

# engage

*Learn more. Give smart.*



## **Land of Creative Opportunity:** *How the arts impact quality of life in Arkansas*

*The sixth in a series exploring issues from ARCF's Aspire Arkansas report.*





Heather Larkin

## table of contents

Land of Creative Opportunity .....	2
4 Ways the Arts Improve Health .....	5
Shakespeare Helps Shelter Residents Build Confidence and Community.....	6
Arts-Infused Curriculum Unlocks Students' Academic Potential .....	7
Arkansas Viewpoints: What role do the arts play in the overall quality of life? .....	9
Second Edition of <i>Aspire Arkansas</i> Offers New Data on Local Quality of Life .....	10

## Smart Giving to Improve Communities

Arkansas Community Foundation offers tools to help Arkansans protect, grow and direct your charitable dollars as you learn more about community needs. We help meet community needs by making grants, providing information, supporting programs that are working and partnering to create new initiatives that address the gaps. We are here for the long-term to help you improve your neighborhood, your town and your state.

A new way to summarize the services we provide to Arkansans is "Smart Giving to Improve Communities." Along with this new tagline, you will see a new graphic identity in *ENGAGE* and all our other communications. The decision to update our identity is the outcome of communications research that solicited input from donors, board members, staff, government and foundation leaders, nonprofits, business partners and the general public.

One smart giving tip for this year is the IRA Rollover, a way for those who are 70 ½ or older to garner significant tax savings on gifts up to \$100,000 given before the end of December of this year. The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 allows these donors to create a substantial charitable legacy, and the Community Foundation can make the process simple, flexible and effective.

If you qualify, you can transfer up to \$100,000 from an individual retirement account directly to the Foundation without paying income taxes on the distribution from the IRA. For more information on the tax-free gift of a lifetime, contact Vice President of Development Kim Evans.

It's up to you. You can use the IRA Rollover make a gift to one of our Giving Tree Endowments that support a variety of community causes today and in the future. You can support our mission and help us better serve Arkansas donors and communities by giving to our Founders Endowment. Or you can establish an endowment benefiting a particular nonprofit organization or issue you care about, such as animal welfare of healthcare.

That's smart giving to improve communities!

Heather Larkin, JD, CPA  
ARCF President and CEO



A R K A N S A S  
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Smart Giving to Improve Communities



"Newport" by Matt Coburn

# Land of Creative Opportunity

*In communities across Arkansas, the arts give local economies a boost*

by Jennifer Barnett Reed

If you want proof that the arts can be a powerful driver of economic development, look no further than Bentonville, where the 2-year-old Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art has sparked a revitalization of the downtown area and created both jobs and a new, rich source of tax revenue for the city.

If you want inspiration, though — and evidence that high-dollar philanthropy isn't a necessary part of the equation — shift your eyes east to Newport, where city leaders operating with a

shoestring budget and an impressive cadre of volunteers have seen their 5-year-old annual arts show explode into a downtown-swallowing, can't-miss event that generated an estimated \$100,000 in direct sales to artists over a single weekend in February.

Across the state and the nation, the arts have a vital place in economic development. The impact can be direct, through sales of art and performance tickets, tourism revenue and employment



Pottery by Amber LaRue

**“My philosophy has always been that the community is the product that we’re trying to sell.”**

**— Jon Chadwell**



“After the Hunt” by Scott Shively

of artists and related professionals, or indirect, by elevating a community’s quality of life and making it a more attractive place for businesses and talented workers to locate. In Arkansas, the creative economy — which includes the arts as well as design-intensive goods — is the third-largest cluster of industries in the state, employing about 35,000 people, according to a study commissioned by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation.

### **Museum Boosts Tourism in Bentonville**

Crystal Bridges’ impact on Bentonville’s economic development has been nothing short of game-changing. Billionaire Alice Walton’s 2010 announcement of her plan to build the museum in the city’s downtown area sparked a revival in that neighborhood, with new restaurants, hotels and retail shops opening to cater to the leisure travelers the museum promised to attract — a species that previously had been scarce in Bentonville, said Kalene Griffith, president and chief executive officer of the Bentonville Advertising and Promotion Commission. “This is a new attraction, a new audience for our community.”

