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ESSENTIAL ARTS 2-23-2018

Read below to learn more about the great things happening in Region 7E

**March 1 Grant Deadlines for Artists of all ages
Black Box Theater Project
Art Grant Info Session in March for April 1 Deadlines
More Awesome Board Members Needed
About ECRAC**



Nikki Schneider "Drop Velocity" 2010

March 1 Artist Grant Deadline for all Ages!

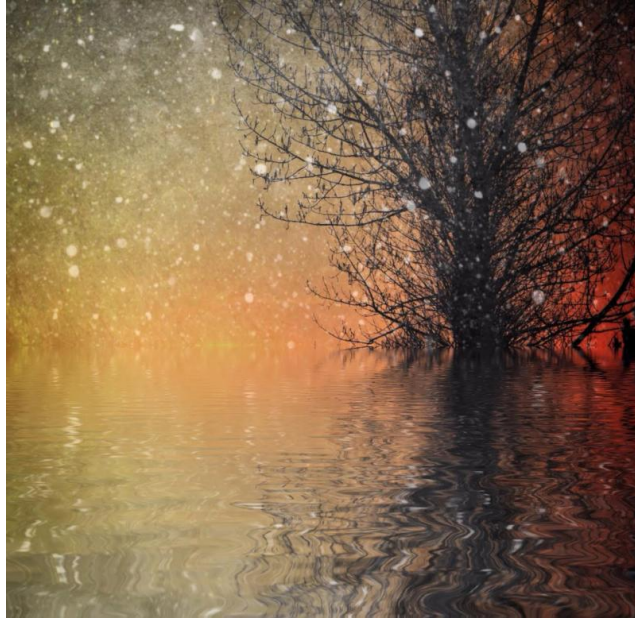
The East Central Regional Arts Council (ECRAC) is pleased to announce to artists of all ages within Region 7E (the Minnesota Counties of Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, and Pine), that the next deadline to apply for funding is March 1, 2018. Funding is available for 2 programs for artists of all ages.

Essential Artist Award Program

The ECRAC Essential Artist Award is designed to recognize, reward, and encourage outstanding professional artists. These Awards will allow artists to set aside time to work, purchase supplies and materials, undertake advanced artistic study (not related to a degree) or to pursue

other artistic career goals. Three \$7,000 Essential Artist Awards are available. The annual deadline is March 1.

Last year this program was called the ECRAC Fellowship Grant and the awards went to: Marilyn Cuellar, Cambridge; Dee Kotaska, Mora; and Nikki Schneider, Isanti.



Dee Kotaska "The Last of the Snows" 2015

ECRAC K-12 Scholarship Program for Students

Scholarship funding up to \$500 is available for a student's specific art or music learning projects, camp, or art programs for students currently in grades K-12. These activities should not be related to a degree and can't occur outside the state of Minnesota. The annual deadline is March 1. Last year's scholarships funded music lessons, voice lessons, Pre-Intensive Preparatory Ballet Camp, and MacPhail Institute's Suzuki Institute.



Marilyn Cuellar "Ukrainian Girls" 2013

Additional information regarding these funding opportunities and all online grant application portal can be found at the ECRAC website: <http://www.ecrac.org/grants>, or by visiting the ECRAC office located at 112 Main Avenue South, Braham, MN.

Grant applicants requesting grant writing consultation or wanting more information regarding arts grant programs can contact the ECRAC office by phone at 320-396-2337 x 2, or by email grantinfo@ecrac.org.

These activities are made possible with funds provided by The McKnight Foundation and also by the voters of Minnesota thanks to legislative appropriations from the general fund.



Black Box Theater Project Made Possible

Rachel Lexvold knew she wanted to get into more local theater directing, but she wasn't quite sure how it was going to happen.

Lexvold was already directing the one-act play for Chisago Lakes High School in Lindstrom, but with the nearest local theaters in St. Croix Falls, Forest Lake and White Bear Lake, it was tough to find any other places to work at her craft and her passion, directing theater. That's when she learned that Chisago Lakes Community Education had been approved for an East Central Regional Arts Grant that would allow her to create her own theatrical setting.

