

# INSIDE THE



LEHIGH VALLEY ARTS COUNCIL



## Something for Everyone

The Lehigh Valley Arts Council and the Disability Friendly Community welcome you to an afternoon of learning and laughter at *Champions of Inclusion*, a trade fair for greater cultural access and a performance by celebrated comedian Josh Blue. This multi-faceted event will be held on Thursday, July 12, 2018, at the Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts in Bethlehem from 1:00pm–4:30pm, and features presentations by local and regional professionals who have expanded access to the arts for the region's largest-growing minority.

Champions recognizes twelve organizations who have demonstrated a commitment to greater inclusion in the arts. There are more than 87,000 persons with a disability living independently in the Lehigh Valley, and very few of them have access the region's rich, diverse arts

culture. Individuals with disabilities and their families are encouraged to attend and learn about opportunities to be more engaged in the arts.

The champions will share their experiences with arts administrators and human services agencies that are seeking to begin or create their own accessible programs. Special guest Street Thoma, the former Manager of Accessible Programs at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, will recount the development of the museum's program. Much of Thoma's career has focused on creative ways to help people with sensory, intellectual, and physical impairments participate in the visual arts. He developed a method to communicate paintings in museums through discussion and touch, allowing people who are blind or visually impaired to share the experience with sighted friends and family.

### Program Schedule

**1:00pm:** Welcome

**1:10pm:** Trade Fair begins

**1:40pm:** Panel Discussion:

**Building Partnerships:  
Sharing Strategies for Success**

Jessica Bien, Muhlenberg College  
Theatre & Dance (moderator)

Rita Lang, Center for Vision Loss

Jill Arington, Pennsylvania  
Shakespeare Festival

Kim Resh, Mikayla's Voice

**2:40pm:** Presentation:

**Best Practices: How to Develop  
an Accessible Program**

Street Thoma, former Manager of  
Accessible Programs at Philadelphia  
Museum of Art

**3:05pm:** Seating begins in the  
theatre

**3:30pm:** Josh Blue takes the stage

**4:10pm:** Dessert reception

Comedian Josh Blue will perform at 3:30pm, followed by a dessert reception to cap off the day. Blue uses his own affliction with cerebral palsy as part of his routine and encourages his audience to overcome preconceived notions about people who are labeled as "disabled." He recently appeared on NBC's *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*.

As an added treat, artists with disabilities will have work on display. The entire day's activities are free to the members of the Lehigh Valley Arts Council and the Disability Friendly Community. However, tickets are still required to see Josh Blue's performance. Reserve your free tickets by contacting the Arts Council at 610-437-5915 or [LVArtsCouncil.org](http://LVArtsCouncil.org) via Eventbrite. Nonmembers pay \$20 at [LVArtsBoxOffice.org](http://LVArtsBoxOffice.org) for the performance; the trade show is free and open to the public.

# Your Passport to the Arts

Summertime brings 20 times the FUN with the July 1st release of the new ARTix Passport to the Arts, a Buy One ticket, Get One free to 20 arts and cultural venues in the Lehigh Valley. That's 20 arts adventures at 20 exciting destinations available to you and up to 20 companions through June 30, 2019.

As the region's leading advocate for the arts, the Lehigh Valley Arts Council created ARTix to encourage the community to explore the region's splendid array of dance, musical, theatrical, and historical offerings. "When we come together to promote all of the arts in the region, everyone wins," says Randall Forte, Arts Council Executive Director. "The arts consumer has more choices, the organizations attract larger audiences, and local businesses thrive." This new edition marks twenty-one years of collaborative arts marketing among the region's cultural groups.

ARTix remains a benefit of membership in the Lehigh Valley Arts Council, but over the years the Council has increased the circulation and opened the door wider for all people to enjoy the arts. Real estate and corporate relocation offices give passports to new residents relocating to the Valley. Local health networks encourage volunteers to enjoy the arts as part of a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, the social service sector offers ARTix to their clients with disabilities, allowing them affordable access to disability-friendly events. There is definitely something

for everyone to enjoy—from symphonic to folk music, fine arts to vintage cars, Shakespeare to Broadway musicals—fun and entertainment for the entire family.

"The Lehigh Valley Arts Council is proud to provide regional leadership that advances the arts in this growing community," says Forte. The list of participating venues include Act 1, DeSales University Performing & Fine Arts, Miller Symphony Hall, America on Wheels, The Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Camerata Singers, Chamber Music Society of Bethlehem, Civic Theatre of Allentown, Godfrey Daniels, Historic Bethlehem Museums and Historic Sites, Lehigh County Historical Society, Music @ Moravian, Muhlenberg College Theatre & Dance, Pennsylvania Sinfonia Orchestra, National Museum of Industrial History, Northampton County Historical & Genealogical Society, State Theatre, Touchstone Theatre, Williams Center for the Arts, and Zoellner Arts Center. ARTix can be used one time at each of the 20 participating organizations. Some restrictions apply; call the venue in advance to reserve your tickets. For more

information on membership in the Lehigh Valley Arts Council, visit [LVArtsCouncil.org/membership](http://LVArtsCouncil.org/membership).

ARTix is made possible through the sponsorship of Peoples Security Bank & Trust and the support of Christmas City Printing, The County of Lehigh, and The Harry C. Trexler Trust.



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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Randall Forte

Call for submission guidelines: New items must be received by the fifth of the month preceding publication.

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## Our Mission:

To promote the value of the arts, foster collaboration in the community, and encourage arts engagement for all people in the Lehigh Valley.

The Lehigh Valley Arts Council is a Pennsylvania Partner in the Arts, a program of the PCA.



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## THE INSIDE TRACK

Lafayette College and the Allentown Symphony Association each have been awarded a NEA \$10,000 grant. Lafayette will use the grant to support the Williams Center for the Arts Jazz Series with master classes, open rehearsals and lectures as well as pre- and post-performance discussions moderated by Lafayette faculty. The symphony will use its grant for a commissioned work and residencies by acclaimed Chinese composer Zhou Tian. The composition will have its premiere in Allentown at concerts led by conductor Diane Wittry this November. **Touchstone Theatre** received a \$50,000 Our Town grant from the NEA for their Festival UnBound in October 2019.

## NEW MEMBERS

INDIVIDUAL: Evelyn DiCandia, Kamille Freske  
 HOUSEHOLD: Tara Henninger, Joseph Lynn & Mary Rutkowski

## ONE LAST THOUGHT

Champions of Inclusion is about how we can all participate in the arts. It begins with listening to each other. When we raise awareness, remove barriers, and make accommodations, we create a more inclusive Lehigh Valley.

Meet the champions who are bringing the community together through the arts. Learn about opportunities to be more engaged. And, laugh alongside each other during a performance by comedian Josh Blue. We hope you will join us!

*Randall Forte*