Revenue from the city’s hotel and restaurant tax is increasing at double the rate it was before the museum opened, Griffith said, and traveling exhibits like the recent Norman Rockwell exhibit can push those numbers dramatically higher. Those extra dollars mean the commission can afford more marketing, which in turn draws even more visitors. Just as importantly, arts and culture are enjoying a newfound prominence community-wide, she said. That will help attract a different kind of newcomer than the ones lured by the more traditional retail and transportation powerhouses that call the city home.

### **Art Show Draws Visitors to Newport**

What’s happening in Newport, on the other hand, is much smaller in scale — but no less important. The city’s strategic development plan has included an arts component for close to a decade, said Jon Chadwell, director of the city’s Economic Development Commission. With the Delta’s musical heritage already well covered elsewhere, the visual arts seemed like a promising niche, but city leaders weren’t sure how to get started. Enter the Clinton School of Public Service, which matches its students to public service projects around the state through a competitive application process. The school twice sent teams of students to Newport to help city leaders flesh out their arts-related ideas and plans.

While the ultimate goal is a permanent, physical arts center downtown, the students advised starting smaller to establish a successful track record to show potential donors. The first Delta Visual Arts Show was held five years ago in a single building downtown with 17 artists and 175 attendees. The fifth show, held on the last weekend of February, sprawled into the streets and featured 148 artists. It drew about 1,000 people, Chadwell said — no small crowd in a town with a population of 8,000 — and cost about \$20,000 to put on.

So far, funding for the shows has come from local sponsors and grants. Next year’s show, set for the last weekend in February 2014, will get a lift from an event this past August that auctioned off works donated by the 2013 artists, which graced the walls of the Economic Development Commission’s offices all spring and summer.

The show itself has a significant impact on the local economy through sales tax on purchases of art, food, gas and other retail spending, and by putting dollars



directly in the pocket of the participating artists. But most importantly, Chadwell said, it's making Newport a more attractive place to live.

"My philosophy has always been that the community is the product that we're trying to sell," he said. "I've got two jobs — one is to sell the product and the other is to improve the product so it's easier to sell in the future."

## Arts Drive Economic Development Across Arkansas

Henry Florsheim knows first-hand the power of a community's arts offerings to attract new residents. Florsheim, president and CEO of the El Dorado Chamber of Commerce, relocated from the much larger Lafayette, La., almost three years ago with his wife, who had been on the board of the arts center in Lafayette. Chamber officials took her on a tour of the South Arkansas Arts Center, which among other things is the home base for the South Arkansas Symphony Orchestra.

"It made a difference in us deciding to move here," Florsheim said. "It plays a big role for a lot of people."

In the Delta, arts-related economic activity often centers on the region's rich musical heritage, from the King Biscuit Blues Festival in Helena-West Helena to the Johnny Cash boyhood home restoration project in Dyess, which is projected to create about 100 jobs and bring in \$10 million a year in tourism revenue when it's complete. At least one organization, though, is bringing art into efforts to improve the area's future human capital. West Memphis-based DeltaARTS stages art exhibits, hosts performances and showcases the Delta's music, but it also has a heavy focus on integrating arts education into area schools using models developed by the Lincoln Center in New York and Wolf Trap in Washington, D.C.

"Both of these programs focus on developing skills in students, thinking skills, that businesses are looking for — imaginative thinking, problem-solving," said Amelia Barton, executive director of DeltaARTS.

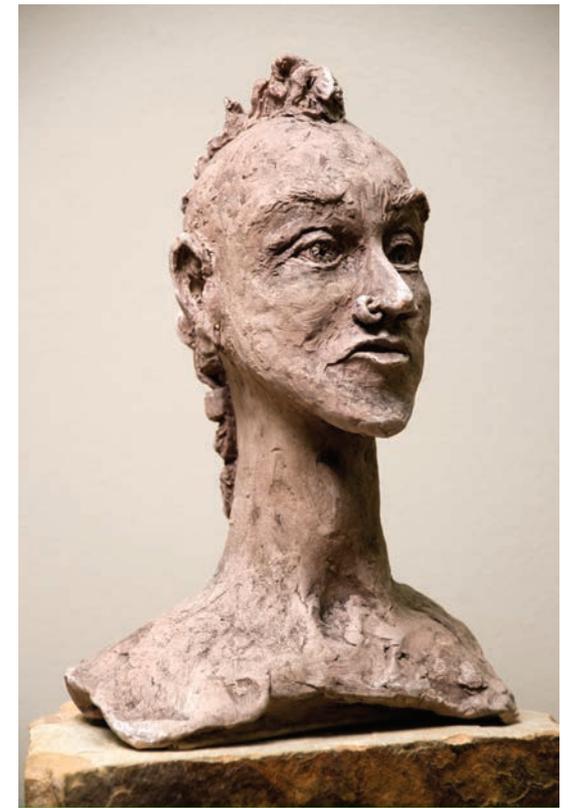
While there isn't necessarily one single entity or event to point to in Fayetteville, that city is an excellent example of a thriving creative community and economy that sustains and feeds itself with a continuous diet of arts and culture, from major performances at the Walton Arts Center to tiny touches like inviting musicians to perform at the popular Farmer's Market and encouraging local banks and other businesses to buy works from local artists to hang on their walls.