"There was a lot of discussion and a lot of planning that had to go into it, but we were approved to work with an intimate space that had been added on to the high school years ago for a television recording class. The classroom was still used for that purpose, but it didn't have much other use besides that, and Lexvold decided it would be the perfect spot for a Black Box Theater, paying homage to the space and area they'll be working with.

Lexvold was already very familiar with the space, as she was a graduate of Chisago Lakes High School and made use of that space through her academic and extra curricular activities. Despite her familiarity with the space and with directing plays, there was still multiple daunting tasks ahead for the project. "It was going to be a tight timeline, and we weren't sure how many people we'd get to show up, so we really had to put a lot of thought and work into selecting the right play and getting the word out."

The director eventually settled on the Louisa May Alcott classic "Little Women" for the debut show. Lexvold said she chose that particular musical because there were multiple versions that allowed for a small and big cast. She ended up picking the perfect number. The first rehearsals were held on Thursday, January 25, and Lexvold said they only had one person over the cast limit, so the actors and actresses were pretty much spot on. The one extra even decided to take a backstage role on to help with the production of the intimate show. There was even a participant who showed up who had zero acting experience before coming out for this, which Lexvold said was a great sign that they are on their way to their goal of presenting theater to new people.

With two rehearsals a week for four weeks, the participants are getting a crash course in their lines and mannerisms. They only have a short amount of time to perfect what they are doing before their show on Tuesday, March 6, and with such a small and close setting, the performances are even more magnified. But, that is what excites Lexvold so much. "In big stage plays, you can have big, flashy sets that can distract the audience," she said. "In this setting, it will be more about the story and the performances. It's just so exciting to try new things and open this space up for something it hadn't been used for in over 10 years."



Black Box Stage Setting for upcoming production of *Little Women*.

Lexvold expressed her gratitude to ECRAC for the grant, as it's allowed her to share her passion of theater with others in the area. "There is a want, a desire, and a need for more theater in this area, and this is a great opportunity for use to reach more people," she explained. "We want to pull more people in to this world and who knows what where it might go after that!"

"Little Women" will be performed at the Chisago Lakes High School on Tuesday, March 6 at 7 p.m. Only about 70 seats will be available for the lone performance. This event is free and open to the public.

This project is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the East Central Regional Arts Council thanks to a legislative appropriation from the State's General Fund and the Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund.

Upcoming Grant Info Session

Looking for more information on where and when to get help with applying for an ECRAC grant?

East Central Regional Arts Council (ECRAC) has scheduled its upcoming grant information session for all artists, arts organizations, schools, community organizations, and non-profit organizations in the Region 7E area. This sessions will include basic information about all ECRAC art grant programs, as well as recent changes to the grant application process. Individual appointments with staff are available immediately after the group session. This session will help you prepare for the April 1 ECRAC Grant deadlines.

- Saturday, March 17, 2018; 9:00-10:00 a.m.

30 minute individual meetings are available after the above sessions at 10:30, 11:00, and 11:30 upon request.

This session will be held at the East Central Regional Arts Council office located at 112 Main Avenue South in Braham, MN.

Advance registration is required. To register, please call the East Central Regional Arts Council office at (320) 396-2337 x 1, or email info@ecrac.org.

More Awesome Board Members Needed

[ECRAC is in search of more awesome board members! To find out more, click here!](#)

About ECRAC

The East Central Regional Arts Council (ECRAC) is a Minnesota Regional Arts Council serves Region 7E the Counties of Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, and Pine.

The mission of ECRAC is to support the arts and bring the life enhancing values they afford to Region 7E residents. This is done primarily through the funding of grants to artists and to organizations sponsoring arts events and activities. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and by appointment.

ECRAC's programs are made possible with funds provided by The McKnight Foundation, and by the voters of Minnesota thanks to legislative appropriations from the general fund and the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

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