

NONPROFIT NEWS AND UPDATES

Supporting the arts in the Applegate

BY MEGAN FEHRMAN

This fall, staff members of A Greater Applegate (AGA) had the pleasure and privilege of visiting Washington, DC, to participate in a meeting for the Citizens Institute for Rural Design. The Applegate Valley is one of 17 communities selected for the Design Learning Cohort, in which leaders receive assistance navigating funding opportunities, help with facilitation techniques, one-on-one technical assistance for community design projects, and training in rural design and creative placemaking.

Placemaking? It's the process of creating quality places where people want to live, work, play, and learn. Quality places are active and unique. They are places within a community that enhance the specialness of that community.

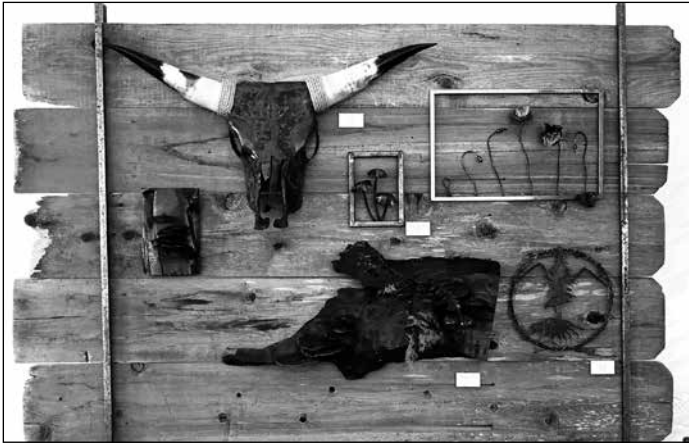
They strive to be visually attractive while showcasing the culture of the area—often weaving together public art, history, and recreation or green spaces. Placemaking projects help communities find ways to advance the quality of life, economic vitality, arts, and social infrastructure of that community.

A Greater Applegate has spent much of 2023 on placemaking projects, many involving the arts. Some projects showcased the best of our place to the outside world, and others brought the outside world to the Applegate. For example, in March we partnered with Art Presence in Jacksonville for a monthlong "Applegate Artists" exhibition featuring metal arts, feltwork, jewelry, and painting. On opening night, artists had the opportunity to share their work as guests sipped on Schmidt Family Vineyards wine.

Through our Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge grant and the Artist Working Group, AGA supported an Art Walk at Pacifica, brought Oregon's poet laureate to Plaisance Ranch, and set up a Pop-Up Art Gallery at the Jacksaphine Count(ry) Fair in September. The Pop-Up Art Gallery featured the work of nine Applegate artists. Everything from originating the concept to building the temporary walls and hanging lighting was executed by members of the Artist Working Group. These collaborative processes and events integrate the arts into our community and tell the story of the people who live, work, and play here.

The Artist Working Group is developing projects for 2024, including more exhibition opportunities for Applegate artists, an artwalk along the Applegate Wine Trail, and public murals. The group meets monthly to discuss upcoming projects. If you are interested in collaborating and being a part of this working group, email jb@agreaterapplegate.org.

AGA is a community-based organization dedicated to the economic,



Wooden sculptures by Kris Albro were displayed in the Pop-up Art Gallery at the Jacksaphine Count(ry) Fair in September.



The above wall of art in the Pop-up Art Gallery includes pieces by Evelyn Byrne Williams, Janis Mohr-Tipton, Tina Schiefer, jb Palasini, Denise Lambert, Curtis Keeler, and Cecile Evans.

environmental, and social vitality of the Applegate Valley. We remain committed to making connections within our community, supporting community-led actions, increasing our collective capacity for placemaking projects, and celebrating our rural culture.

Our small but mighty team is made up of residents of this valley. What we love most about our jobs is the opportunity to work with all of you to build deeper relationships and trust between community members so that we may collectively design appropriate solutions and give the community the ability to sustain the projects that connect people to this place we call home. We are able to achieve more because of the power and promise of our rural community. If you, too, love what we are doing and are called to participate, bring your neighborhood together to work on a project or join one of our many working groups. Reach out to us at info@agreaterapplegate.org.

If you have dollars to spare this holiday season, please consider A Greater Applegate. If you have the ability to become a major donor, let's talk! If you prefer to give monthly, we are grateful for any amount you can contribute. You can donate on our website at agreaterapplegate.org or mail a check to PO Box 335, Jacksonville, OR 97530.

Join us. Support us. Let's do more of this together in 2024.

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Applegate innovators

A Greater Applegate awards grants to projects that enhance life in the valley

A sports court in Williams, a Cantrall Buckley Park coloring book, an art studio, a food garden at Ruch School, a tribute to the Applegate's Indigenous people—these are just a few of the projects that A Greater Applegate was able to support through its 2023 Innovation Grants program.

The program awarded up to \$2,500 to local projects that advance the goals of the Applegate Valley Vision, an 89-page document that details ideas and aspirations for the future of the Applegate Valley. It is based on input gathered from listening sessions conducted throughout the valley in 2019-2020.

The hundreds of residents who attended the open sessions expressed a variety of wishes, including a desire for the valley to be "vibrant and livable," "inclusive and engaged," and "prosperous and vital." They also suggested specific strategies for realizing these aspirations, such as putting on more cultural events and providing more educational opportunities.

For instance, one of the grants provided funds to bring in more diverse DJs to the popular Ecstatic Dance events in Williams. Ecstatic Dance is a monthly event where community members create free-form movement to ambient live DJ music. The event enhances community health and connectedness.

"The dance community in Williams was super grateful for the grant," says event coordinator Mika Smith. "Our dances clearly reflect a greater diversity of attendees with DJs of diverse backgrounds."

Also furthering local arts was a grant for Open Studios to set up a space with canvasses, easels, paints, and brushes for people of all ages to create art. "We are all artists," organizer Kimberly Schneeman says. "It's a matter of opening up the creative process." Open Studios is held at Dorothy Gales Event Centre in Williams.

Other grants funded economic studies of the area, the design of maps and brochures for our local trails and river runs, and the work of a local theater group, the Apple Players.

The 2024 grants were just issued and include money for the Rogue Valley Paragliding and Hang Gliding Association to purchase windsocks to indicate which fields are okay for pilots to land in. These windsocks should increase safety and reduce trespassing disputes. Stay tuned for more grant announcements on A Greater Applegate's website. Read about the 2023 grants by clicking on the "Projects" page on Applegate Valley Connect (applegateconnect.org).

A Greater Applegate's Co-Executive Director Angelique Stewart says, "The AGA staff and board are so excited to fund these community projects, and we can't wait to see them finished!"

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An Innovation Grant funded opening hours for Open Studios.



AGA contributed to the creation of this sports court in Williams, which meets the Applegate Valley Vision of making more shared spaces "to enhance community connections."

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