"When you add it together you form that vibe, that community that supports the arts," said Chung Tan, director of economic development for the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce. It's a vibe that attracts creative, entrepreneurial people and is essential to the vibrant start-up community that's taken root in the city, she said.

## A Community-Driven Approach

The route to successful arts-driven economic development isn't a simple build-it-and-they-will-come process, said Sherece West-Scantlebury, president and CEO of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, whose mission includes encouraging economic development. It's not enough to have well-meaning people with what they believe is a good idea.

"It needs to be community-driven — otherwise you're wasting your money," she said. "... Anyone who wants to do it should do a feasibility study and a market analysis and have a solid business plan, and be open to what it says. People may not support your dance theatre but they may support a gallery or they may support incubating a co-op for artists in the community."



"Untitled" by Joe Martin



The creative economy — artists, designers, architects, museums, libraries and businesses that depend on creative talent — is Arkansas's third largest career cluster.

Source: "Creativity in the Natural State: Growing Arkansas's Creative Economy" commissioned by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation.

# 4 Ways the Arts Improve Health

We know intuitively that the arts enrich our lives and satisfy our need for beauty and creativity. But art can also have a profound impact on our mental and physical well-being. Below are a few ways the arts improve health:

1

**Music boosts mood for people with dementia.** Up to 80 percent of people living in nursing homes have some kind of dementia, and research suggests that music can have a positive effect on mood and quality of life, particularly if it's the kind of music the client enjoyed as a child or young adult. According to Dr. Susan Compton Sparks, a neuropsychologist at the UAMS Thomas and Lyon Longevity Clinic, "There really is an emphasis in treating dementia patients in long-term care facilities using non-pharmacological interventions [like music] to help calm them when they're anxious and agitated. Sometimes we can be successful doing that and not have to use medicine. We think these interventions should be a first line of defense."



2

**Dance encourages physical fitness and development.** Dance is a fun and effective form of cardiovascular exercise for people of all fitness levels. I CAN! Dance in Central Arkansas seeks to bring the social and physical benefits of dance to children with a variety of physical disabilities. "There are obvious benefits to moving," said founder Julie Mayberry. "We have an obesity problem in our country, and then you add in the fact that some of our kids are in wheelchairs or have mobility issues. This class gets them moving." Mayberry shared the story of a 12-year-old girl with Down syndrome who had trouble dressing herself before participating in I CAN! Dance. "She didn't have the strength and flexibility to put on her own button-down sweater. After taking dance for a while, she began to do that on her own."

3

**Visual arts improve communication for people with language disorders.** Some people may have trouble speaking or understanding words after a stroke or as a result of Alzheimer's disease. "There's growing thought that for people who have trouble expressing themselves with language, they take to and enjoy a nonverbal means of expressing themselves," said Compton Sparks. "It's an enjoyable, engaging sort of project that enhances quality of life." In such cases, it's helpful to have a facilitator to lead an art activity because, Compton Sparks noted, "People with dementia often have trouble initiating activities on their own. If you just put them in an activity room, it's not likely to happen. It takes someone to structure the activity."

4

**Singing improves breathing for people with chronic respiratory disease.** At Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust in the United Kingdom, a class called Singing for Breathing uses group singing exercises to support patients with diseases of the lungs such as COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). Seventy percent of patients reported feeling markedly better after sessions.



