso.delgadillo@gmail.com  
Mural

**Jimmy Descant**

Deluxe West  
deluxerocketships.com/perfor-  
mances.html  
jimmydescant@gmail.com  
Collage, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Sculpture

**Benilda Devarie**

Mother Chalker  
mother-chalker.com  
thatmotherchalker@gmail.com  
Pastel, Chalk

**Carson Deyoung**

Carson Deyoung  
depsone.com  
depsonebk@gmail.com  
Mural

**Tony Di Angelis**

tonydiangelis.com  
tonydiangelis@yahoo.com  
Acrylic, Collage, Mixed Media

**Brenda Dickason**

Dickason Artisans  
dickasonartisans.com  
brownpi@comcast.net  
Beauty Products, Specialty Gifts

**Bronwyn Dierssen**

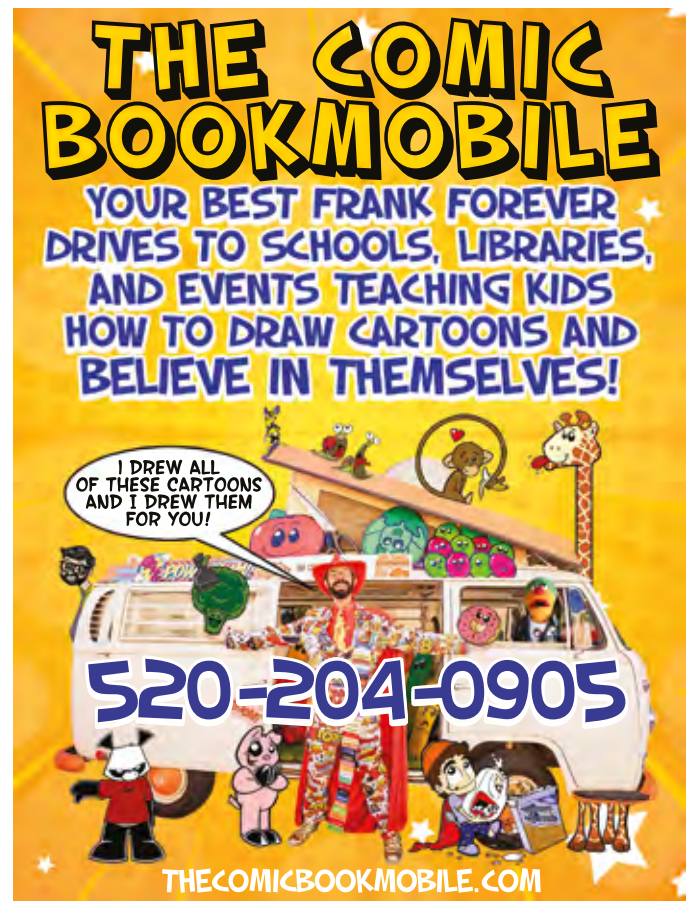
Bronwyn Dierssen Studio LLC  
bronwyndierssen.com  
bronwyndierssenart@gmail.com  
Charcoal, Mural, Oil

**Mary Theresa Dietz**

Mary Theresa Dietz Fine Art  
mtdietz.com  
mtdietz@mac.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Oil, Sculpture

**Deanna Dillard**

Trendy Bullsh\*t  
Drawing, Pen & Ink, Watercolor



**Lili Donovan**

Lila Art  
lila.art.arizona@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Crafts, Painting

**Paul Dougherty**

Doc's Dyes  
docsdyes.com  
docsdyes@gmail.com  
Fiber

**Nancy Drigotas**

nancydrigotas.com  
nancydrigotas@yahoo.com  
Acrylic, Oil, Print Making

**Olivier Dubois-Cherrier**

theislandintucson.org  
duboischerrier@icloud.com  
Painting, Sculpture, Land Art

**Pam Dunn**

Arizona Warmth Creations  
arizonawarmth.com  
arizonawarmth@gmail.com  
Crafts, Textiles, Embroidery

**KymSue Ecker**

Dezignz By KymSue  
dezignzbykysue@gmail.com  
Jewelry, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Sculpture

**Spencer Edgerton**

Arkane Arts Ilc  
spenceredgerton.com  
arkanearts@gmail.com  
Bronze, Welded Steel, Kinetic

**Andrea Edmundson**

Mosaics by Andrea  
andreaedmundson.art  
mosaicsbyandrea@gmail.com  
Mosaic

**Dr. Amy Eisenberg**

universityofarizona.academia.edu/  
amy Eisenbergphd  
dramyeis@yahoo.com  
Acrylic, Drawing, Pen & Ink

**Marcy Ellis**

marcyellis.com  
marcyellisllc@gmail.com  
Pen & Ink, Watercolor, Face/Body  
Painting


**Tanja Caterina Eltze**

moca23  
moca23.com  
art@moca23.com  
Acrylic, Charcoal, Metalwork

**Katrina Emmert**

eyelie.mxf  
eyeliemxf.com  
Photography, Video

**Carlos Encinas**

encinas6.wixsite.com/paintings  
encinas6@cox.net  
Digital Art, Photography

**Kerry Engbarth**

KME4Art  
kerryengbarth.artstorefronts.com  
kme4art@kerryengbarthfineart.com  
Acrylic, Collage, Oil

**Ariana Enriquez**

arianaenriquez.com  
ariana.b.enriquez@gmail.com  
Murals, Painting

**Monty Esposito**

theseswon38@gmail.com  
Mural

**Catherine Eyde**

Catherine Eyde Art + Design  
catherineeyde.com  
catherineeyde.artwork@gmail.com  
Mixed Media

**Andrew Farias**

TDOG Art and Apparel  
thedaysofgreen88@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Digital Art, Pen & Ink

**Shane Farmer**

Power to Change Chainmaille  
shanelfarmer.com  
powertochange76@gmail.com  
Jewelry, Glass, Metalwork

**Peter Farrow**

pfarrowl@cox.net  
Oil

**Patty Fawn**

Patty Fawn Native American Arts  
docandpatty44@gmail.com  
Ceramics, Jewelry, Felting

**Samantha Feinstein**

Formed and Fired LLC  
goimagine.com/formedandfiredllc  
sculptress@cox.net  
Sculpture

**Luz Felix**

lucamen\_@hotmail.com  
Acrylic, Collage, Alcohol Ink

**Denyse Fenelon**

Studio 6 Gallery  
studio6gallery.com  
denysefenelon@gmail.com  
Oil

**Susan Ferguson**

susanfergusonartist.com  
susanfergusonartist@gmail.com  
Collage, Encaustic, Fiber Art

**Bela Fidel**

Bela Fidel Fine Art  
belafidelart.com  
belafidel@gmail.com  
Abstract Painting, Mixed Media,  
Encaustics

**Marcellus Field**

Hereditary Outlaw  
hereditaryoutlaw@gmail.com  
Mixed Media, Photography,  
Installation Art

**Joe Figueiredo**

Joe Fig Enterprises  
promastiff@aol.com  
Mixed Media, Furniture

**Joanne Fisher**

Jo Fisher Art  
jofisher.art  
joanne@jofisher.art  
Ceramics, Pottery, Sculpture"

**Tracy Foltz**

Zinnia Sky Studio  
zinniaskystudio.com  
zinniaskystudio@gmail.com  
Watercolor, Drawing

**Diane Fortney**

Phun Potz  
etsy.com/shop/phunpotz  
spongekakedf@msn.com  
Ceramics

**Robyn Fowler**

Rusty Paws  
rustypawsaz@gmail.com  
Metal, Wood

**Frank Fowler Jr**

Frank Fowler Jr  
frankfowlerjr98@gmail.com  
Painting

**Joan Fox**

BeeStill  
beestillcardsprints.com  
beestillcardsprints@gmail.com  
Greeting Cards, Photography, Print  
Making

**Lana Fultz**

Lana's Designs  
artist.com-lana-fultz  
lanabanana223@yahoo.com  
Oil


**Mary Jean Galivan**

maryjeangelivan.com  
mjgal3@msn.com  
Acrylic, Encaustic, Print Making

**Luis Fernando Garcia**

Border Photography Services  
borderphotographyservices.com  
luis@borderphotographyservices.  
com  
Manipulated Digital Imagery,  
Photography

**Luis Garcia**

Border Photography Services  
borderphotographyservices.com  
(520) 841-0370  
Photography, Performing Arts,  
Cultural Documentation

**Ignacio Garcia**

Arte By Ignacio  
ignacioheartist.com  
artebyignacio@gmail.com  
Mural

**Francisco Garcia**

instagram.com/artjusticemurals  
fgarcia9@asu.edu  
Murals

**Leslie Garry**

Slossy Jewelry  
slossy.com  
slossy@aol.com  
Jewelry

**Shannon Garvey**

Sea of Sun Tattoo  
shannongtattoo@gmail.com  
Drawing, Watercolor, Face/Body  
Painting


**Judith Gary**

JAG Art Studio  
judithgary.com  
jag-art@cox.net  
Pastel, Pencil, Watercolor

**Kathryn Gastelum**

Kathryn Gastelum Art  
kathryngastelumart.com  
studiogastelum@gmail.com  
Oil, Cold Wax

**Terri Gay**

terriganay.com  
terriganayfineart@gmail.com  
Watercolor

**Kenny Gaynor**

Kokofin Creations  
kengaynorus@gmail.com  
Sculpture, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Woodwork

**Elisabeth Geel**

elisabethgeel.com  
elisabethgeel@gmail.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Oil,  
Watercolor

**Allie Giambalvo**

alliegiambalvo.com  
alliegiambalvo@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Mural, Oil

**Eledel Giddings**

Iguhit Art Studio  
iguhit.com  
eledel@iguhit.com  
Drawing, Oil, Watercolor

**Anfaney Gladwin**

Pastel

**Andi Goetz**

Andi's Craft Room - Upcycled  
andriagoetz@yahoo.com  
Crafts, Quilting, Textiles

**Barbara Goldberg**

barbgoldbergart.com  
barb@barbgoldbergart.com  
Acrylic, Digital Art, Mixed Media  
2D/3D

**Rita Goldner**

Rita Goldner Books  
ritagoldnerbooks.com  
ritagoldner@msn.com  
Digital Art, Drawing, Illustrator

**Debra Goley**

Debra Goley Art  
debragoleyart.com  
debra@debragoleyart.com  
Fiber Art, Art Quilting, Collage

**Jennifer Golubiewski**

Sunny Slope Design Studio  
jennifergolubiewski.com  
jennifer.golubiewski@gmail.com  
Acrylic

**Ana Laura Gonzalez**

Nossub Gallery  
nossubgallery.com  
nossubgallery1@gmail.com  
Digital Art, Photography, Van Dyke  
Prints

**Lyanne Goodluck**

Goodluck & Crowther Navajo  
Jewelry  
jewell@rocketmail.com  
Jewelry

## Shazieh Gorji

Agave Pantry  
agavepantry.com  
info@agavepantry.com  
Ceramics

## Virginia Gott

vgottdrawings.com  
studio@vgottdrawings.com  
Acrylic, Drawing, Oil

## Eric and Charlatta Greenstone

Greenstone Collection Pottery and Crafts  
https://greenstonecollection.square.site/greenstone.collection@gmail.com  
Pottery, Jewellery

## Laureen Grenus

Tea 'N Lace By Laureen Sky  
teanlace.com  
info@herbescent.net  
Fiber, Clothing

## Perianne Grignon

periannegrignon.com  
Watercolor

## Nicole Gross

Nicole Gross Photography  
nicolegrossphotography.com  
nlgimagery@gmail.com  
Photography

## Cindy Guare

Cindy Guare Paint & Design  
cindyguareart.com  
cynthiaguare@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Mural, Oil



## Amy Guillory

Amy G's Desert Designs  
(405) 210-5864  
Photography

## Todd and Michelle Haden

Berkshire Bags  
berkshirebags.com  
mhaden12@outlook.com  
Fiber

## Ulli Hain

ullihainart.com  
hain.ulli@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Collage, Mixed Media  
2D/3D

## Douglas Hall

Fire, Steel, and Wood  
info@firesteelwood.com  
Sculpture, Welded Steel

## Mikayla Hammock

Intricate Ink Studio  
intricateinkstudio.com  
mikayla.hammock@gmail.com  
Drawing, Digital Art

