

Darien
ARTS CENTER

*visual
arts*

music

dance

the HEART *of the* ARTS



Community



Since its inception in 1976, the DARIEN ARTS CENTER has been a welcoming haven to all members of the community. As a home for the arts, individuals of all ages and backgrounds have found a creative atmosphere to pursue not just their interests but also their dreams. Under one roof, the Darien Arts Center provides dynamic programs, classes, and activities in dance, music, visual arts, and theater.

Today the Darien Arts Center maintains this tradition of high quality arts and its continued invitation to all to experience the arts. With thousands of individuals and families participating in and benefiting from an enriched arts experience, we remain committed to our extended family.

BE A PART OF THE ARTS, AT DARIEN ARTS CENTER!



Guest artist, Alejandro Ulloa, of East Coast Contemporary Ballet, partners with senior student Sophia Condon in the role of Sugar Plum in the 2022 production of the *Nutcracker*



ALL YOU NEED IS ARTS...

DARIEN ARTS CENTER'S executive leadership reflects on our organization.

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | George Colabella



George Colabella

Since joining the Darien Arts Center in August 2022, I have often been asked how I like being here. The best I can offer is, I am not where I thought I would be, but I am definitely where I was meant to be. Each and every day I am surrounded by creative, joyful, and dynamic folks. From the youngest to the most senior, their energy permeates the Center and inspires me. I am humbled and honored to be part of this family.

Hanging on my wall is a quote by John Lennon, "Any artist's or poet's role is to try and express what we feel. Not to tell people how to feel. Not as a preacher, not as a leader but as reflection

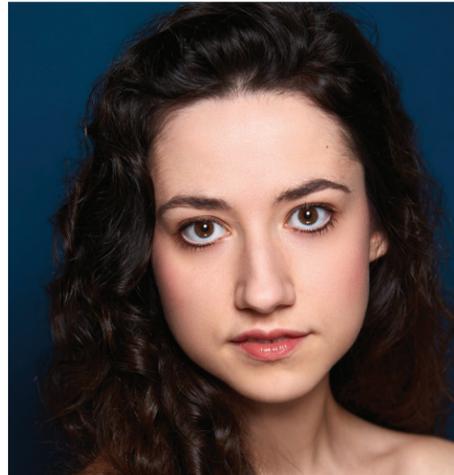
of us all." I not only believe this, but I experience it every day. Through dance, visual arts, and music I continue to experience the wonders of the arts.

It has been a momentous year for the Darien Arts Center. There have been many new classes, workshops, and events. Directors, both new and seasoned, have not just enriched our repertoire but have touched the lives of many. I wish that all could see the smiles on the faces of all those who enter our doors.

Looking forward to the coming year, there will be a number of new and exciting activities. We will continue to bring in performers from the region and expand our programs and productions. I encourage everyone to check out all that is new and also to come by my office so we may chat and learn more about one another.

This year I have truly experienced that which John Lennon so eloquently stated. I have been touched by all those who have captured what I feel.

ABOUT OUR



DIRECTORS

Claire Mazza DANCE DIRECTOR

Claire has been teaching dance to students ages 3-18 for ten years, and was drawn to DAC's "nurturing and versatile program, and the kind students who show so much potential."

Lisa Koorbusch VISUAL ARTS DIRECTOR

A working artist in Darien, Lisa believes the "visual arts can expand our imaginations, and help us to connect with one another in a very meaningful way."



Juanita Bosee MUSIC DIRECTOR

A teacher for more than 35 years, Juanita loves "fostering the intersection of students' unique musical and life journeys, nurturing their ability to express themselves joyfully through music."



WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT The Darien Arts Center is a non-profit organization funded exclusively by tuition, ticket sales and donations. To support or volunteer, visit us at: darienarts.org.

A NOTE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT | Carolyn Cavolo

Welcome both our returning and first-time students to another exciting year at the Darien Arts Center.

The past term offered much that was new. Combined with our standard repertoire, 2024 promises to be an exciting time as the Center renews its commitment to build upon the many performances, classes, workshops, recitals, and community events.

Our growth in 2023 has shown that the Darien Arts Center is filling a dynamic and creative interest in our community. True to our founding mission, we continue to respond to the interests and vitality of all who seek an opportunity to both enjoy and participate in the creative arts.

We are experiencing a true renaissance of the arts both within our home and within our expanded community. The addition of creative and dynamic department directors, executive director, existing staff, and dedicated Board members have brought renewed energy and creative spirit to the Center.



Carolyn Cavolo

The dedication of the Center's Board of Directors continues to set a tone of excellence and high quality arts. We welcome Mary-Nevin Gautier, Lisa Albano, and Pamela Garrity to our dynamic Board, who join Kellie Anderson, Cristina Boudo, Meg Deluca, Daniel Kunetz, Donna McLaughlin Wyant, Winnie Norman, Katrina O'Connor, Gail Samuel, Aly Sturm, and Chrysula Winegar. Their skills, insight, and enthusiasm will further advance the dynamic mission of the Center.

