



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **ARTS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES LATEST ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES**

**(MORGANTOWN, W.VA., FEB. 25, 2021)** – Arts Council of Greater Morgantown (Arts Council), which was formerly known as Arts Mon, is ending its first quarter of 2021 with major updates and accomplishments. The organization unveiled its new website: [artsgm.org](http://artsgm.org); it received the Certified Arts Community designation from the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History (WVDACH) on behalf of Monongalia County; and its leadership transitioned as Beth Keener-Flannery is now Arts Council’s Creative Director.

To achieve the Arts Council’s mission, which is to provide the infrastructure and support to foster a thriving creative community, the organization needed to establish an online presence. Thanks to organizational leadership and Guidon Creative, Arts Council is excited to unveil its new website, which will be the primary communication platform. More website features such as a Creative Network spotlight, volunteer submissions, and events solely for creatives (i.e. artist calls, trainings, auditions) will be added in the future, but [artsgm.org](http://artsgm.org) will now facilitate communication of local, regional, state, and national information and opportunities throughout our creative community.

“We couldn’t be more excited to finally release our new website,” said Arts Council Board President, Susan Riddle. “Our plan is for the website to be the anchor and catalyst to increase conversations and resources for creatives.”

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In 2020, Arts Council accomplished initiatives in partnership with WVDACH, which included applying for the Certified Arts Community program. This hereby designates Monongalia County as a Certified Arts Community, which are communities that annually support two or more arts organizations, provide volunteer governance, make financial contributions, and communicate with audiences for arts programming. To showcase this for the area, Arts Council submitted information regarding its grant opportunities, Gallery Without Walls curatorial services, programming and education.

“We worked with Jack O’ Hearn, WVDACH Community Arts Coordinator, for several years,” said Arts Council Creative Director, Beth Keener-Flanery. “To see this work come to fruition reveals that the efforts of both the creative community and community at large in Monongalia County have collectively reached a level of achievement that will allow for distinctive identity, which is one that goes beyond the expression of individual creativity and artistic appreciation.”

The Greater Morgantown area was well represented in this application process, as the City of Morgantown, another Arts Council supporter, received an Arts Community Certification as well.

Being a “Certified Arts Community” means that the area is a place for people to gather and enjoy their community’s arts and culture and a place where innovation and creativity can thrive. With this new title, Arts Council foresees great discovery in Monongalia County, as new methods are developed by collaborative community projects. This solidifies that arts and culture function as an indispensable part of the community’s lives.

“I congratulate the Arts Council for their terrific work in recognizing Monongalia County’s creative efforts by receiving the Arts Community Certificate,” said Monongalia County Commissioner, Jeff Arnett. “As the incoming Monongalia County Commissioner, I am excited to work with the organization more in assisting the area’s artistic industries.”

Flannery produced a substantial amount of the work necessary to accomplish these major milestones and many others, such as the growth of Arts Council’s Creative Network and Gallery Without Walls. While she has since resigned from her position as the organization’s Executive Director, in her new role of Creative Director, she plans to continue with these two initiatives to moving the area’s arts industry forward.

“The Arts Council’s journey to get the organization to this point has been the culmination of thousands of tireless volunteer hours, steadfast commitment of numerous board members, and generous community partners,” said Riddle. “The Arts Council of Greater Morgantown is well poised to continue to advance and grow the creative community in an impactful way at a time when so many non-profits are struggling. It is definitely a terrific time to be involved with the Arts Council of Greater Morgantown.”

For more information, visit [artsgm.org](http://artsgm.org).

**About Arts Council of Greater Morgantown:** The Arts Council provides the infrastructure and support to foster a thriving creative community in the Greater Morgantown area. Through our advocacy and Creative Network, we ensure that our region's artistic industries are recognized for their cultural impact and their contribution to the region's economy.

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