## Chloë Hammond

Aptegwai  
chloedavishammond.art  
ukulelegirl7@gmail.com  
Watercolor

## Mary Hammond

Calla Glass Designs  
callaglassdesigns.com  
callaglassdesigns@gmail.com  
Glass

## Bruce & Joan Hane

Southwestern Vibes  
southwesternvibes.com  
southwesternvibes@icloud.com  
Sculpture, Woodwork

## Charlene Hardin

heartinarts.com  
cmarihardin@gmail.com  
Charcoal, Digital Art, Drawing

## Melissa Hare

Amethyst Junction, LLC  
amethystjunction.com  
contactme@amethystjunction.com  
Woodwork

## Meg Harper

Meg Harper Art  
megharper.com  
meg@megharper.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Upcycled / Recycled

## Linda Harrison-Parsons

lindaharrisonparsons.com  
lharrisonparsons@gmail.com  
Charcoal, Papermaking, Drawing

## Peter Hawkins

Peter Hawkins Photography LLC  
phawkinsphoto.com  
peter@phawkinsphoto.com  
Photography

## Kellie Hazell

KMH Expressions, LLC  
kmhexpressions.com  
info@kmhexpressions.com  
Acrylic, Jewelry, Mixed Media  
2D/3D

## Carolyn Henderson

Artistic Beadwear  
artisticbeadwear.com  
artisticbeadwear@gmail.com  
Jewelry

## Karen Hendrickson

Karen's Kumihimo  
karenskumihimo@gmail.com  
Jewelry, Handmade Craft Jewelry

## Melissa Henshaw

Melissa Henshaw Ceramics  
melissahenshawceramics.com  
melissahenshawceramics@gmail.com  
Ceramics

## Samuel Hernandez

sam2257620@maricopa.edu  
Charcoal, Drawing, Oil

## Christylyn Hess-Kretiv

Rainbow Bull Studios  
rainbowbullstudios@gmail.com  
Ceramics, Pottery, Sculpture

## Sheryl Hester

kiyoteekisses@comcast.net  
Digital Art, Nature Photography

## Angela Hill

Ash Hooke: Angela Hill - Visual and Literary Artist  
sites.google.com/view/artist-ash-hooke  
ashhooke@gmail.com  
Drawing, Oil, Watercolor, Illustrator

## Lucinda Hinojos La Morena

lamorenaart.com  
booklamorena@gmail.com  
Murals

## Angela Hitt

Angela Hitt Designs  
angelahitt.com  
ahittdesigns@gmail.com  
Jewelry

## Dan Hoffbauer

dantherealestateman1@gmail.com  
Painting, Craft Arts, Painted Canvas

## Christy Holden

Cozy Creations by Christy  
christydenh@comcast.net  
Crafts, Quilting, Spinning & Weaving

## Daniel Holladay

Holladay Design Jewelry  
dlholladay@hotmail.com  
Jewelry, Metal, Handmade Craft Jewelry

## Christina Holland

Christina Holland Designs  
christinahollanddesigns.com  
info@christinahollanddesigns.com  
Jewelry

## Kim Holmes

KAHolmes Photography  
kaholmesphotography.com  
ck.holmes@sbcglobal.net  
Photography

## Tracy Ann Holmes

tracyannholmes.com  
tracyannholmes@gmail.com  
Ceramic, Watercolor, Mural

## Paul Hopman

Scratchboard Art  
paulhopman.com  
paulhopman@gmail.com  
Framing, Giclee, Scratchboard

## Tim Hull

American Art Studio  
tim.americanartstudio@gmail.com  
Ceramics, Sculpture, Stoneware

## JoAnne Hungate

Art by JoAnne  
artbyjoanne.com  
johungate3@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Collage, Watercolor



## Kenton Hyatt

kentonhyatt.com  
khyatt@kentonhyatt.com  
Oil, Photography

## Catharine Hyatt

Catas Designs  
catasdesigns.com  
catahyatt1@gmail.com  
Glass, Mosaic

## Eric Jabloner

ericjabloner.com  
ericjabloner@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Painting

## Elsa Jacklitch

Elsa M. Jacklitch Photography  
emjphotos.org  
ejacklitch@emjphotos.org  
Photography, Head Shots, Events

## Daniel Janes

Quirky Decor  
quirkydecor2019@gmail.com  
Framed Artwork, Specialty Gifts, Furniture



## Carson Jansen

Carogi Bags  
carogi.com  
carogi@carogi.com  
Fiber

**Dinah Jasensky**

dinahjasensky.com  
dinahjasensky@gmail.com  
Drawing, Oil

**Jose Jimenez**

La Iguana Art Gallery  
laiguanaart@yahoo.com  
Ceramics, Pottery

**Alexandra Jimenez**

Alexclamation Ink  
alexclamation.com  
alexclamations@gmail.com  
Mural, Acrylic, Illustrator

**Maria Jimenez French**

Hands Of the People  
handsofthepeople.net  
handsofthepeople2022@gmail.com  
Clothing, Fiber

**Judith Johnson**

judithjohnsonart.blogspot.com  
Oil

**Maria Renée Johnson**

maria-renee.com  
griefecologies@gmail.com  
Mural, Pen & Ink

**Susan Kay Johnson**

Susan Kay Johnson  
skjpaint@gmail.com  
Sculpture, Acrylic, Drawing

**Kyle Johnston**

fineartamerica.com/profiles/  
kyle-johnston  
kylejohnston1@cox.net  
Acrylic, Collage, Mixed Media  
2D/3D

**Alex Jones**

Roadside Distractions  
rosdsidedistractions.com  
achapinjones@yahoo.com  
Acrylic, Scratchboard, Watercolor

**Bettina Jones**

Bettina Fine Art  
bettinafineart.com  
writeme@bettinafineart.com  
Painting

**Cheryl Kabala**

Cheryl Kabala Studio  
cherylkabalastudio.com  
ckabalastudio@yahoo.com  
Fiber

**Melinda Kane**

The Pink Saguaro  
thepinksaguaro@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Watercolor, Gouache

**Maria Karlosak**

maria-karlosak.pixels.com  
marikakiss6@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Painting

**Nancy Karnes**

Plated Again Silver Designs  
jbnanc1@gmail.com  
Metal

**Lauri Kaye**

Create For The People  
createforthepeople.com  
lauri@createforthepeople.com  
Digital Art, Metalwork, Mixed  
Media 2D/3D

**Loisanne Keller**

loisannekeller.com  
loisannekeller@loisannekeller.com  
Watercolor

**Martha Kelly**

Shooting Star Pottery  
shootingstarpottery.com  
[520] 604-0300  
Ceramics

**Cristoff Keyonnie**

Cedar Springs Studio  
cedarspringstudio.com  
keyonniearts@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Oil, Watercolor

**Ibrahim Khazzaka**

Ibrahim Khazzaka LLC  
ibrahim-khazzaka.com  
i.khazzaka@gmail.com  
Ceramics, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Stoneware

**Jeff Kienzle**

Acrylic

**Christie Kikel**

M3 Studio Arts  
m3studioarts@gmail.com  
Ceramics

**Moon Kim**

MooNaMoo LLC  
moonamoo.com  
mjkim@moonamoo.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Origami

**Inseong Kim**

Inseong Kim  
inseonggallery.com  
Painting, Oil, Scenery

**Doris King**

dorisking.com  
dkcreativity@comcast.net  
Jewelry

**Carolyn King**

Carolyn King  
carolynkingarts.com  
cking72@cox.net  
Acrylic, Visual Art Classes, Mixed  
Media

**Irene Klar**

ireneklar.com  
ireneklar@yahoo.com  
Acrylic, Print Making, Watercolor

**Howard Kline**

Howard Kline Fine Art Studio  
howardkline.com  
[520] 344-7885  
Watercolor, Drawing

**Judith Kohn**

Contemporary Artwork  
pjkhon17@yahoo.com  
Acrylic, Collage, Mixed Media 2D/3D

**Audreyal Koinva**

audreyalkoinva.com  
audreyalkoinva@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Woodwork

**Anderson Koinva**

andersonkoinva.com  
andersonkoinva@hotmail.com  
Jewelry, Metalwork

**Jessica Korff**

Jessica Korff Studios  
jessicakorff.com  
jessica@jessicakorff.com  
Photography

**Katherine Kwan**

Katherine Kwan | Shooter + Cutter  
+ Story-teller  
katherinekwan.com  
info@katkwan.com  
Photography, Video, Storytelling

**Greg Kyke**

Kyle Studio  
gregkylestudio.com  
gkyle.studio@gmail.com  
Painting

**Jane Larcombe**

Montana Weave  
montanaweave.com  
[406] 590-5263  
Spinning & Weaving, Sculpture

**Ann Larocca**

Ann Larocca/The Designing Lady  
thedesigningladyaz1.com  
designingladyaz@aol.com  
Mixed Media, Specialty Gifts

**Laurie Larwood**

Quail Lane Studios  
quailane.com  
larwood@quailane.com  
Digital Art, Manipulated Digital  
Imagery, Photography

**Lino Laure**

Lino Laure Art  
linolaureart.com  
linolaure@hotmail.com  
Giclee, Mural, Oil

**Katie Laws**

Painted Nook LLC  
katielaws.art  
katie@paintednook.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D

**Marsha LAZAR Klinger**

marshalazarklinger.com  
mlazarklin@gmail.com  
Oil, Pencil, Watercolor

**James Lee**

mkl702@yahoo.com  
Painting, Mixed Media, Painted  
Canvas

**Laura LePere**

3L Arts  
3larts.com  
Collage, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Scratchboard

**William Lesch**

William Lesch Fine Art  
williamlesch.com  
wlesch@williamlesch.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Photography,  
Sculpture

**Katherine Lester**

katherinejoyceillustration.com  
katherinejoyceart@gmail.com  
Murals

**Tina Levy**

Tina's Sedona  
tinassedona.com  
tinassedona@gmail.com  
French Beading, Jewelry, Bead  
Embroidery

**Randy Lewis**

Rusted Desert Metal Art  
rusteddesertaz.com  
rusteddesertaz@yahoo.com  
Sculpture, Metal

**Susan Libby**

Susan Libby Art  
susanlibbyart.com  
artsusanlibby@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Giclee, Watercolor

**Josh Lien**

joshlien27.com  
info@joshlien27.com  
Photography

**Chris Lindvig**

cdartconcepts@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Pen & Ink, Pencil

**Mary Beth Livingston**

mbcaudill@gmail.com  
Photography

**Bryce Lloyd**

Southwestern Flame Thrown  
Ceramics  
bryce.lloyd@gmail.com  
Ceramics

**Ruth Lopez**

Rustic Rose Art Studio  
rusticroseart520@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Giclee, Pencil

**Marco Antonio Lucero**

Tonyplak  
instagram.com/tonyplak  
tony.plako@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Digital Art, Mural

**Karen Lukacs**

Karen Lukacs Textiles  
karenlukacs.com  
karen@karenlukacs.com  
Collage, Fiber Art, Textiles

**Barbara MacCambridge**

bbmacc2@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Digital Art, Giclee

**Gary Mackender**

garymackender.com  
gmac@garymackender.com  
Ceramics, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Mosaic

**Scott Mackenzie**

scottmackenziestudio.com  
mackvisual@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Digital Art, Pen & Ink

**Maria Madrid Reed**

mariamadridreed.com  
mariamadridreed@gmail.com  
Mural, Print Making, Digital Art

**Anette Madzalan**

Desert Sky Gourds  
desertsky530@gmail.com  
Craft Arts, Mixed Media

**Alan Magazine**

Alan Magazine Photography  
alan.magazine@gmail.com  
Photography

**Emily Mann**

Solaz Designs Metal Art  
solaz.biz  
emilyemann@gmail.com  
Metalwork, Sculpture

**Sabrina Manygoats**

The Mathues  
themathues.com  
info@themathues.com  
Jewelry, Manipulated Digital  
Imagery, Mixed Media 2D/3D

**Cindi Mapes**

Designs by Cindi  
designsbycindi.com  
designsbycindil@gmail.com  
Glass

**Gail Marcus-Orlen**

gmopainter@gmail.com  
Oil

**Angela Marie**

angelamariarts.com  
hello@angelamariarts.com  
Acrylic, Crafts, Mixed Media 2D/3D

**Judith Mariner**

The Whale Studio  
judithmariner.com  
judithmariner@aol.com  
Acrylic, Oil, Sculpture

