



The Art of Community: Rural SC

An initiative of the
South Carolina Arts Commission
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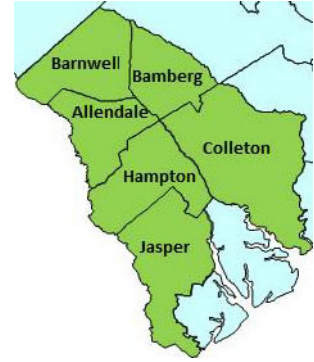


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The Wallace Foundation

The Art of Community: Rural SC

As part of its work with the South Carolina Promise Zone, the South Carolina Arts Commission has launched a new initiative, *The Art of Community: Rural SC*

This pilot project advances the Arts Commission's commitment to rural development through the arts, culture and creative placemaking and is supported by funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development. The Promise Zone federal designation provides a new way for people in Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties to benefit from grants administered by 12 federal agencies through more than 30 programs.



Purpose: A community process to create a new framework for engagement, learning and action in rural communities

Questions: What makes rural places unique? What characteristics define each place? And how can those positive characteristics serve as the basis for new ideas and ways to celebrate these six small communities in South Carolina's Promise Zone? Who leads change in each rural community and how can "the table" be enlarged for more voices to be heard?

The Art of Community: Rural SC creates a way to support new leadership, generate energy and motivate action in South Carolina's rural Promise Zone. Its primary objectives:

1. To create pride of place
2. To discover and engage with leaders while honoring current leadership
3. To inspire new community building using arts and culture
4. To fuel local action with new resources

Through a guided exploration of each county's natural, built and human assets, the program will foster pride of place and consideration of what's possible within each community's cultural context and physical landscape. While the discussion may include what "has been," the focus in *The Art of Community* will be on what "can be."

Framework:

1. An advisory council of national, state and local leaders will engage with the South Carolina Arts Commission for mutual learning and to provide insight as the program is developed and implemented. Advisory council members will participate in conference calls and may also be invited to one of the planned local meetings within the Promise Zone. Advisors will be asked to consider ways *The Art of Community: Rural SC* can be scaled for other rural communities in South Carolina and beyond.
2. Six community members will serve as "mavens" (one from each of the six Promise Zone counties) and identify a six-member local team to join in a series of local meetings for cross-county learning and community building through creative placemaking.
3. Emerging leaders will be invited to a series of community-based, context-setting local meetings. These leaders will work together to better understand the variety of assets and cultural richness of each community; each session will also present a practical approach to grant writing using the South Carolina Arts Commission's Quarterly Grant as an entry point. Each cohort will identify an opportunity to expand or develop where the arts can be used to enhance their community. The process will focus on what creative placemaking means and how the arts are being used to address community challenges around the country. As part of the process, the South Carolina Arts Commission will fund grant requests (up to \$1,000) that are developed as a first step to allow the cohorts to implement their proposals.
4. Rural Promise Zone Cultural Exchange: Mavens will travel to Kentucky's Eastern Highlands, site of the first rural Promise Zone in the United States, for exploration of their arts and culture initiatives.

Mavens



Gary Hagood Brightwell (Colleton County representative) is a native of Pickens, S.C., and attended Columbia College and USC with a major in history. She has lived in Walterboro for 40 years and has been involved with the arts as board president of the Colleton County Arts Council, as interim director of the S.C. Artisans Center and as a performer. Brightwell has sung with the Charleston Symphony Singers, VOX, and the Voices of Colleton, and currently sings with a women's a Capella ensemble, the Grace Notes. She served as Colleton County Library's reference librarian and as assistant director. She is director of the Colleton Museum & Farmers Market & Colleton Commercial Kitchen. Brightwell has been married to Charles Brightwell for 47 years. They have two sons and four grandchildren.



Evelyn Coker (Barnwell County representative) has served as executive director with Blackville Community Development Corporation for 10 years. She earned an Associate degree and Bachelor of Science degree from Voorhees College and a Master of Business Administration from Nova Southeastern University. Coker currently serves on the boards of the S.C. Association of Community Economic Development and Low Country Health Care System, and is clerk/financial secretary of Sunshine Baptist Church. She served for 12 years on the board of trustees for Barnwell 19 School District. She earned the Certificate of Achievement from the Non-Profit Leadership Institute and attended leadership and community development training through Community Development Institute.