# Shakespeare Helps Shelter Residents Build Confidence and Community

Driving to work one morning, Joy Ritchey, case manager for Our House shelter in Little Rock, began to think about what a coincidence it was that the shelter housed several residents who shared names with some of Shakespeare's greatest characters: Portia, Ophelia, Cordelia, Romeo. Ritchey was concerned that some of the shelter's residents seemed lonely and disconnected, and the Shakespearean connection gave her an idea to build engagement and create a social outlet — what if Our House's residents put on a Shakespeare play? From that brainstorm, Shakespeare at the Shelter was born.

For Arkansans without a home, transitional shelters like Our House provide a safe, stable place to live, job training, childcare and education. The long term goal of Our House is to equip its residents with skills that will enable them to be successful in the workforce, the community and their families.

Beyond these goals, though, Our House also prioritizes its residents' personal growth. Shakespeare at the Shelter was designed as a creative outlet for residents, who have the opportunity to perform scenes from some of Shakespeare's greatest works: *As You Like It*, *Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Henry IV* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In its second year, Shakespeare at the Shelter raised money to purchase new furniture for the shelter living area, where residents have meals, relax and visit.

"Performing in Shakespeare at the Shelter empowers our residents," said Ritchey. "It helps residents build relationships with each other. Their self esteem rises and they get a sense of accomplishment. More than anything, I just wanted them to have fun."

Often, residents of homeless shelters feel cut off from events in the community. Shakespeare at the Shelter allows residents to reconnect with their city and its citizens. "It anchors people who are lonely into a community," Ritchey added. Raising money to buy furniture for their own living area is a powerfully positive self-affirmation.

Ronald Carlson, who delivered a monologue from *Henry V* in 2013, is both a former resident of Our House and a returning cast member. Ronald joined Our House's charity event for a second year without hesitation. He explained, "It wasn't really a choice. I felt that I owed it to the people who worked hard to help me out. I wanted to prove to myself again that I could do it."

Comedic relief is important in every play, and that was exactly the role of Derrick Beasley, who played Falstaff in a scene from *Henry IV, Part II*. "I wanted to be a funny character, so that's why I chose Falstaff." Aside from providing a humorous presence through his inebriated character, Derrick learned a thing or two while participating in the play: "I learned teamwork, accountability and how to speak before people."

Mother of two Mary Shue is also a returning cast member of Shakespeare at the Shelter, this year playing a handmaid to Lady Macbeth in a scene from *Macbeth*. An honorary board member and former resident of Our House, Mary was eager to join the cast for a second year, "I had so much fun. It was a challenge. And that's important to me."

For the players of Our House's Shakespeare at the Shelter, artistic expression is an important element in reestablishing confidence and a sense of community.



**"I learned teamwork, accountability and how to speak before people."**

**— Derrick Beasley**

As Shue explained it, "Anyone who has become homeless, their self esteem has got to be affected. So having an outlet in the arts is great for self expression, and that helps your self esteem. It's a wonderful idea to get the residents to do something creative and express themselves. It's a real positive outlet."



*Students in Tobie Sprawls' third grade class craft handmade telephones to learn about sound waves.*

# Arts-Infused Curriculum Unlocks Students' Academic Potential

**T**obie Sprawls' third grade class at Hugh Goodwin Elementary in El Dorado is quiet but busy. "We're making earphone cups," explains Deundra in the front row. "To see if we can hear through them," adds his tablemate, Miranda. Working together, the students build rudimentary telephones using plastic cups connected by string. Then, Ms. Sprawls asks them to make a hypothesis: will the cup-phones work?

Savannah and about two-thirds of her classmates think the phones will work "because they used things like this in the old days," she says. The remaining third are skeptical, so the students

head outside to test their hypotheses. Sprawls leads the students through a hands-on exercise on the physics of sound waves and a practical demonstration of the scientific method. But as far as the kids are concerned, they're just having fun.

For the past 10 years, Hugh Goodwin Elementary has participated in Arkansas A+ Schools, a framework to infuse the arts and experiential learning into every aspect of a school's curriculum. Science lessons become an opportunity to build, draw and model. Reading lessons involve singing and dance. Math lessons invite students to move and role-play to understand the relationships



among numbers. “The model teaches teachers and principals how to create an atmosphere in the classroom that’s creative, collaborative, fun and interesting, and that uses the arts — movement, music, drama/role-play, any creative mode — to cater to how each child learns,” explained Paul Leopoulos, executive director of the Thea Foundation, which operates and promotes the A+ program in Arkansas.