**Roberto Marquez**

Hand Made Copper Fountains  
handmadecopperfountains.com  
pezgato65.rm@gmail.com  
Metal, Sculpture

**Diane Marr**

diane5154@gmail.com  
Photography

**Caity Martin**

Celestial Mountains Ceramics  
instagram.com/celestialmountain-  
sceramics/?api=1  
celestialmountainsceramics@  
gmail.com  
Ceramics

**Johanna Martinez**

Derailed Design  
derailedaz@gmail.com  
Calligraphy, Digital Art, Mural

**Kelly Martinez**

Permanent Jewelry Club  
permanentjewelryclub.com  
join@permanentjewelryclub.com  
Jewelry

**Deanna Martinez-Hay**

Art 4 Your glasses  
etsy.com/shop/art4yourglasses  
(610) 570-3927  
Craft Arts, Painting

**Joyce Mason-Monheim**

Assemblage Art Ornaments and  
Wine Glasses  
jmmonheim@yahoo.com  
Mixed Media, Craft Arts, Special-  
ty Gifts

**Monika Mayer**

Second Chance Glass  
facebook.com/secondchance-  
crystals  
alpenrose7@icloud.com  
Glass, Craft Arts

**Renee McAdam**

Crossroads Calligraphy LLC  
crossroadscalligraphy.com  
Calligraphy

**Dan McCabe**

danmccabemetal.com  
dan@danmccabemetal.com  
Metal

**Casonti McClure**

Casonti Studios  
casonti.squarespace.com  
casonti@gmail.com  
Acrylic

**Deborah McDonnell**

Hainpainted Silk Designs  
deborahmcdonnell.com  
ddbrrgh@gmail.com  
Fiber, Clothing

**Jen YaYa McFarland**

yayaportraits@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Pen & Ink, Watercolor

**Sue McIntyre**

Suestuff  
etsy.com/shop/windspiritsbysue  
aqualady17@msn.com  
Crafts, Mixed Media 2D/3D, Sten-  
ciling

**Tamra McKinney**

Tamra Paints  
https://www.instagram.com/  
tamrapaintstamrawest@msn.com  
Painting, Framed Artwork

**Jack McLain**

Self Indulgent Studio  
jackmclain.com  
jackmclain@mac.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D, Oil

**Melanie McPherson**

Melanie McPherson Fine Art  
melaniemcphersonfinearts.com  
artist4peace27@gmail.com  
Charcoal, Photography, Pottery

**Deborah Mechigian**

Deborah Mechigian Art  
rockhunterdeb@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Pastel

**Sterling Medrano**

artpal.com/sterlingloiacono  
sterlingloiacono@yahoo.com  
Plein Air

**Diane Lucille Meyer**

dianemeyerart.com  
dlucyart@msn.com  
Watercolor

**Patrice Meyerdirk**

Meyerdirk Art  
meyerdirkart.com  
patrice@meyerdirkart.com  
Metal, Sculpture

**Cynthia Miller**

FineFusions.com  
finefusions.com  
clmtucson@comcast.net  
Crafts, Glass, Installation Art

**Cynthia E Miller**

Miller Studio Arts  
cemillerart.com  
cemillerart@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Collage, Mixed Media  
2D/3D

**Carrie Miller**

Carrie Crafting  
carriecrafting.com  
carrie@carriecrafting.com  
Cement

**Doug Miller**

Doug Miller Fine Art  
dougmilleraart.com  
dougmilleraart@gmail.com  
Painting

**Danyelle Minnis**

Raven Pyre  
ravenpyre.com  
minnis.danyelle@yahoo.com  
Craft Arts, Jewelry, Digital Art

**Janet Mirsky**

janetmirsky.com  
janetmirsky@mac.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D, Oil

**Alejandra Montaño**

Casa Montaño  
alejandraarte.com  
senorita.artista@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Jewelry, Woodwork

**Iveth Montoya Calvillo**

Pinta Para el Alma  
ivypintaparaelalma@gmail.com  
Watercolor

**Daniel Moore**

The Oxide Studio  
theoxidestudio.com  
nina@theoxidestudio.com  
Metalwork

**Terrence Moore**

terrencemoorephotography  
terry@terrencemoore.com  
Photography

**Juan Morales**

Johnny\_The\_Murales  
moralesjuanblue@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Mural, Oil

**Ruben Moreno**

Ruben Urrea Moreno  
rubenurreamoreno@yahoo.com  
Acrylic, Mural, Oil

**John Morey**

John Morey Photography | Natural  
Fine Art Photographics & More  
johnmoreyphotography.com  
john@johnmoreyphotography.com  
Photography, Framed Artwork

**Judy A. Morgan**

judymorganart@gmail.com  
Oil, Watercolor

**Linda Morrison**

Lucky Dog Art  
parallax@fairpoint.net  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D

**Jere Moskovitz**

Studiojere  
studiojere.com  
studiojere@gmail.com  
Jewelry

**Stevan Mrdalj**

ComputersReimagined  
computersreimagined.com  
smrdalj011@gmail.com  
Mixed Media

**Natalia Mueller**

Nikkiloo  
nikkiloo.etsy.com  
nikkiloodesigns2004@gmail.com  
Clothing, Embellished Clothing

**Barbara Mulleneaux**

Barbara Mulleneaux Art LLC  
barbaramulleneaux.com  
art@barbaramulleneaux.com  
Drawing, Oil, Cold Wax

**Patrick Mulligan**

photographystudiotucson.com/  
patrick-mulligan  
pmulligan@teamstudiocreate.com  
Photography

**Andria Munoz**

Andrias Tienda LLC  
andriastienda.com  
andriastienda@gmail.com  
Jewelry

**Liette Murphy**

Flying Crow Metalworks  
flyingcrowmetalworks.com  
liette@flyingcrowmw.com  
Jewelry

**Debra Lee Murrow**

COLORME Art Spa  
colormeartspa.com  
colormedebralee@gmail.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Oil, Pen & Ink

**Joe Mussulman**

jmussulman@yahoo.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Sculpture,  
Woodwork

**James Mustard**

jmustard2001@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Photography

**Ethan Myerson**

emfineart.com  
ethan@emfineart.com  
Digital Art, Oil, Woodwork

**Victor Navarro**

Victor Navarro Art  
victornavarroart.weebly.com  
vicnav20art@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Mural, Oil

**Yvonne Navarro**

yvonnenavarro1@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Photography, Watercolor

**Andrea Neal**

Jasperz Artz  
jpdesignzapparel.square.site  
jasp.prod@gmail.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Photography

**Kimberly Neal**

440 & Co  
fourtyco.com  
hello@fourtyco.com  
Craft Arts, Beauty Products

**Joyce Nelson**

artofjnelson.com  
joycenelson.art@gmail.com  
Oil, Watercolor

**Rachel Nelson**

Rachel Nelson Art  
rachelnelsonartist.com  
rachelnelsonartist@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D, Art  
Therapy

**Sharon Nemirov**

sharonnemirov.com  
nemirovsharon@gmail.com  
Fiber Art, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Photography

**Byron Neslen**

Byron Neslen Photography LLC  
byronneslenfineartphotography  
byronneslen@gmail.com  
Photography

**Lourdes Nicolette**

Neopragma LLC  
lnicolette.faso.com  
malunicolette@gmail.com  
Glass, Mosaic, Sculpture

**Katie Noboa**

Canoa Naturals  
canoanaturals.com  
katiennoboa@gmail.com  
Jewelry, Specialty Jewelry, Hand-  
made Craft Jewelry

**Suzi Pinki Nutter**

Opulent Silk/The Copper Camel  
fasa-art.com  
thecoppercamel@gmail.com  
Fiber Art, Surface Design, Textiles

**Allison O'Shea**

AWO Bright Designs  
awobrightdesigns.com  
awobrightdesigns@gmail.com  
Furniture, Upcycled / Recycled,  
Mixed Media

**Amy Jo Obbink**

SparrowDesignsbyAmyJo  
sparrowdesignsbyamyjo.com  
sparrowdesignsbyamyjo@gmail.com  
Jewelry, Metal

**Kim & Krystal Obrzut**

Seyesnem Bronze  
seyesnembronze.com  
kimandkrystal@gmail.com  
Sculpture, Metal

**Clara Ochoa**

Created by Clara  
facebook.com/c.ochoathemud-  
slinger  
cochoa.themudslinger@yahoo.com  
Ceramic

**Ryan Olinger**

Fork Tailed Media  
forktailed.com  
info.forktailed@gmail.com  
Photography, Video

**Robert Oliver**

Distinctive Burl Design  
sherlockswatson@hotmail.com  
Wood

**Christy Olsen**

christyolsen.com  
christyolsenaz@gmail.com  
Charcoal, Oil, Pen & Ink

**Gloria Olson**

GG Jewels  
ggjewels.com  
gloria@gggjewels.com  
Jewelry, Craft Arts, Handmade  
Craft Jewelry

**Julie Orrico**

Julie's Puppets & Art Dolls  
juliespuppets@gmail.com  
Fiber Art, Puppetry

**Sandy Ostroff**

sandyostroff.com  
sostroff@gmail.com  
Photography

**Sharon Otstot**

OBOE  
mssharonotstot@gmail.com  
Ceramics, Fiber Art, Textiles

**Jan Oxendale**

janoxendale.com  
joxendale@live.com  
Oil

**Joe Pagac**

Joe Pagac - Murals, Sculpture and  
Fine Art  
joepagac.net  
joepagac@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Bronze, Mural

**Romina Paiva**

Innerwoven  
innerwovenart.com  
innerwoven2020@gmail.com  
Fiber, Jewelry

## Howard Paley

Howard Paley Photography  
hpaley.com  
hpaley55@gmail.com  
Photography

## George Palovich

TriPal Arts Studio  
sites.google.com/site/artbytripal/  
welcome  
tripal42@cox.net  
Oil, Print Making, Pottery

## Genia Parker

Ochoa Stained Glass Custom  
Glass Artworks  
ochoasg.com  
stainedglass@ochoasg.com  
Glass, Mosaic

## Terry Parker

Loma Prieta Pottery  
lomaprietapottery.com  
terry@lomaprietapottery.com  
Ceramics, Pottery, Stoneware

## Sandra Parker

Sandra Parker Watercolor Art  
sandraparker-watercolorart.com  
moiradelambre@gmail.com  
Painting

## Pattie Parkhurst

Pattie Parkhurst Jewelry  
pattieparkhurst.com/pages/about-us  
pattieparkhurst1@gmail.com  
Jewelry, Sculpture

## Lorrie Parsell

lcparsell@comcast.net  
Acrylic, Collage

## Marco Patania

Legendary Patania Jewelry  
spatania.com  
chloe@spatania.com  
Jewelry

## Caitlin Paul

Caitlin Paul Jewelry LLC  
caitlinpaul.com  
caitlinpauljewelry@gmail.com  
Jewelry

## Ben Pawlowski

Ben Pawlowski  
benpawlowski.com  
benfrankpawl@gmail.com  
Mixed Media, Youth Education,  
Digital Art

## Pama Peckham Cao-Ba

planetpama.com  
planetpama@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Collage, Photography

## Jean Peliska

Bold Rabbit Beads  
jpeliska@gmail.com  
Jewelry

## Mary Helen Pelton

Gourds as Art  
maryhelenpelton@gmail.com  
Sculpture, Gourd

## Kathryn Peña

Unearthed  
unearthedaz.com  
unearthedaz@gmail.com  
Jewelry

## David Pennington

davidpenningtoncollageart.com  
wuntoo3@icloud.com  
Collage



## Brenda Peo

Brenda Peo Art  
brendapeoart.com  
brendapeoart@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Giclee, Oil

## Roger Perkins

Sosakete  
powowpopart.com  
sosakete@gmail.com  
Painting, Pottery, Wood

## Cyd Peroni

cydperoniphotography.com  
cydperoni@gmail.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Photography,  
Print Making

## Jesse Perry

shinethruart.com  
jesseperryart@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D, Mural

## Molly Willson Perry

facebook.com/mollywillsonperry  
Jewelry, Ceramics, Handmade  
Craft Jewelry

## Annmari Perry

Out Of My Mind  
facebook.com/outofmymindperry  
outofmymindperry@gmail.com  
Murals, Spray Paint, Chalk, Airbrush

## Lawrence Peters

Brwoven Studio  
bewovenstudio.com  
Fiber Art

## Jay Petersen

JAY Kyle Petersen Artist  
jaykylepetersen.com  
jaykylepetersen@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D, Oil