The students, parents, and community members are the lifeblood of the Darien Arts Center and make all we do possible. Even more important, they are part of our family.

"I welcome all into our creative home!"

DANCE

dance

Chelsea St. Cloud

What a year of growth and change it has been for Darien Arts Center's Dance Department, which serves nearly three hundred students in a plethora of dance styles. Under the new direction of professional ballerina and East Coast Contemporary Ballet (ECCB) co-director, Claire Mazza, the Dance Department and associated pre-professional company has had new life breathed into it.

With a new and energized focused we saw the introduction of dance etiquette and standardized dress codes and developed a more consistent ballet curriculum fostering communication and unification among instructors. Additionally, new classes such as Contemporary and Partnering, were offered. These classes provide an opportunity for dancers to learn new modes of movement and to experience ballet pas de deux work for the first time. Established curriculum was maintained along with building upon the strong and thriving community already present at DAC. A primary goal was to continue to instill confidence in the young dancers—this is how they will be able meet their own goals and progress in their individual trajectories.

“I love the focus, the new choreography and the pace at which we are going.”

—DAC SENIOR COMPANY STUDENT

December 2023 brought with it the annual holiday classic, *The Nutcracker*. This reimagined iteration showcased DAC dancers ages six to eighteen. All nine performances were sold-out!

The Dance Department continues to grow, incorporating a variety of styles (Dance Beginnings, Pre Ballet, Kinderballet, Ballet Technique, Pointe, Contemporary, Hip Hop, Broadway, Lyrical Jazz,

Adult Ballet and Contemporary). This past year has elevated the ballet program and the pre-professional company. We saw the first *Mixed Rep* performance, where the objective is to showcase advanced students' ballet training while also focusing on their contemporary technique.

The end of the year concluded with two Spring Concerts, one for the tiniest dancers at DAC and the other for levels Ballet 1 through Company. The well-attended performances showcased that which the students had learned and accomplished. We also celebrated the graduation of six seniors, five of whom had danced at DAC since they were three years old.

Special recognition goes to the eight instructors who have made the Dance Program a success.



Chelsea St. Cloud in the role of English Rose amidst her corps of flowers. LEFT TO RIGHT: Bridget Parr, Sabrina Byrnes, Camilla Calderwood, Eloise Mallie, Lulu Deluca, and Logan Samuel.

BELOW: Darien Arts Center Instructor, Cindy DeForest leading a pre-ballet class.



“It is a privilege to be choreographed and have a role especially made for me.”

—Mackenzie Maier
DAC STUDENT

The DAC Company performs *Tremor*, an East Coast Contemporary Ballet work restaged for the annual Mixed Rep Program.





The Visual Arts Program offers a variety of classes and workshops for children and adults in painting, drawing, sculpture, photography and fine crafts.

VISUAL ARTS

visual arts

Plans for 2024 include more offerings for adults as well as continuing a number of favorites. The Visual Arts Department plans on holding an Open House in the studio which will include live music in conjunction with the Music Department. Other plans include a gallery showing.

We have been working closely with a new partner, NAYA, a local eatery, which included art work and live children’s painting at their grand opening, along with scheduled children’s classes and exhibitions.

It has been an extraordinary year and the vision for the future is exciting.



Proud student showing her Art From Life masterpiece.

“My daughter can’t wait to get to the studio each week to dive into a new project!”

—Anne Michaels
PARENT

The Visual Arts Program was enriched and enhanced due to the addition of Lisa Koorbusch who joined the Darien Arts Center in August 2023. Lisa continues to provide energy and vision to the Visual Arts Program, which resulted in numerous programs plus attracting new and enthusiastic participants. This growth and enhancement of the program has been evidenced by new classes, new instructors, and programs for adults. A sampling of these activities include: Watercolor Workshops, “Sip and Paint” Watercolor Evenings, “Sip and Pour” Acrylic Pour Evenings, Art From Life for grades 2-5, Digital Camera Photography Workshop, Mixed Media and Collage for grades 5-8, and Expressive Art for Middle Schoolers.

“The instructors create a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere.”

—Kathy Cramer
STUDENT

We have seen significant growth of visual arts programs, including: social media Digital Illustration competition with Technical Reproductions on Instagram. Winners in each age group were given large prints of their artwork and exposure on social media. Seven high school seniors applied for the Ginny Wright Scholarship which is awarded to an outstanding Darien art student. Sarah Jackson was named winner and honored at the DHS award ceremony.

Our Holiday Wreath Workshops were as popular as ever, and we added a Gingerbread House Work-shop for children and caregivers. Our youngest artists enjoyed a February and Summer Camp arts experience in our studio.



PAINT THE TOWN
Summer camp students dance to music in bare feet, creating a visual representation of music.



MUSIC

music



Our students receive a foundation in classical or jazz, which can later be applied to any musical interest.

Juanita Bosee's three decades of commitment to the Darien Arts Center, along with her considerable experience, expertise, and dedication once again resulted in an outstanding year for the Music Department. In addition to her teaching skills, she has put together a dynamic team of music instructors which has enabled the music department to grow.