Leopoulos is a strong advocate for the arts in education, not simply to teach children to draw or play music, but as a means to helping them engage with their core subjects: English, science, math, social studies. “Having students memorize and regurgitate onto a test isn’t working,” he said. The A+ arts infusion framework is designed to take students beyond memorization to engage with material and learn to apply it. “It has everything to do with their excitement for learning and ability to relate what they learn.”

Schools that have successfully implemented A+ have seen impressive outcomes, both on standardized tests and student behavior. After Hugh Goodwin Elementary adopted A+, disciplinary referrals almost disappeared within two years, and testing scores skyrocketed. “We’ve had the highest math scores in the district for the last two or three years,” said Principal Connie Reed. Since 2009, third grade literacy scores have jumped from 60 percent proficient to 88 percent, and math scores have increased from 78 percent proficient to 90 percent.

“We’re just your typical elementary school here,” Reed said. “We have the same curriculum here as any school in the state. We just take it an extra step here.”

Creating arts-infused lesson plans that appeal to students’ different learning styles has paid off for Hugh Goodwin Elementary and other A+ schools throughout the region, but the program requires a high level of commitment. “It’s a lot of work,” said Tobie Sprawls. “It takes a lot more planning.” But teachers also have the freedom to use their own creativity in the lessons they prepare. “Our teachers, they’re on board. They enjoy being here. They love to be able to teach outside of the box sometimes,” said Reed.

For Leopoulos, art and creativity are tools that can unlock every child’s academic potential. Through an arts-infused curriculum, “kids are not being talked to all day; they’re asking and figuring out. You give them a little bit of information and a forum to explore, and they will blow you away.”

To learn more about Arkansas A+ Schools, visit [www.theafoundation.org](http://www.theafoundation.org).



## Artmobile Brings Museum to Kids

Visual art captures children’s imaginations and exposes them to new worlds and new ideas. But students who live in rural areas may lack access to fine arts experiences.

Enter the Arkansas Arts Center’s Artmobile, a museum on wheels that brings fine art exhibits into communities across the state. Each year the Artmobile features a new curated exhibit with dozens of artworks from various artists and time periods. “The Artmobile is a true gallery experience. When you walk in, it really looks like a gallery,” said Jessica Wright, senior education specialist for the Arts Center.

An art educator travels on board to give guided tours of the mobile museum, and the Arts Center even provides lesson plans and quick-start guides to help teachers incorporate the Artmobile experience into the classroom.

“We don’t want this to be a one-time thing. We want this to be a partnership. We want to be involved in education and create lasting, meaningful experiences that will engage the students and hopefully feed that hunger for more to continue on their own,” said Wright.

To bring the Artmobile to your community, contact Jessica Wright at [jwright@arkansasartscenter.org](mailto:jwright@arkansasartscenter.org) or 501-396-0350.



**Students who participate in four years of arts or music education in high school score an average of 100 points higher on the SAT than students with half a year or less of arts instruction.**

Source: Americans for the Arts.

# ARKANSAS **VIEWPOINTS**

## What role do the arts play in overall quality of life?



By Rod Bigelow  
*Crystal Bridges Museum  
of American Art*

**A**rt-making is an innately human ability. Since prehistoric times, humans have been adorning dwellings and telling stories through art. It is an essential part of the way we express our thoughts and feelings and the way we make sense of the world. Art can stir our curiosity, spark our creativity, provoke contemplation and discussion and trigger memory. Great works of art help us make connections among ideas and people.

This universal nature of art is what makes it such a powerful and important factor in the quality of life — for individuals, families and communities. Art is everywhere: in street signs, magazine covers, furniture design, even the clothing you wear. It's entertaining, it's invigorating and — importantly — it's an experience we can all share. Art connects us and helps to draw our communities together; access to great works of art elevates the creative energy as well as the sense of cohesion within that community. This energy helps to spark dynamic creative endeavors.

In Bentonville, we've seen an explosion in arts participation since the opening of Crystal Bridges. A recent study in which we were involved has proven that access to art is a powerful educational tool. Learning from works of art provides connections across subjects for school-age children and helps them think in creative, associative ways that will serve them all their lives.

Art is at the core of our quality of life, inspiring us to reflect on our lives, imagine new possibilities and shape them into realities.