## Brad Peterson

customfoamsculptures.com  
br.peterson@gmail.com  
Sculpture

## Steve Petit Jean

Bleu d'Olive  
bleudolive.com  
steve@bleudolive.com  
Fiber, Framed Artwork

## Joan Pevarnik

El Fuego Pottery  
elfuegopottery.com  
sjpevarnik@yahoo.com  
Ceramics, Stoneware



## Ralph Philabaum

Art by Rafa  
artbyrafa.com  
artbyrafatucson@gmail.com  
Pen & Ink, Watercolor

## Steve Piepmeier

Steve Piepmeier  
piepsart@gmail.com  
Photography

## Amber Pierson

Amber Pierson Fine Art  
amberpierson.artspan.com  
amberdpierson@gmail.com  
Drawing, Pencil

## Eliza Plumlee

elizaplumlee.com  
elizaplumlee@yahoo.com  
Oil, Pastel, Print Making



## Theresa Poalucci

Applied & Fine Art Studio  
artisttheresapoalucci.com  
theresa.mydirectorynw@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Digital Art, Mixed Media 2D/3D

## Allen Polt

Allen Polt Fine Art  
alllenpolt.net  
jocarolla@taosnet.com  
Acrylic, Oil

## Elaine Powers

Elaine A Powers  
elaineapowers.com  
iginspired@gmail.com  
Drawing, Video, Illustrator

## Aubrey Prestwich

Aubrey Prestwich Photography  
aubreyprestwichphotography.com  
aubreyprestwichphotography@  
gmail.com  
Photography

## Steven Price

Sunset Road Productions  
sp9339326@gmail.com  
Acrylic

## Marie Provine

marieprovine.com  
marie.provine@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Oil, Gouache

## Angela Puffer

Angela Puffer Fine Arts  
angelpuffer.com  
anotherpuffer@gmail.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Pen & Ink, Pottery

## Linda Pullinsi

lindapullinsi.com  
lp@lindapullinsi.com  
Acrylic, Oil, Watercolor

## Mireya Quiroz

Mireya Quiroz Art  
mireyaquirozart.com  
mireyaquirozbusiness@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Drawing, Pen & Ink

## Lauren Raine

Lauren Raine MFA  
laurenaine.com  
laurenaine9@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Print Making, Sculpture, Leather

## Alisa Raines

alisaraines.faso.com  
alisaraines@comcast.net  
Oil, Pastel

## Anthony Ramos

hakvdub@gmail.com  
Photography

## Lea Rankin

Rather Be Chalking  
ratherbechalking.com  
ratherbechalking@gmail.com  
Mural, Pastel, Chalk

## Cheri Reckers

cherireckers.com  
cherireckers@hotmail.com  
Mosaic, Mural, Painted Silk

## Linda Reese

Added Touch (Clothing)  
tatilinda@hickorytech.net  
Clothing

## Linda Reese

Added Touch (Jewelry)  
tatilinda@hickorytech.net  
Jewelry

## Bonnie Reeves

bonniereeves52@yahoo.com  
Jewelry

**Joseph Retsky**

Joseph Retsky  
joet.smugmug.com  
jretsky6316@gmail.com  
Photography, Watercolor, Drawing

**Gina Ribaud**

Ribaud Art  
ribaudart.com  
creativewalls@gmail.com  
Acrylic

**Cathryn Riley**

Glassified Art Design  
glassifiedartdesign.com  
mcmdb@aol.com  
Glass

**Suzanne Riley**

Backyard Delight  
suebdoob12@yahoo.com  
Glass, Upcycled Art, Decorative Arts

**Ana Luisa Rincon**

Rinconart  
rinconart.com  
Painting, Acrylic

**James Roberts**

J Paul Copper Creations  
jpaulcoppercreations.com  
jpaul@jpaulcoppercreations.com  
Jewelry

**Marian Robinson**

Jewels by Jan  
etsy/shop/jbyj  
mrobi22486@aol.com  
Craft Arts, Jewelry, Specialty Gifts

**Gregory Rogan**

The Phabric Pharmacy  
thephabricpharmacy@gmail.com  
Fiber Art, Quilting, Textiles

**Gregory Rogan**

The Phabric Pharmacy  
thephabricpharmacy@gmail.com  
Decor, Textiles, Quilting

**Esther Rogoway**

Horses in Motion Gallery  
horsesinmotiongallery.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D, Oil

**Mary Ann Rolfe**

[520] 241-3704  
Digital Art, Jewelry, Photography

**Kay Ross**

Kay Ross Art  
kayrossart.com  
kayrossart@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Watercolor

**Cheyenne Rouse**

Cheyenne L Rouse Photography  
cheyennerouse.com  
chey.rouse@gmail.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Photography

**Peggy Rubin**

peggyrubinart.com  
pbrubin@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Jewelry, Mixed Media 2D/3D

**Joel Rubiner**

Four Winds West  
fourwindswest.com  
joelwest@cox.net  
Leather

**Dee Ruff**

Black Cat Mosaics  
blackcatmosaics.com  
druff015@gmail.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Mosaic, Sculpture

**Joel T. Ruiz**

joelgamercoolxd@arizona.edu  
Photography

**Ken Rupel**

rupelkr@icloud.com  
Drawing, Oil, Pencil

**Karelia Ruvalcaba**

Kjewelerscreations  
kareliaruvalcaba@gmail.com  
Jewelry

**Michele Ryan**

micheleryanart.com  
michele.ryan11@gmail.com  
Acrylic

**Kevin Sack**

Kevin K Designs  
ksackta@aol.com  
Jewelry, Fiber, Specialty Gifts

**Elizabeth Sage**

elizabethsageartist.com  
e.sage7@gmail.com  
Oil

**Suzanne Sahakian**

Suzanne Sahakian Photography  
suzannesahakianphotography.com  
sahakian.suzanne@gmail.com  
Digital Art, Photography

**Josh Sailor**

Josh Sailor Photography, LLC  
joshsailor.com  
josh@joshsailor.com  
Photography

**Marisa Salazar**

b1stmrs12@yahoo.com  
Acrylic, Digital Art, Pen & Ink

**Karen Samson**

Karen Samson Designs  
karensamsondesigns.com  
karen.samson@gmail.com  
Collage, Fiber Art, Watercolor

**Bob Samson**

Bob Samson  
karensamdondesigns.com  
plastixbob@comcast.net  
Glass

**Elizabeth Sanchez**

Aligned Healing  
alignedhealingcollective.com  
elizabeth@alignedhealingcollective.com  
Jewelry

**Ana Rendón Sanders**

Firelight and Company  
firelightandcompany.com  
ana@firelightandcompany.com  
Jewelry

**Ana Santos-Acinas**

anasantosacinas.com  
santosacinas.a@gmail.com  
Crafts, Digital Art, Mural

**Lisa Scadron**

lisascadronart.com  
lisa@lisascadronart.com  
Mixed Media, Painting

**Alicia Schilder**

Alicia Schilder Fine Art  
alicia-art.com  
alicia@alicia-art.com  
Acrylic, Collage, Mixed Media 2D

**Neal Schlosburg**

My Picture Tells A Story  
mypicturetellsastory.com  
neal.ns.image@gmail.com  
Photography, Portrait

**Julius Schlosburg**

JPop Photon LLC  
jpopphoton.com  
jpopphoton@gmail.com  
Photography

**David SchwARTZ**

ARTZworks.com  
schwartz@artzworks.com  
Acrylic, Painting

**Rex Scofield**

Rex Scofield Photography  
rexscfieldphotography.com  
rexscfieldphotography@gmail.com  
Photography

**Pat Scott**

Foreverglass  
foreverglass@yahoo.com  
Jewelry

**Rachael Sedgwick**

Joy Luxe Hiero Tarot & Candles  
joyluxehiero@gmail.com  
Crafts, Video, Tarot

**Barbara Seyfried**

barbaraseyfried.com  
rks46@aol.com  
Acrylic, Photography, Sculpture

**Sylvia A. Shanahan**

sylviashanahan1.com  
sylviaashanahan@gmail.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Oil

**Richard Shaw**

3D Wire Art  
vimeo.com/3dwireart  
3dwireart@att.net  
Metal, Mixed Media

**Madeline Shea**

madelinesheaarts.com  
madshea345@aol.com  
Acrylic, Giclee, Oil

**Mary Sherwood**

Mary Sherwood Art Glass  
marysherwoodlifestyles.com  
mary@marysherwood.com  
Acrylic, Glass, Mixed Media 2D/3D

**Sara Shute**

Copious Eclections  
copiouscollections.com  
sara@copiouscollections.com  
Jewelry, Metalwork, Sculpture

**Becky Siler**

Intrinsic Creations  
dbsiler5@msn.com  
Painting, Jewelry, Framed Artwork

**Patricia Silva**

Sol Design Studio  
thesoldesignstudio.com  
solvedesignstudio12@gmail.com  
Mixed Media, Painting

**Bobby Silverman**

Bobby Silverman Design  
bsilverman1026@gmail.com  
Acrylic

**Celia Sislow**

Nine Hills Functional Clay  
9hills.com  
ninehills@aol.com  
Ceramics

**Paul Sislow**

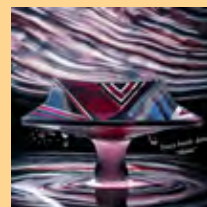
CopperAnza Furnishings  
9hills.com  
Metal, Furniture

**William Skiles**

Got All Your Marbles  
gotallyourmarbles.com  
lisa@gotallyourmarbles.com  
Jewelry, Specialty Jewelry

**Melissa Slone**

STICKS ~ n ~ STONES by Slone  
slonesticks@gmail.com  
Glass, Handmade Craft Jewelry, Specialty Gifts

**Tracey Smith**

Glass Art by Tracey  
glassartbytracey.com  
glassartbytracey@gmail.com  
Glass

## Hailey Smith

Hailey Jo Art  
haileyjoart.com  
haileyjoart@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Mural, Oil

## Phil Smith

Phil Smith - Photoarts  
philsmith-photoarts.com  
photoarts@comcast.net  
Collage, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Photography

## Meryl Smyth

Myth and Stone  
mythandstone.com  
hello@mythandstone.com  
Jewelry

## Aimee Smythe

fasa-art.com/collections/161216  
aimee.smythe@gmail.com  
Fiber Art, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Photography

## Felicitas Sokec

Temple of MA, LLC  
templeofma.wixsite.com/temple-  
of-ma  
templeofma@hotmail.com  
Painting, Drawing, Mural

## Nataliya Solace

Resin Art by Nataliya  
laserpic.net  
nataliya\_solace@yahoo.com  
Mixed Media

## Johan Sorvala

johansorvala.com  
johan123sorvala@gmail.com  
Oil

## Amelia South

Amelia Anne Arts  
ameliaanarts.com  
amelia.anne.arts@gmail.com  
Jewelry, Metalwork



## Deborah Splain

Canvas Conversations  
deborahsplainartist.com  
dwscanvas@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Sculpture

## Henry Staggs

Henry Staggs  
thearizonaroofer@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Chaplain

## Carolanne Stalteri

Carolanne Stalteri Jewelry Designs  
instagram.com/carolannestalteri  
cstalteri50@gmail.com  
Jewelry

## Caryn Stedman

Thimble Peak Studio  
thimblepeakstudio.com  
thebarefoottreadler@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Jewelry, Fiber Art

## Peggy Steffens

peggysteffens.com  
peggysteffens1@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Photography, Watercolor

## Lisa Stelling-Jokisch

LSJ Arts  
lsjarts.com  
lisa.jokisch@gmail.com  
Ceramics

## Wendy Stoltze

Bijoubywendy  
bijoubijou\_jewelery@hotmail.com  
Jewelry, Wood, Specialty Jewelry

## George Strasburger

georgestrasburger.com  
georgestrasburger@gmail.com  
Drawing, Oil

## Deborah Streeter-Jagow

coffeebeads50@gmail.com  
Jewelry, Fiber Art, Mixed Media 2D/3D

## Ariel Fawn Strobel

A Fawn Designs and Fine Art  
afawndesigns.com  
afawndesigns@gmail.com  
Ceramics, Mosaic, Mural

## Such Styles

instagram.com/\_suchstyles  
Mural, Digital Art, Spray Paint

## Beth Surdut

Surdut Art For The Mind & Body  
bethsurdut.com  
info@bethsurdut.com  
Wildlife Illustration, Painted Silk,  
Glass Murals

