

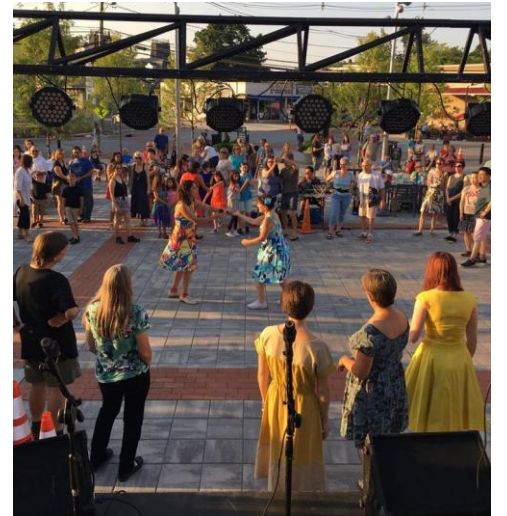
Adapting to Support & Grow A Flourishing Arts Community

As widely recognized by community members, public officials, and the press, the Metuchen Arts scene has grown and flourished during the past decade. Four permanent visual arts galleries have been established, public art is cropping up, and local venues are offering frequent live music. Businesses are partnering with local artists in presenting both performing and visual arts, the new Plaza in the center of town is quickly becoming a hub of cultural activity, and planning for the Arts District – with The Forum Theatre as its center – is underway.



In 2007, the Junebug Arts Fest Committee was created out of a unique partnership between the Metuchen Arts Council and Metuchen Area Chamber of Commerce to meet several different goals. One goal was to foster an appreciation for the arts in residents of all ages, another was to bring foot traffic to the downtown core. Both of these goals have clearly been met, and quite successfully. We are now at a point where there is enough support and enthusiasm for those arts activities featured during the Festival that they can be held throughout the year. Instead of simply one annual festival, they have the strength to grow into their own stand-alone events.

One goal we're continuing to work on is improving the networking between local arts organizations and promoting local artists themselves. Our area is home to a wealth of artistic talent, and supporting them as creative professionals is beneficial not only to them individually, but is an important aspect of Metuchen's economic success. They are a source of strength that brings more and more vibrancy to our community.



Therefore the focus in 2019 - and until the needs and challenges change again - is to diversify our efforts to focus on this unrealized goal of building a supporting network of local artists and artisans, and working towards initiatives and events that support them directly. We've helped grow the audience and



support from the business community, and plan to put what we've learned to use in meeting this goal. Many, if not most, of the activities that comprised the Junebug & Metfest events will continue in different formats and as stand-alone events, with a renewed focus on the artists & artisans themselves. For over a decade they have helped drive the economic development of Metuchen, and it's time to return that favor! For more information about the many wonderful events and initiatives being for 2019 and beyond, visit www.metuchenarts.com.

Onward and ARTWARD!

Robert Diken, Chair of the Metuchen Arts Council

&

Tyreen Reuter, Executive Director of the Metuchen Area Chamber of Commerce



If you are an artist or artisan vendor, please know that there will be events to which you will be invited to participate, including an event on the Plaza in early June. In addition, you may want to consider registering for the Chamber's Spring Street Fair in Metuchen on May 19th. Perth Amboy's Arts Festival on the waterfront is May 24th and 25th, and Highland Park's Arts In The Park festival takes place each September.