Johnny Davis (Jasper County representative) graduated from Winthrop University in 1992 with a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education with an emphasis in recreation and leisure services. He currently serves as the director of Jasper County Parks and Recreation with 23 years of experience in this field. He is a former chairman of S.C. Athletic Programs and Eat Smart, Move More of the Lowcountry. Davis served as an elder for a local church and currently heads up the Men's Ministry. He has been married to Macon Davis for 20 years and is the father of twin daughters Adia and Claire (13). Davis lives in Beaufort, S.C., and loves spending time with his family, fishing, camping, golfing and anything outdoors.



Audrey Hopkins-Williams of Estill (Hampton County representative) has worked with several community programs, including reading and math camps. She was involved in the Bridging the Gap Resource Center's alliance with the Hampton County Arts Council to host an African-American art exhibition for Black History month. *The Arts of the Humanities* was viewed by nearly 5,000 students and community leaders. Having been raised in the Lowcountry, Hopkins-Williams is aware of the community's struggles with economic and educational opportunities. She attended Denmark Technical College and majored in human services. She has worked for Gordon Logging Company since 1999, and in 2000, started an event planning business, One Moment in Time Events. She is married to Wodwill Williams.



Lottie Lewis (Allendale representative) is chairman of the Allendale County Arts Council, heads up Eat Smart, Move More, has initiated several neighborhood associations, got the Farmers Market up and running, and has brought many grant dollars into the community. She is skilled in design, loves the arts and community beautification, and has run a thriving home-decorating business. She coordinates several yearly mission teams who come into the area to serve. As a member of Town Council, Lewis understands how the arts drive economic development. Because she knows the arts play such a vital role in education, she launched the "A is for Allendale" initiative, placing banners along Highway 278 to promote early childhood literacy.



Yvette McDaniel of Orangeburg (Bamberg County representative) is a soprano who has performed nationally and internationally. She has served as an arts educator, advocate and consultant. Dr. McDaniel teaches at Denmark Technical College, where she works with children from Early Head Start through 5th grade. She also directs the college's choir, which has performed for President Bill Clinton, Congressman James Clyburn and Gov. Nikki Haley. She founded Ultramacs Music Group to assist young professionals and organized the Vocalis Music Industry Conference to offer guidance with contracts, representation and promotion. She also established the "Hood N-Da Woodz" Awards to recognize artists in the Orangeburg area. Dr. McDaniel is an LSU Fellow and earned a Doctor of Music Arts degree in vocal performance.

Advisory Committee

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USC-Salkehatchie, South Carolina

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Savannah Barrett

Art of the Rural, Kentucky

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Co-Chairs



Dr. Ann C. Carmichael is the dean of the University of South Carolina Salkehatchie. Prior to her appointment in 2000, Dr. Carmichael served for nine years as director of the Salkehatchie Walterboro Campus and coordinator of development, overseeing the institution’s multimillion dollar capital campaign. She earned her Ph.D. in counseling from USC and a Master’s

in Student Personnel Services from Clemson University. Prior to joining USC Salkehatchie in 1991, she served as associate vice president for academic affairs and dean of students at Charleston Southern University and dean of students at Judson College in Marion, Ala. Dr. Carmichael was instrumental in securing the Promise Zone designation for the six-county region. Dr. Carmichael is a graduate of the Diversity Leadership Institute at Furman University and currently serves as chair-elect of the Colleton Walterboro Chamber of Commerce, the SouthernCarolina Regional Economic Development Alliance Board of Directors, and as chairman of the Savannah River Site Redevelopment Authority Board.



J. Robert ‘Bob’ Reeder serves as a program director and program field manager for Rural LISC (the rural component of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation). There he directs sustainable rural community development activities covering 76 local, community-based organizations working in 44 states, covering 1,973 rural counties. His areas of expertise include community

engagement, board of director development and training, land retention strategies in rural areas and other issues impacting land tenure, financial underwriting, project feasibility analysis, grant and loan assistance, and organizational capacity building. Reeder has built a 30-year career devoted to social and economic justice, housing and comprehensive community development, particularly in incorporating arts and cultural-based strategies (creative placemaking) in the revival of distressed rural communities, public policy, and legal and administrative advocacy. A native of Rock Hill, S.C., he earned a BA in Government from Wofford College and a JD from Vanderbilt University School of Law.



Special Thanks to Vernita Dore

Vernita Dore, appointed by President Barack Obama in 2009 as state director for USDA-Rural Development and later to the post of Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development, is much appreciated. A native of Beaufort, S.C., she has provided guidance and support for *The Art of Community: Rural S.C.* from its inception.

March 2017

The South Carolina Arts Commission

The South Carolina Arts Commission works to develop a thriving arts environment, which is essential to quality of life, education, and economic vitality for all South Carolinians. The agency focuses on three priority areas: community development, arts education and artist development.

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CAROLINA
arts
COMMISSION

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