## Hirotsume Tashima

hirotashima.com  
htashima@pima.edu  
Cement, Ceramics, Sculpture

## Janny Taylor

jannytaylor.com  
janny@jannytaylor.com  
Encaustics, Oil Oaint, Collage

## Diane C. Taylor

Diane C. Taylor Fused Glass  
dianesfusedglass.com  
dianectaylor@netscape.net  
Jewelry, Glass, Mixed Media 2D/3D

## Chandika Tazouz

Tazouz  
tazouzart.com  
tazouz@gmail.com  
Drawing, Oil, Print Making

## Margaret (Peggy) Terlisner

Glass Happens  
facebook.com/glass.happens.3  
mmterl@msn.com  
Glass, Specialty Gifts

## Priya Thadigiri

instagram.com/artsy\_girlyyyy  
priya.thadigiri.07@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Photography, Woodwork

## Magon Thayer

Magon Rose Studio  
magonrosetudio@gmail.com  
Collage, Metalwork, Mixed Media  
2D/3D

## Ray and Diana Thibault

Rincon Valley Artisans  
website pending  
sales@rinconartisans.com  
Glass, Metalwork, Woodwork

## Peggie Thomas

fasa-art.com  
azpthomas@gmail.com  
Fiber Art

## Dr. Rebecca Thompson

rebeccalthompsonart.com  
rlt2@arizona.edu  
Bronze, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Sculpture

## Chris Thompson

Chris Thompson Bags  
christhompsonbags.com  
chris@christhompsonbags.com  
Fiber Art, Upcycled / Recycled

## Jasmine Thompson

Jazz Art & Animal Sanctuary  
artanimalsanctuary.com  
jazzartanimalsanctuary@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Mural, Woodwork

## Virginia Thompson

Stump Canyon Studio  
stumpcanyonstudio@gmail.com  
Ceramics, Crafts, Jewelry

## Gale Thomssen

Cactus Wren Art Gallery  
cactuswrenart.gallery  
gale@cactuswrenart.gallery  
Gallery, Jewelry, Artist Studios



## Laura Thurbon

LauraMuralist  
lauramuralist.com  
art@laurathurbon.com  
Acrylic, Drawing, Mural

## Jill Tierney

jilltierneyphotography  
tierney3573@yahoo.com  
Photography

## Eric Tippit

Constant Flux Pottery  
constantfluxpottery.com  
constantfluxpottery@gmail.com  
Ceramics

## Meressa Tockey

Maude Pods  
instagram.com/maude.pods  
Jewelry, Wood

## Jenna Tomasello

jennatomasello.com  
jtomasellotattoo@gmail.com  
Mural, Oil, Watercolor

## Lucretia Torva

torvafineart@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Drawing, Mural

## Ann Tracy

Ann Tracy Art  
anntracyart.com  
anntracy@gmail.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Photography,  
Installation Art

## Chip Travers

chiptraversproductions.com  
ctravers1@cox.net  
Acrylic, Pen & Ink, Watercolor

## Clydean Troner

ctroner44@gmail.com  
Ceramics, Collage, Oil

## Jennifer Troupe-Yazback

Journey Bindery & Art  
journeybinderyart.com  
Acrylic, Digital Art, Book Binding



## Emmy Truckenmiller

metruckenmillerphotography.com  
metruckenmiller@gmail.com  
Oil, Photography, Pen & Ink

## Alejandra Trujillo

atrujillo-art.com  
aniebla88@live.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D, Mural

## James Tunell

TheAmericanWest.org  
theamericanwest.org  
jim@theamericanwest.org  
Photography, Mixed Media,  
Framed Artwork

**Sandi Tychewicz**

sandibags1@aol.com  
Craft Arts, Mixed Media

**Joyce Van Remortel**

Jewelry by Jann  
jewelrybyjann@gmail.com  
Jewelry

**Mary Vaneecke**

maryvaneecke.com  
mary@maryvaneecke.com  
Textiles

**Ute Vaughn**

artbyte.com  
uteart@earthlink.net  
Acrylic, Watercolor

**Diane Verkuylen-Murphy**

Catalina Sun Studio  
dianeverkuylen@gmail.com  
Acrylic

**Samantha Violette**

samanthaviolette.com  
sam@samanthaviolette.com  
Photography, Mixed Media

**William Voice**

Old Pueblo Bath and Body Essentials  
oldpueblobathandbodyessentials.com  
wvoice@oldpueblobathandbodyessentials.com  
Beauty Products, Handmade  
Beauty Products

**Risa Waldt**

House of the Redtails Studio  
risawaldtfineart.com  
risa@risawaldtfineart.com  
Acrylic, Mural, Pen & Ink, Art Therapy

**Lynn Waltke**

Lynn Waltke Art  
lynnwaltkeart.com  
lynnwaltke@comcast.net  
Acrylic, Oil, Watercolor

**Richard Ward**

Terraform Together  
terraformtogether.org  
richard@terraformtogether.org  
Ceramics, Mixed Media 2D/3D,  
Pottery

**Tirzah Washington**

Love My Shawl  
lovemysawls.com  
lovemysawlwashington@gmail.com  
Clothing

**Charlie Watkins**

WatkinsArt & Family Crafts  
watkinsart.com  
kinzart1@gmail.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Sculpture,  
Woodwork

**Carolyn Watson**

bronzie221@comcast.net  
Bronze, Oil

**Jon Watson**

The Metal Gardener  
themetalgardener.com  
info@wattoononline.com  
Metal, Mixed Media

**Bethany Watts-Cruz**

BethanyCrz Art  
linktr.ee/bethanycrzart  
bethanycrz@gmail.com  
Painting, Printmaking, Painted Canvas

**Ambika Wauters**

Ambika Wauters/Life Energy Art  
ambikawauters.com  
ambika@ambikawauters.com  
Photography, Framed Artwork

**Beata Wehr**

beatawehr.com  
beatawehr@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Oil, Watercolor

**Wendy Welch**

In a Glass of My Own  
inaglassofmyown.etsy.com  
dogdiva1@gmail.com  
Glass

**Kristin Wesley**

Roosevelt Artworks  
kristinwesley.com  
kristinwesley@cox.net  
Metalwork, Mixed Media, Mural,  
Art Therapy

**Mark West**

Mark West Art  
m@markdwest.com  
Design, Fine Art, Photography

**Randine Westlund**

randinewestlund.com  
randinewestlund@gmail.com  
Oil

**Steve Wharam**

Dry Heat Abstracts  
dryheatabstracts.com  
dryheatabstracts@icloud.com  
Acrylic

**Donovan White**

Donovan White Art  
donovanwhite99@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Mixed Media 2D/3D, Pen & Ink

**Ashley White**

Delsa Designs  
delsadesigns.com  
ashley@delsadesigns.com  
Digital Art, Mural, Sign Painting

**Chi-Vas White**

Drawings by Chi-Vas  
chi-vaswhite.com  
chi-vas@sbcglobal.net  
Drawing, Sculpture, Paper Works

**Kara Wiesmann**

Kara Wiesmann Pottery  
karawiesmann.com  
kara.wiesmann@gmail.com  
Ceramics

**Gabi Williams**

cosmicart\_chemigo.artsteps.com  
chemigo@msn.com  
Acrylic

**Jim Williams**

Williams Crafts  
weloveaz2@gmail.com  
Wood, Specialty Gifts

**Frank Williams**

Frank Williams Art  
gourdgeousart1@gmail.com  
Mixed Media

**Dorothy Wilson**

DLW Art  
dlwart.com  
dwilson6162@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Crafts, Mixed Media 2D/3D

**Vanessa Wingerath**

wildrosewomanphotography.com  
vanessa@wildroseproject.com  
Photography

**Marlena Winiarska**

Stems and Gems LLC  
stemsandgems.com  
stemsandgemsstudio@gmail.com  
Jewelry

**Mark Wolfson**

Ophidian Photography  
tucsonreptileshow.com  
mokisdad@comcast.net  
Photography, Wildlife

**Nan Wollman**

Wollman Studios  
wollmanstudios.com  
nan@wollmanstudios.com  
Ceramics, Photography,  
Welded Steel

**Tora Woloshin**

rts8.my.canva.site  
torawoloshin89@gmail.com  
Mixed Media 2D/3D, Oil,  
Photography

**Roni Woolston**

bellasonomadesigns.com  
roniwoolston@gmail.com  
Jewelry, Metal

**Ozlem Yeni**

Ozlem Yeni Fine Art  
ozlemyeni.com  
info@ozlemyeni.com  
Mixed Media, Contemporary

**Becky Zimmerman**

Beckyzimm Design  
beckyzimmdesign.com  
beckyzimmdesign@gmail.com  
Acrylic, Fiber Art, Pen & Ink

**Kathy Zimmerman**

Kathy Zimmerman Photography  
kathyzimmermanphotography.com  
kathyphoto@gmail.com  
Photography, Jewelry, Specialty  
Gifts

**Bobby Zokaite**

Zokaite Sculpture  
bobbyzokaite.com  
zokaiteessculpture@gmail.com  
Sculpture, Spinning & Weaving,  
Public Art

**Nathaniel Zoret-Russell**

deadfallartcollective.com  
zoret.nathan@gmail.com  
Mural, Oil, Print Making

Written By Sovay Hansen

Creative Aging in Action:

# How Missy Paschke-Wood Built a Thriving Artist Community at The Hacienda

**How One Arts Leader is Transforming Senior Living into a Creative Community Rooted in Expression, Connection, and Celebration.**

It's rare to meet someone whose work so clearly aligns with their calling. Rarer still is when that work makes life more joyful, expressive, and connected for an entire community.



Event Plaza at Hacienda at the Canyon

At The Hacienda at the Canyon—a senior living community nestled in Tucson's desert landscape—Associate Executive Director Missy Paschke-Wood has created a dynamic, deeply personal arts program that defies all stereotypes of aging.

Missy, who holds a BFA in Theatre Performance and a background in arts nonprofits and education, was hired five years ago as Community Resource Director to launch an in-house arts program. What she's built is a creative engine that now pulses through every corridor of The Hacienda.

With support from her Community Life Team, Missy has brought a stunning range of arts disciplines to life:

- Visual arts: drawing, painting, sculpture, collage, glass-work
- Theatrical arts: film screenings, play readings, improv, musicals
- Literary arts: poetry, memoir, reflective writing
- Fiber arts: macramé, basket weaving, felt crafts
- Culinary arts, jewelry making, movement classes, and more

But what sets this programming apart isn't just its variety—it's the culture of belonging Missy has nurtured. "I enjoy connecting people and putting on events," she said. "I love that kind of camaraderie."

## Curtain Up: The Summer Stock Tradition

After our interview, Missy walked me to The Hacienda's cozy movie theater, where residents—"members," as they're respectfully called—gathered with popcorn in hand for a screening of *Bye Bye Birdie*. Before the film rolled, Missy read aloud the synopsis of *Bye Snowbirdie*, her team's Hacienda-themed rewrite of the classic musical.

Members giggled and clapped as Missy performed the plot summary—satirizing daily life, friendly gossip, and the joys of retirement. It's part of their fifth annual "Summer Stock" production, following previous adaptations of *Grease*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Oklahoma!*.

Some members perform. Others help backstage. All are welcome.

## Art Is for Everyone

Among The Hacienda's 360 members are professional artists—a painter, a glass sculptor, a memoirist, a playwright—but the true hallmark of the program is its accessibility.



**Missy Paschke-Wood, Associate Executive Director · The Hacienda at the Canyon**

Residents with no previous artistic experience are encouraged to explore new mediums. Those with existing skills are invited to share them by leading workshops, exhibiting their work, or organizing readings. Everyone is seen as having something to contribute.

Hiring local artists to lead workshops is also a cornerstone of Missy's approach. "That's the joy of it—bringing in artists, hiring people who specialize in things like watercolor or printmaking," she explained. "Many of our members are longtime supporters of the arts—some even had careers as performers."