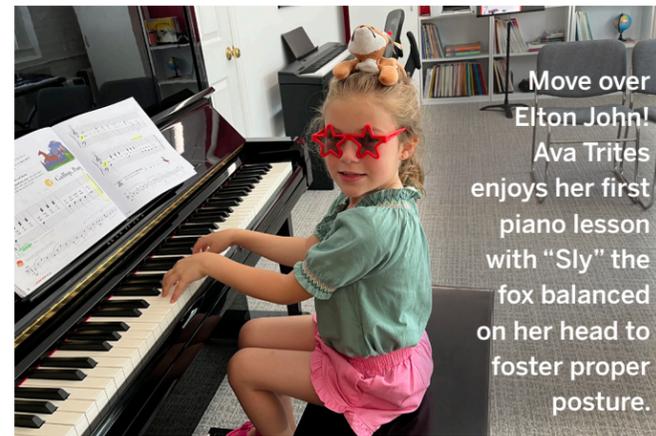
It has been an extraordinary and vibrant year. From young-

sters to adults, classes in piano, violin, viola, flute, guitar, and voice proved to be popular, with classes filling quickly. The dynamic music department continues to provide instruction for the novice to the accomplished. A significant percentage of students have been with the program for several years, testifying to the high quality and personalized instruction. The trend of graduating students going on to pursue their musical training and careers has continued.

The end-of-year performance drew a full house, in which students of all levels were able to showcase their skills and talents. Their energy and mastery were evident to all. A standing ovation completed the evening as three seniors who have been studying at the DAC since they were 6 years old were recognized.

In 2024 we will see additional classes in a variety of instrumental and voice lessons. The Music Department continues to grow.

COME TOGETHER Open to children and adults, our professional instructors work with students to help them discover their full potential by strengthening their technique, artistry, self-awareness, and individuality.



Move over Elton John! Ava Trites enjoys her first piano lesson with "Sly" the fox balanced on her head to foster proper posture.



Kayla Bulpitt at our spring 2023 concert. Kayla says her love of music has brought her joy and confidence.

"The DAC provided us with a great opportunity to grow comfortable performing for an audience, a skill that is vital to our success today."

—Matthew
FORMER STUDENT



Theo Bang

Great Beginnings

After 12 years of study at the DAC, graduating senior Theo Bang, played a sublime rendition of Chopin's mournful Prelude in e minor, Opus 28 No.4 at the 2023 Spring Music Recital. Theo is currently pursuing his studies in languages and music at the University of Wisconsin, where his study of piano and AP Music Theory at the DAC will serve him well.

Christopher and Matthew Drake, MC4D, DJing at recent headline performance at Big Night Live in Boston, MA



BAND OF BROTHERS

MATTHEW AND CHRISTOPHER DRAKE, DAC alums and twin brother duo, are *MC4D*, a successful production/DJ team

Brothers Matthew and Christopher Drake credit their success as performers to their strong roots writing and producing music at the Darien Arts Center learning under Juanita Bosee.

After graduating from Darien High School in 2016, they formed the production/DJ duo MC4D. Says Christopher, “We’ve released

“The DAC provided us with a great opportunity to grow comfortable performing for an audience, a skill that is vital to our success today.”

—Matthew Drake

FORMER STUDENT



Christopher and Matthew Drake

dozens of original songs and remixes, amassed more than 100K+ followers and 20M streams on major record labels, and performed almost 100 headline shows around the country.”

Adds Matthew, “We are now able to pursue music full time and are planning our biggest tours yet in 2024. We are very grateful to the DAC for helping us learn to love playing and creating music. Learning the composition and theory behind the songs we loved was instrumental to our success.

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Thank you!

EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO INCLUDE ALL OF OUR DONORS ON THIS LIST. IF YOUR NAME WAS INADVERTENTLY LEFT OFF, PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE.

Feast Your Eyes

When NAYA Middle Eastern Grill opened a Darien Commons location in June of 2023, they donated all proceeds from their first days to the Darien Arts Center. In addition to providing an opportunity for young children to create an over-sized painting during the opening ceremony, guests enjoyed a cooking exhibition by Bravo’s Top Chef Middle East & North Africa, Season 5 winner, Charbel Hayek.

Monthly events with the Darien Arts Center at NAYA offer bird house and pumpkin painting, and holiday ornament making for children, as well as a Sip and

Paint Workshop for adults. We look forward to many more collaborative ventures with NAYA.



ABOVE: DAC Visual Arts Director, Lisa Koorbusch, hosts children’s workshops at NAYA. RIGHT: Board President Carolyn Cavolo with Top Chef Charbel Hayek at NAYA’s opening in Darien Commons.



VISIT @MC4DMUSIC ON INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK

Original Production of
Cinderella with dancer
Mackenzie Maier.



Arts for All



Be a PART of the ARTS
DARIEN
ARTS
CENTER

Katie Cavolo in the
Center's original production
of *Cinderella*.



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