By Buddy Villines  
*Pulaski County Judge*

**A**rt can reach out and touch us, even in its most basic form. Most of us don't remember the first time that we picked up a crayon or spread finger paint over a piece of paper. I certainly don't. But I do remember when our daughters created crazy lines with crayons and massive splotches with paint. "Look, Daddy! That's you, mom, kitty, our house, the sky, the moon and sun." What joy and pleasure we experienced!

Art touches and brings out something inside of us. It changes us, whether it's the visual arts, theater, music or dance. We begin to look at the world around us differently. When we experience a great landscape painting, we look at the art of the creation through the eye of the artist. When we experience the theater, we become more interested in our stories and the stories of our community. When we experience music and dance we listen to the sounds and movements around us.

When we see our community differently, design becomes art. The lines of a building, the attention to landscape, how we preserve our story, our history, of who we were, who we are and who we strive to be. It's the art of place(s) that makes a community a place where people want to live, work and play.

Art touches and enriches our spirit and soul. It lifts us to new heights. We are better, our community is better. That's the importance of art!



**"In today's climate in our country, which is sickened with the pollution of pollution, threatened with the prominence of AIDS, riddled with burgeoning racism, rife with growing huddles of the homeless, we need art and we need art in all forms. We need all methods of art to be present, everywhere present, and all the time present."**

— Maya Angelou, poet, author and Arkansas Native



# Second Edition of *Aspire Arkansas* Offers New Data on Local Quality of Life

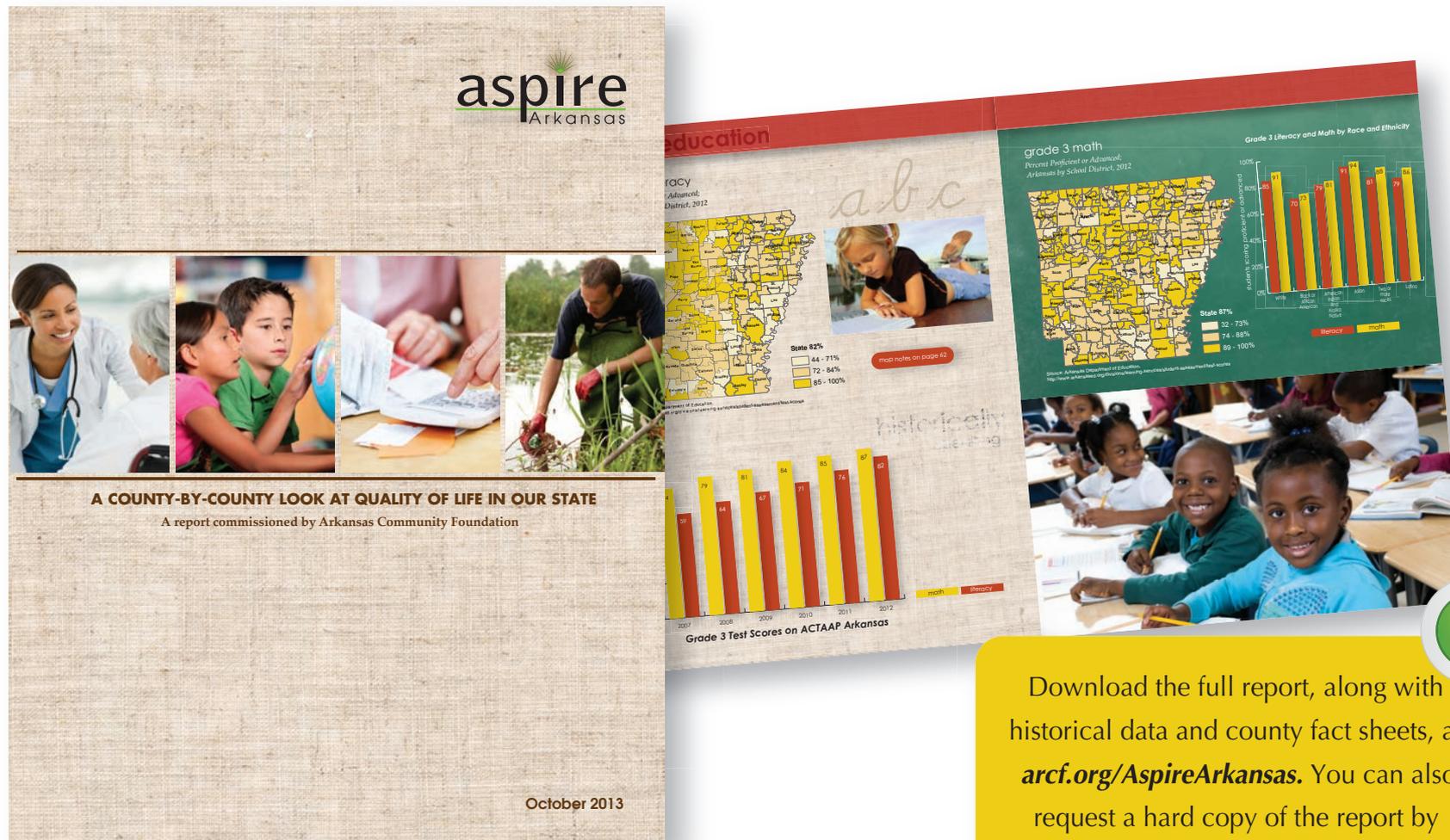
At Arkansas Community Foundation, we're in the business of providing resources to make charitable giving in our state more effective. That's why we have commissioned research from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to produce the second edition of *Aspire Arkansas*. The report presents county-by-county data on measures of community well-being, from economics and education to health and community engagement.