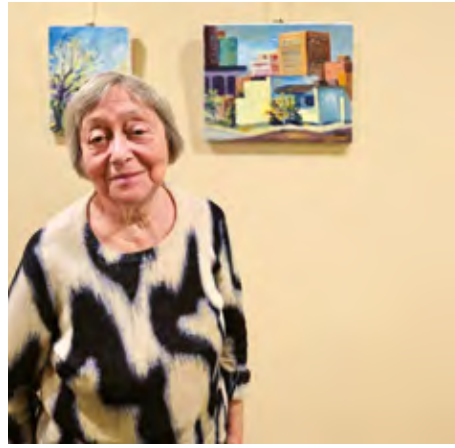
She smiled and added, "We've even had the symphony here. One of our members is a former symphony violist. There's just so much talent."

### **The COVID Pivot**

Of course, the path hasn't been without challenges. Just five months after opening, the COVID-19 pandemic brought in-person programming to a halt.

Missy and her team responded with creativity and compassion. They launched an in-house TV channel, producing daily themed content to entertain and uplift. The spirit of playfulness never left.

The first post-lockdown summer, they performed a rewritten version of *The Sound of Music*. "We changed the lyrics—'You are 60 going on 70,'" Missy recalled, breaking into



**Luba - Artist, Memory Care Member**

song. "It was a way to laugh, connect, and feel human again after so much isolation."

### **The Art Barn: Where Big Ideas Take Shape**

Missy's team includes Creative Aging Specialist Sam Mulder and instructor Ben Ryan, who introduced me to the "Art Barn"—a large, light-filled studio where members build props, create costumes, and explore their creativity.

Sam showed off a handmade headband with hair rollers, created for *Grease*. "And last year, we built eight-foot-tall saguaros for *Oklahoma!*," she said.

Ben directs the musicals and teaches classes like gentle movement and origami. He shared the story of a member who eagerly awaits the musical each year: "She just loves to sing. It's the highlight of her summer."

Both staff emphasized that these programs are about joy and connection, not performance perfection. "It's not about talent," Ben said. "It's about creative expression in a safe, social space."

### **From Printing Consultant to Painter**

One of the most inspiring stories came from Herb Ross, a member who had never thought of himself as an artist. After retirement, he began attending painting classes. Today, his home is filled with original artwork.



**Canyon musical theater**

"You should see my walls—they're covered with my paintings!" Herb laughed. "I complete one a week."

Inspired by the graphic design he encountered during his career in print consulting, Herb decided to give it a try. "There's so much great art out there," he thought. "Why can't I learn to do that?"

When asked how painting makes him feel, he said: "It gives you a thrill to create something you never thought you could do. It's creative. And it's the sharing of what you've done in a way that other people can see."

That statement captures the power of what Missy and her team have built: a space where residents can rediscover their creative spark—and be seen in the process.

### **A Culture of Possibility**

What makes Missy such a powerful leader isn't just her background in the arts. It's her belief in the people she serves.

"I love our members," she said. "They're so fun, and you learn something new from them every day. Their stories are astounding."

**At The Hacienda, creative aging isn't a theory. It's a lived, joyful experience—driven by vision, built on community, and made possible through the arts.**

Written By Isabela Gamez

Creative Groundwork:

# How Ajo Revitalizes Community Through Art, Hospitality, and Heritage

## How a Former Mining Town Turned Abandoned Schools into Living Studios, Affordable Housing, and a Model for Arts-Based Rural Renewal.

If you're driving through Ajo, Arizona, and glance to your right across from the downtown plaza, a beautiful Spanish Colonial-style building will catch your eye. Once the historic Curley School, this structure has been transformed into affordable housing and creative workspaces for artists.

At the heart of this transformation is the International Sonoran Desert Alliance (ISDA), a nonprofit formed more than 30 years ago after the town's economic backbone collapsed with the closure of the copper mine in 1985.

### A Community Reimagined

"Three-fourths of the town moved away and people left to find work," said Vicki Tapp, ISDA's outreach coordinator. "People from the communities on the reservation in Sonoyta and in the area collaborated to try to figure out what's going to happen."

Out of that uncertainty, ISDA was born, with a mission rooted in environmental stewardship, economic development, and cultural preservation.

"Thirty years later, here we are with huge accomplishments behind us, thanks to the community, founders and supporters," Tapp said.

One of those accomplishments is the Curley School campus itself. Originally built in 1919, the building was repurposed into artist live/work spaces. The vision for Curley School's redevelopment started coming together in 2001 as part of a comprehensive planning process for Ajo. Fundraising and pre-development work ran from 2001 through 2005. Construction and development on the property ran through 2006 and early 2007, with a grand opening in May 2007. So from concept to completion, the process spanned around six years, with actual redevelopment work taking approximately 18 months.

"We have a lot of artists living there. It's also affordable housing, so it's a combination of artists and residents," Tapp said. As the artist liaison, she supports the residents and helps plan events like the upcoming Second Saturdays summer series featuring live performances in the Curley auditorium.

### An Artistic Anchor

Naomi Caceras, site manager at the Curley School, sees her role as a mix of property management and mission support.

"The priority of the mission here is to cater toward artists," Caceras said. "Low-income housing is also a great resource for the community, but we really want to give artists a great place to thrive."

The school's transformation was only possible through community collaboration.

"Once the mine shut down in '85, it sat vacant," said Tapp. "We didn't want to see the Curley School crumble, so one of the first projects we got behind was to generate a conversation with the community on what we could do."



The Curley School in Ajo, Arizona



**Ajo Arts Performance**

That conversation led to a vision of turning the old classrooms into affordable apartments and studios for artists, both local and from out of state, drawn by the welcoming, creative energy.

Today, the school holds regular gallery shows, offering local artists a platform.

"It's a good way for them to showcase their art, and there are other art galleries in town that are actively looking for artists to showcase," said Caceras.

### **Curley as a Community Connector**

Beyond the monthly exhibits, the team at ISDA and the Curley School works to engage more of the broader Ajo community.

"Between the Escape the Heat events and the Second Saturdays and gallery events, we're bringing in artists from a whole community," Tapp said.

Ajo has long valued its collaborative spirit.

"When you're in a small town, there's one tradition that's never changed, which is that the Ajo community works together on everything," Tapp added. "We have the most fabulous festivals that blow people away."

Still, challenges remain. Infrastructure limitations and contractor availability can slow progress. But both Caceras and Tapp share a vision of a more cohesive seven-acre Curley School campus that connects artists



**ISDA Curley Space**

with the community through shared spaces like the woodshop, clay studio, learning studio, cafés, and food spots.

"When visitors come to Ajo, they are always pleasantly surprised when they find out what's going on with economic development," said Tapp. "ISDA offers a lot of resources, assistance, apprenticeship programs, and arts."

### **A Legacy Reimagined: The Sonoran Desert Inn**

Another standout project is the Sonoran Desert Inn & Conference Center. Like the Curley School, the building was revitalized into a space that serves the community and celebrates local heritage.

Dionne Vega, the Assistant General Manager, knows the building intimately. Her father and siblings all attended school there, and she herself was a student through sixth grade. Now, the same classrooms where she once learned math and science have been reimagined into unique hotel rooms.

Lucia Gutierrez, the General Manager at the inn, and Vega are part of a team building on the property's community roots. The inn hosts events like the annual Pomegranate Festival, typically held in late September. Its orchard includes more than 30 pomegranate varieties—some of them heritage fruit—as well as lemon and kumquat trees.

Under new management, the inn plans to host a celebration of Mexican Independ-

ence Day, another way of anchoring cultural pride in public celebration.

"The locals here are all very friendly, and it's a very tight-knit community," Vega said. "When we have unfortunate events, the community comes together and makes sure that people get what they need."

Her love for the town shines through.

"I appreciate very much being able to live and work in Ajo," she said. "There's a lot of tranquility here, a sense of community, and it's a simple, slower life."

### **A Model for Rural Resilience**

Together, ISDA, the Curley School, and the Sonoran Desert Inn form a dynamic ecosystem—one that blends history with hope, and creativity with opportunity. Through art, hospitality, and community-driven collaboration, Ajo continues to reimagine what rural revitalization can look like.

Here, art is more than expression; it's infrastructure. It lives in the restored buildings, the neighborhood galleries, the vibrant festivals, and the shared spaces where stories are exchanged and traditions evolve.

"Get the newsletter, watch your socials and make some day trips," Tapp encouraged. "Come down and enjoy some of these wonderful community and ISDA-related events. There's a lot of stuff going on year-round."

Learn more at [www.curleyschool.com](http://www.curleyschool.com)

Written By Jonathan Frahm

**Creativity, Care, and Connection:**

# Southern Arizona Senior Pride Champions Healing Through the Arts

**In Tucson, Southern Arizona Senior Pride Is Using the Arts to Uplift LGBTQ+ Elders—Creating Space for Healing, Visibility, and Connection Through Every Brushstroke and Story.**

Southern Arizona Senior Pride, a nonprofit rooted in advocacy, social support, and community care for LGBTQ+ older adults, has been quietly building a revolution in aging services since its founding in 2004. Now led by Executive Direc-



SASP at Tucson Pride 2024

“

**The arts can help people process trauma and connect.”**

Mary O'Donoghue

tor Mary O'Donoghue and staff like Communications Coordinator Harrison Orr, the organization has blossomed into a hub for inclusive health and wellness programming. Orr, who brings a background in education and creative aging, is helping weave visual and literary arts into the tapestry of Senior Pride's offerings.

“Creativity can increase longevity. It strengthens cognitive function. But beyond the data, it gives people purpose,” Harrison shared. “One participant told me one of our programs was the first thing she's done in a long time that was just for her. Not to serve someone else, not to volunteer—just to be seen as a person.”

Senior Pride's programs are layered and intentional, spanning linocut printmaking classes in South Tucson with Mel Dominguez, to grief and memory cafes that use collage, painting, and storytelling as tools for processing loss. They are designed to reach LGBTQ+ elders who have felt isolated or erased in traditional healthcare or community settings.

Mary, who brings decades of experience in aging services, emphasizes that arts access isn't a luxury for older adults, but a lifeline.

Mary said, “As a person without that creative background myself, I've seen firsthand how the arts can help people process trauma and connect. For LGBTQ+ elders who have had to hide parts of themselves, or who feel forgotten by both mainstream services and younger queer spaces, these moments of creative expression become powerful acts of self-affirmation.”

Southern Arizona Senior Pride's programs are community-driven, with participants often doubling as volunteers, facilitators, or collaborators. Many



**SASP Printmaking Class with Mel Dominguez**

have been professional artists in earlier chapters of life, while others are just beginning to see themselves as creative.

“The arts are the great mediator,” Mary shared. “Whether you’ve been an artist for fifty years or you’re just picking up a paintbrush, everyone can find connection through creativity.”



**SASP Staff at Holiday Gathering 2024**

“

**Creativity can increase longevity. It strengthens cognitive function. But beyond the data, it gives people purpose.”**

Harrison Orr

Senior Pride now facilitates several recurring programs and reaches hundreds of community members, all while partnering with arts organizations, university classes, and care networks across Southern Arizona. As the organization continues to grow, its vision remains rooted in vetting and sharing services that enhance the lives of older members of the LGBTQ+ community, including in healing through the arts.

Harrison smiled while sharing, “I always say, when people have a space to create, they have a space to heal. That’s what we’re building here—one collage, one story, one connection at a time.”

Learn more at [www.soazseniorpride.org](http://www.soazseniorpride.org)



**SASP Volunteer Appreciation Event 2025**



Written By Valerie Vinyard

# Soothe Operators

## Tucson Medical Center adds the power of art to its medicine bag

**At Tucson Medical Center, the Healing Art Program is Transforming Clinical Spaces into Sanctuaries of Hope—Where Art, Music, and Creativity Support Patients, Families, and Caregivers on Their Healing Journeys.**

“Health” is why TMC established its Healing Art Program in 2014 to help patients heal with surroundings that inspire, encourage and cheer. The program is a powerful model for what’s possible when creativity is integrated into clinical care.

During a recent interview, founding Curator Lauren Rabb discussed how hospitals are exploring ways to promote healing in addition to using traditional medicine.

“Hospitals are paying a lot more attention to their surroundings and understand that the environment can actually make a difference in healing,” said Rabb, who estimated that the more than 2,200 donated works are installed on the main campus, auxiliary buildings and clinics, Rincon Hospital, Benson Hospital, and many of the 63 TMC Ones.

The idea was originally floated to TMC by art collectors Doris and Len Coris, who are



considered the founders of the program. The program is funded by individual donors, by the TMC Health Foundation and by the HAP endowment, which is currently at about \$1.3 million.

Now, there’s a budget line for artwork, so when one of the more than 100 buildings undergoes renovations, there will be money set aside for the program.

“They’re placed very thoughtfully,” Rabb said.

According to the Mayo Clinic, art has the potential to improve the physical, mental and emotional well-being in people. Research from the American Journal of Public Health suggests a direct link between creative arts and health outcomes, with art contributing to stress reduction, improved mood and lower blood pressure. And just viewing art

can stimulate the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that promotes feelings of calmness and well-being.

Rabb noted that there are 8 miles of hallways just inside the main TMC building, a lot of potential dopamine.

Before the program began, Rabb she said the hospital's walls were mostly bare, save for some rather generic prints. When the hospital started asking for local art donations, "people started coming out of the woodwork," she said.

"We've never had a lack of people wanting to give art," said Rabb, noting that many of the donors were born in Tucson, had been a patient at TMC or their family member was a patient. "People have a deep connection to TMC that I don't personally believe they have to any other. It's a true community hospital."

Rabb is leaving her position at TMC, just as her curator position has become newly endowed. This will allow the new curator to take the Healing Art Program to the next level, with more programming for staff and patients.

That new curator is Jenna Green, the first time TMC's curator will be an employee instead of a contractor.



**Arizona artist, Shirley Wagner Human Architecture series produced for the Orthopedic Tower of TMC. In the distance are pastels by artist Harry Brorby**

"I'm thrilled to be leading the next chapter of this program where I hope to not only sustain the curatorial work but expand our programming and educational opportunities," Green said. "Since I've started, I've collaborated with the Wellness Department to offer staff hands-on art-making activities and hope to continue building relationships throughout the TMC Health System to integrate the arts into daily operations. I also have plans to strengthen and expand the music program, making it more patient-focused."

Rabb said the new employee position represents TMC's commitment to the arts for creating the best possible healing environment for patients and those who care for them. And because so many Healing Art Program projects involve local creatives, it demonstrates the hospital's commitment to its role as a vibrant part of the Tucson community.

Angela Pittenger, a senior communications specialist with TMC, is one of the artists and has three paintings featured on the hospital's walls.

"I donated my art to this program because I truly think a welcoming and beautiful environment can help in the healing process; and it's pretty special to be a part of that," Pittenger said.

The process of painting and creating is therapeutic and healing to me, so having my artworks hanging in a hospital where healing takes place is kind of a beautiful full circle."

Another artist, Katie Baird, is a viola player and a TMC Foundation employee. She said that music is about giving people something they didn't know they needed.

“

**During some of the hardest moments of their life, watching the light return to a patient's eyes as they hum along or move their feet to the music reminds me why I do this.”**

Katie Baird, viola player and a TMC Foundation employee



Arizona photographer Sonja van Buuren features original photography in the Women's Center on the way to the Labor and Delivery Department at Tucson Medical Center

**"In the hospital, there are moments when words alone cannot offer relief," Baird said. "In those often-overwhelming spaces, I find that music offers comfort, reassurance and a place for emotions to surface. ... For a few minutes, the beeping monitors fade, the weight of the day softens,**

**and we simply exist together in those moments through music.**

"During some of the hardest moments of their life, watching the light return to a patient's eyes as they hum along or move their feet to the music reminds me why I do this."



Located in the Tucson Medical Center Drachman Hall original work by Arizona artist Jean Nerenberg, titled Rainforest #1.

On average, seven paid musicians are playing string instruments such as violin, harp and classical guitar in lobbies, patient units and patient rooms if invited in. About a half dozen volunteer musicians who play the piano in the main lobby. Rabb said that the professional musicians are chosen based on their personalities and compatible play for patients.

TMC also teaches Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to the new nurses, which helps medical staff improve focus, critical thinking and empathy.

"It's a fun way to look at artwork," Rabb said. "It increases collaboration skills, communication skills and observation skills among our new nurses. Additionally, it teaches comfort with ambiguity – something patients and families appreciate when their nurse is reassuring them about an ambiguous situation."

Kelly Cupell, a contributing artist and a member of the TMC Wellness Team, recognizes how a patient's surroundings can impact overall wellness.

"As a public health professional and artist, I understand the profound impact a healing environment has on patient health outcomes," Cupell said. "Art purposefully curated and thoughtfully displayed, within medical settings, is a true gift – to patients, families and staff."

The families of patients also benefit from the artwork. Susan Dick, director of The Learning Curve, said she was comforted as she passed the beautiful works by artists she recognized.

"It was like a group of old friends were waiting for me each time I would arrive and again each time I would depart," said Susan. It helped immensely to mitigate the stress I was feeling."

Learn more at [www.tmcfoundation.com/en/healing-art-program](http://www.tmcfoundation.com/en/healing-art-program)

Written By Jonathan Frahm

# Through the Lens of *Healing:* Richard Noel

**With Every Beat, Richard Noel Transforms Drumming into a Language of Healing—Bringing Joy, Connection, and Emotional Release to Communities Across Southern Arizona.**

In a serene gathering space, assisted living residents sit in a circle, each with a hand drum nestled between their knees. The room hums with gentle anticipation before Richard Noel lifts his own drum, closes his eyes and exhales with intention. The first beat lands with certainty, and the circle of residents follows in unison. Rhythms ripple outward. By the end of the session, some are smiling, some are crying, and all have begun to heal—or recognize something within themselves that feels earned.

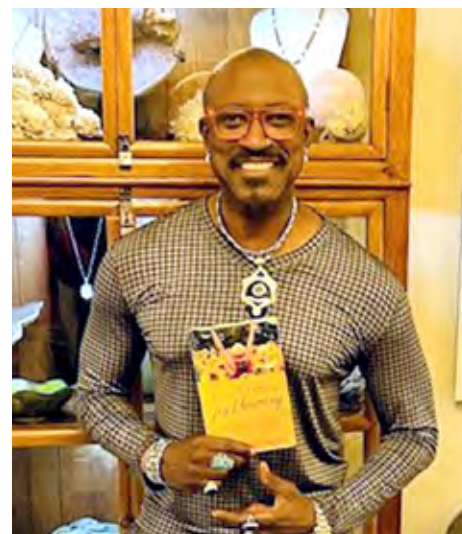
Richard is the founder of Jam2Grow, a therapeutic drumming and edutainment initiative rooted in his Caribbean heritage and

driven by the idea that music is a vehicle for spreading joy.

“Joy is the catalyst for everything I do,” he says. “So the joy is what brings the healing.”

Richard brings decades of experience in rhythmic facilitation and motivational coaching, making his approach both dynamic and meditative. His work takes him into corporate conference rooms, luxury spa retreats, memory care facilities, senior centers and more.

Through programs like TRRP [Tonal Repetition and Rhythmic Perception], Richard



Healing Artist, Richard Noel

uses rhythm and intention to help participants process emotions, spark creativity and regulate their nervous systems. Whether working one-on-one or leading a group of several hundred, he sees each session as an opportunity to uplift and realign.

“Every participant plays music. We jam, and we grow. That’s the whole point,” he says.

Through TRRP and his broader wellness work, Richard demonstrates a fundamental belief: rhythm is a universal language. His intention to connect with others through percussion spans all walks of life. It isn’t about mastering rhythm—it’s about how rhythm and tone make you feel. Each beat is an invitation to listen inward and uncover something positive.

“We are tonal beings,” he continues. “There are tones that can make you joyful, and tones that can make you sad. I choose to create tones that heal. I consider myself a joy ambassador. That’s what I bring into every room.”

When asked what he most hopes people take from his sessions, Richard says: “Instead of reacting, I teach people to respond—with rhythm, with love, with peace. Because on the other side of joy is glory.”

Learn more at [www.jam2grow.com/richard-noel](http://www.jam2grow.com/richard-noel).

“

**Every participant plays music. We jam, and we grow. That’s the whole point.”**

Richard Noel

Written By Jonathan Frahm

## Rhythms of Renewal: How The Fountains at La Cholla Is Redefining Aging Through the Arts

**With drumming circles, painting workshops, live performances, and storytelling, The Fountains is proving that creativity isn't just therapeutic—it's essential to well-being, connection, and purpose in senior living.**



Fountains at La Cholla Members Dancing During Creative Arts Session

In the late afternoon light, the sound of a percussive beat echoes through a quiet corner of The Gardens, the memory care space at The Fountains at La Cholla. A circle of residents sits beside one another, each ready to repeat the rhythm. At the center is Alana Wiesing, a teaching artist and principal timpanist of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, guiding the session.

A woman in her 80s taps along tentatively at first, while another grins and keeps time with the sole of his shoe. Within several minutes, a scattering of sound becomes something cohesive—the rhythm continuing from muscle memory, and something more.

This is not a traditional music class. These are older adults living in a Watermark assisted living community, many with dementia or other cognitive challenges. Yet here, in a weekly percussion session coordinated by the SAACA / Art State Arizona and The Fountains at La Cholla, they are performers and collaborators.

"They really come to life," says Kevin Larkin, the SAACA / Art State Arizona Program Manager who books arts experiences for The Fountains. "Music just taps into something that other language can't."

The Fountains has embraced the arts as a cornerstone of care. The community hosts a dozen or more creative programs during any given month, spanning live performances, hands-on workshops, and resident-led activities. The percussion sessions at The Gardens are a highlight, but so are appearances at Town Center and The Inn by folklorico dancers, Celtic trios, interactive craft artists, movement collectives and local songwriters who might pause mid-set to chat with residents about where their own musical roots were planted.

“There’s a rhythm to it all,” says Abigail Workman, community life director at The Inn, the assisted living side of the campus. “Some days, we start with movement. Other days, it might start with art or journaling. It gives structure, but it also brings a lot of meaning. You see people light up.”

Abigail has worked at The Fountains for 15 years, and in that time she has seen residents reconnect with long-lost passions—a painter who hadn’t picked up a brush in decades; a former band teacher helping others through drum circles; a retired chef sharing stories about family recipes.

“It’s not just programming. It’s how we affirm who they are.”

Makayla Schall, activities assistant at The Gardens, sees these sparks daily. They happen during trivia games, chair yoga and everyday conversation—but sometimes especially when art is involved. Residents who might not remember names can still sing every word of a Tin Pan Alley-era song. A watercolor class might begin in silence and end in laughter. Even tactile moments—folding fabric, turning the page of a photo book—can ground someone in the present.

Reflecting on the drum circle experience, Makayla shares:

“Some will say, ‘I don’t know how to play a drum,’ or, ‘I’ve never done this before.’ And Alana just says, ‘That’s okay. Just feel it.’”

“There’s one resident who told me, ‘I haven’t played since high school marching band,’



#### Creativity in Action at the Watermark Fountains at La Cholla

and then you see her start tapping, building something with everyone else. It becomes a conversation—just not with words.”

“By the end, they don’t want to stop. And I don’t blame them. It’s not just fun—it’s freedom.”

SAACA/Art State Arizona’s involvement expands this model by connecting residents to the greater Southern Arizona arts community.

Kevin Larkin has worked with The Fountains to curate dozens of special events, from appearances by classical chamber groups to Indigenous dance showcases. A professional musician himself, he also enjoys performing at The Inn.

“There’s something profound about playing for people who don’t take it for granted,” he says. “You’re not background noise. They’re feeling it. You finish a song, and someone tells you it reminded them of home, or a dance they used to go to. It’s an exchange.”

Residents also participate in workshops led by working creatives—from musicians and songwriters like Kevin to poets, chefs, muralists, potters, painters and more. The goal is to collapse the distance between audience and artist, creating mutual connection and learning.

Research supports what The Fountains’ staff know intuitively. According to the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Center for Creative Aging, sustained arts participation among older adults is linked to better emotional health, fewer hospitalizations, improved cognitive function and higher morale among care staff.

Makayla notes the emotional impact:

“It gives people a reason to get ready in the morning. You hear, ‘I have to be dressed because Alana’s coming today,’ or, ‘I want to be there for the music.’ That’s purpose. That’s pride.”

“

**They really come to life, music just taps into something that other language can’t.”**

Kevin Larkin, Program Manager, Art State Arizona



#### Drumming and Music Therapy Session at the Fountain at La Cholla

The benefits extend to those facilitating care as well.

"It's one of those lines of work where you

have to be uniquely you," Abigail says. "You can't fake it. But you also get so much back. I've grown here. I've seen what real connection looks like."

She often reminds herself and staff of a profound truth:

"We are in their home. This is their home. It's our place of work, but it is their home."