We consider *Aspire Arkansas* one of the most important tools in our toolkit. The report is both a yardstick to measure where our state currently stands and a compass to help you and your neighbors determine where we should go. Equipped with this tool, we hope you'll have the information you need to begin to identify the local needs you will address with your time, talent and treasure. We'll continue to use *ENGAGE* magazine to share stories that help bring the data from *Aspire Arkansas* to life and spotlight successful programs around the state that are moving the numbers in the right direction.

## What's new in the second edition?

Building on the success of the first edition of *Aspire Arkansas* released in May 2011, we've added a few new features to the 2013 report based on the feedback we received from readers.

- State rankings to indicate how Arkansas compares to other states across the South and U.S.
- Historical trend graphs to illustrate our state's recent progress on each issue.
- Comparisons by race/ethnicity and gender to call attention to demographically based disparities.
- Viewpoints from Arkansas leaders to offer insight into the broader context behind the numbers and suggestions for actions citizens can take to create positive change.



Download the full report, along with historical data and county fact sheets, at [arcf.org/AspireArkansas](http://arcf.org/AspireArkansas). You can also request a hard copy of the report by contacting Arkansas Community Foundation at 888-220-2723 or [arcf@arcf.org](mailto:arcf@arcf.org).



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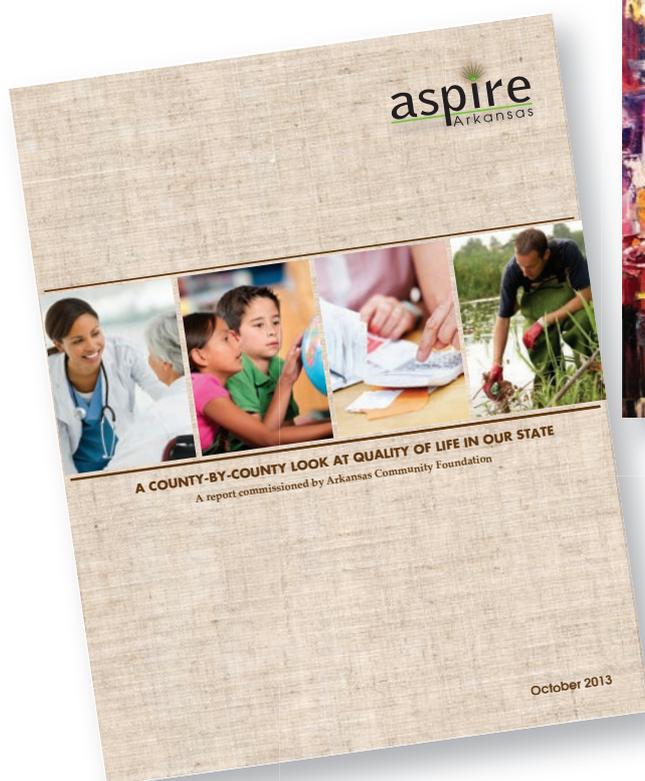
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# INSIDE *engage*



In this issue we explore the arts and their effect on communities. Our cover story features the impact of the arts on economic development in Arkansas.

*Also inside:* stories on the connection between art and health and the role of the arts in human service organizations.