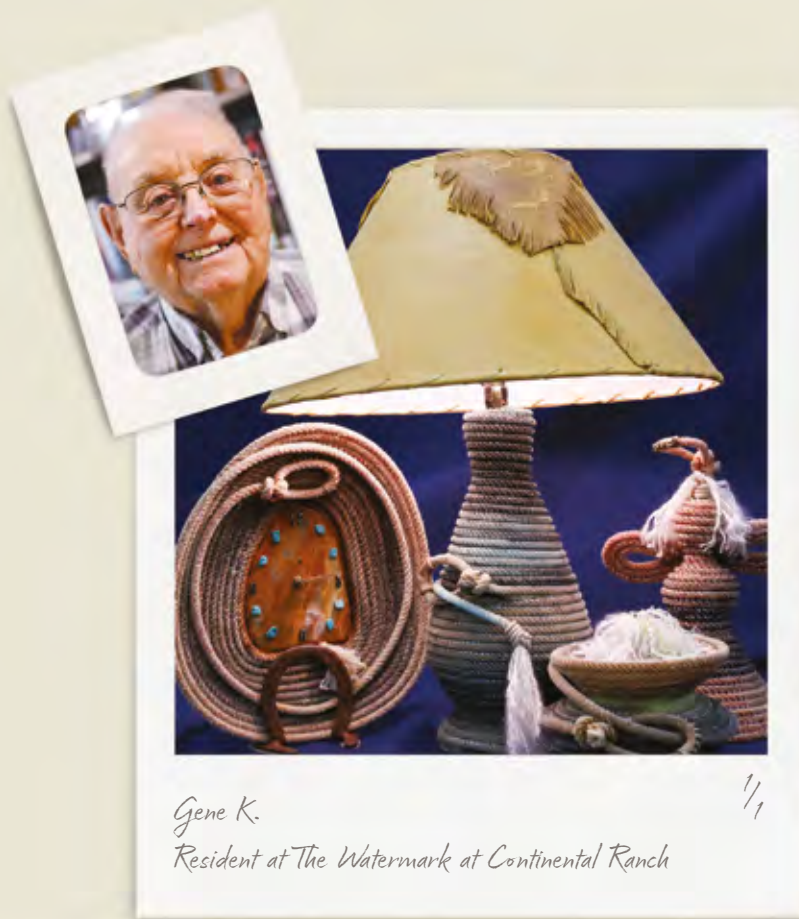
This philosophy shapes every part of care at The Fountains. The arts programs are more than amenities—they are an expression of empathy, respect and a commitment to honoring both the past and the present lives of residents.

Visit on any given day and you might hear the hum of a Celtic harp, the tap of a brush on canvas or the steady beat of hands on drums and shakers. What you won't hear is silence. At The Fountains, residents continue to impact one another through the healing power of creativity.

**"They've lived full lives," Abigail says. "And through art, they're still living them."**



A view from the main gallery hallway at the Fountains of La Cholla, featuring works by artist Tommy Rossi.



Gene K.

Resident at The Watermark at Continental Ranch

1/1

## Where Imagination Takes Shape

Gene proves everyday materials can become unforgettable works of art. With simple lariat ropes, he's transformed a lamp, a clock, even a bowl – each piece turning the familiar into something extraordinary.

Gene shows us inspiration is always within reach.



Discover more



Written By Jonathan Frahm

Moving Toward Hope:

# The Story of the Esperanza Dance Project

**Where Movement Speaks Louder Than Words, Esperanza Transforms Stages into Safe Spaces for Healing and Belonging.**

A girl sits in meditative silence on the bleachers of an auditorium. She watches as dancers move across her school's stage with grace and intent. A potent narrative weaves through each movement, sharing messages of healing and connection through dance. By the time the final note fades, she picks up a pencil and writes anonymously for the collective: "This showed me that I'm not alone. No one is."

This is the power of the Esperanza Dance Project, a Tucson-based nonprofit founded by Beth Braun in 2011. Through multimedia perfor-



Esperanza Dance Project

mances grounded in dance, Esperanza creates space for youth—and people of all ages and backgrounds—to witness, reflect on and begin to heal from the impacts of childhood sexual trauma.

**"Part of the experience of sexual violence is disconnecting our brains from our bodies," Braun says. "Dancing is a way of totally reconnecting them. It's visceral. It speaks to something beyond language."**

Braun was moved to start Esperanza through her experiences as a former dance educator with decades of experience in Tucson schools. She has been dancing for more than 50 years and choreographing for over 30, but no project has resonated more closely with her than Esperanza.



Esperanza Dance Project Performance

Larry Hanelin



Harry Hanelin

### Esperanza Dance Production at the Tucson Jewish Community Center

After witnessing the impact of a single school performance—where students flooded her with questions and disclosures—Braun realized that dance could do something traditional approaches might not. Esperanza meets students where they are, on their own terms.

Many of Esperanza's performances are designed for middle and high school audiences, blending original choreography with first-person narrative and a post-performance Q&A. Some performances focus on topics such as body image, mental health and safety. Others directly address trauma and recovery. The pieces are uncompromising but age-appropriate, designed to open a narrative.

Emily Youngerman, Esperanza's program manager, explains, "We always highlight at the beginning that there are resources in the back of the curriculum. The point of what we do is to start conversations—to create safe spaces where kids can talk about things that are stigmatized."

After each performance, students are invited to write anonymous questions on index cards. They are raw, heartbreaking and hopeful. When Esperanza's dancers stand on stage and respond, it's clear this is art that encourages peer support. It's the beginning of healing in motion.

Youngerman, who joined the project after being drawn by its mission, shares that a profound transformation also occurs offstage. "One of our dancers joined after seeing Esperanza perform at her school. During a community Q&A, she told a room full of strangers how that experience gave her the courage to speak up and eventually dance with us. It's something I'll never forget."

The impact is not only made on audiences but also on the performers themselves. Every dancer completes peer advocacy training, learning how to actively listen, respond without judgment and share resources. While they are not therapists, and Esperanza is not a clinical intervention, they can be a first step.

**"We're creating a space for people to feel comfortable seeking help," Braun says. "It's not about fixing someone. It's about saying, 'I see you. I believe you. You're not alone.'"**

Esperanza often partners with community resource fairs, inviting organizations like the Southern Arizona Center Against Sexual Assault and Our Family Services to offer on-site support. Through their home at the CATALYST Creative Collective, Esperanza has grown into a collaborative model that champions inclusivity and intergenerational connection.

Kevin Larkin, Programs Manager at SAACA/Art State Arizona and space manager at CATALYST, reflects on programming he's curated with Esperanza. **"Through dance, how many lives are changing that previously had nothing to do with dance? That's such a cool thing. It speaks volumes when you come to an Esperanza event and you see all these people who are just there to share resources—born out of this mission to make a better world."**

Braun dreams of reaching more schools, expanding statewide and creating an even greater impact. But more than growth, her vision is rooted in continuity—ensuring Esperanza's work can keep going, dancer by dancer, story by story.

"There are days that this work is really hard," she admits. "But then I open a thank-you card from a student, and I remember why we do it. This work changes lives. Sometimes, it saves them."

Esperanza means "hope." With every step taken and every story shared, they deliver exactly that.

To learn more visit: [www.esperanzadanceproject.org](http://www.esperanzadanceproject.org)

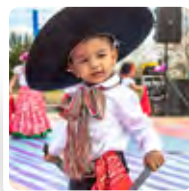


## Salsa, Tequila & Taco Challenge

**Hilton El Conquistador Resort**  
10000 N Oracle Rd  
Tucson, AZ 85704  
Sun 5pm-8:30pm  
**General Admission \$100**  
**VIP \$135**

**August**

**31**  
**2025**

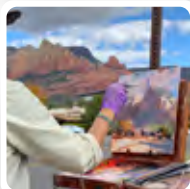


## Sahuarita Art on the Lake Festival

**Sahuarita Lake Park**  
15466 S Rancho Sahuarita Blvd  
Sahuarita, AZ 85629  
Sat 10am-4pm  
**Free Admission**

**January**

**10**  
**2026**



## Park Place Plein Air Painting Festival

**Park Place Mall**  
5870 E Broadway Blvd  
Tucson, AZ 85711  
Sat 11am-4pm  
**Free Admission**

**September**

**6**  
**2025**



## La Encantada Winter Fine Art Festival

**La Encantada Shopping Center**  
2905 E Skyline Dr  
Tucson, AZ 85718  
Sat 10am-5pm & Sun 11am-4pm  
**Free Admission**

**January**

**17 & 18**  
**2026**



## Echoes of Innovation

A wearable art exhibition & runway show

**Roche Tissues Diagnostics**  
1910 E Innovation Park Dr  
Oro Valley, AZ 85755  
Thur 5pm-7pm  
**Tickets \$75 Each**

**September**

**25**  
**2025**



## SAVOR Food Festival

**Tucson Botanical Gardens**  
2150 N Alvernon Way  
Tucson, AZ 85712  
Sat 11am-3pm  
**General Admission \$125**  
**VIP Admission \$160**

**January**

**24**  
**2026**



## Sahuarita Oktoberfest

**Sahuarita Lake Park**  
15466 S Rancho Sahuarita Blvd  
Sahuarita, AZ 85629  
Fri 5pm-8:30pm  
**Free Admission**

**September**

**26**  
**2025**



## Downtown Glendale Arts & Culture Fest

**Glendale Civic Center**  
5750 W Glenn Dr  
Glendale, AZ 85301  
Sat 10am-5pm  
**Free Admission**

**January**

**31**  
**2026**

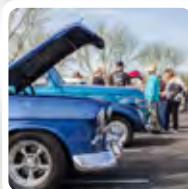


## Patagonia Fall Festival

**Patagonia Town Park**  
325 McKeown Ave  
Patagonia, AZ 85624  
Sat 9am-5pm & Sun 10am-4pm  
**Free Admission**

**October**

**11 & 12**  
**2025**



## Cruise, BBQ & Blues

**Oro Valley Marketplace**  
12155 N Oracle Rd  
Oro Valley, AZ 85737  
Sat 10am-3pm  
**\$5 Admission**

**February**

**7**  
**2026**



## Oro Valley Fall Foodie, Art & Wine Festival

**Oro Valley Marketplace**  
12155 N Oracle Rd  
Oro Valley, AZ 85737  
Sat 10am-4pm & Sun 10am-4pm  
**Free Admission**

**October**

**25 & 26**  
**2025**



## Devour Culinary Classic

**Desert Botanical Gardens**  
1201 N Galvin Pkwy  
Phoenix, AZ 85008  
**Ticket \$150-\$225**

**February**

**21 & 22**  
**2026**



## La Encantada Fall Fine Art Festival

**La Encantada Shopping Center**  
2905 E Skyline Dr  
Tucson, AZ 85718  
Sat 10am-5pm & Sun 11am-4pm  
**Free Admission**

**November**

**8 & 9**  
**2025**



## Oro Valley Spring Food, Art & Wine Festival

**Oro Valley Marketplace**  
12155 N Oracle Rd  
Oro Valley, AZ 85737  
Sat 10am-4pm & Sun 10am-4pm  
**Free Admission**

**March**

**7 & 8**  
**2026**



## Oro Valley Festival of the Arts & Holiday Tree Lighting

**Oro Valley Marketplace**  
12155 N Oracle Rd  
Oro Valley, AZ 85737  
Sat 10am-6:30pm & Sun 10am-4pm  
**Free Admission**

**December**

**6 & 7**  
**2025**



## Tucson Folk Festival

**Downtown Tucson**  
101 N Stone Ave  
Tucson, AZ 85701  
Fri 6pm-9pm  
Sat 12pm-9:30pm  
Sun 11:30am-8:30pm  
**Free Admission**

**April**

**10-12**  
**2026**





## Where Will Your Creativity Lead You?

Visit an Arizona community today.

**Joshua Springs Senior Living**, *Bullhead City*; **Caliche Senior Living**, *Casa Grande*  
**The Watermark at Morrison Ranch**, *Gilbert*; **White Cliffs Senior Living**, *Kingman*  
**The Watermark at Continental Ranch**, *Marana*; **The Watermark at Oro Valley**, *Oro Valley*  
**The Hacienda at the Canyon**, *Tucson*; **The Hacienda at the River**, *Tucson*  
**The Fountains La Cholla**, *Tucson*



Discover more



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