



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).


PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico
Program Title: The Studio at The Springs
Program Category: Parks & Recreation

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Victoria Davis
Title: Public Relations Specialist
Department: Public Relations
Telephone: 804-501-4933 Website: www.henrico.gov
Email: dav127@henrico.gov

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Monica Smith-Callahan
Title: Deputy County Manager for Community Affairs
Signature: 

Program Overview

“The Studio at the Springs” was created to aid in art programming, a vital part of Henrico Recreation and Parks. By converting a less-used space in one of our facilities, we have exposed the community to various art forms including traditional activities such as painting, glasswork, woodwork, and other mediums.

While these classes are very introductory level, they serve as an invitation to explore and learn new avenues of creativity and self-expression, which has proven to bring a healthy, meaningful, and therapeutic value to people of all ages. Customers from all corners of the county have expressed how much they enjoy and appreciate the wide variety of mediums and supplies available.

Aside from the hands-on experience, customers also share that the studio atmosphere fosters creativity, inspiration, and camaraderie among the participants in an overall comfortable space to create. Since its inception in 2020, the studio has evolved and grown beyond its doors in many different directions, with plans to continue to increase programs and expand community involvement.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

Art programming has been integral to the division's offerings since its inception in 1969. However, the process of offering a class had proven to be inefficient for staff and inflexible for our customers. The amount of time and effort spent securing appropriate space, gathering and transporting equipment and supplies to different centers, and returning them after class took up to three additional hours beyond the class itself. Facilitating a program in this fashion proved to be an inefficient use of staff hours and energy and offered less flexibility to pivot in response to our

customer's diverse needs. A centralized location affords us access to more supplies as needed. Also, important to note is that projects had to be completed in one session and then transported to the customer at the end of class. This significantly limited the projects offered and did not meet our customers' needs and wants.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

This project is an innovative solution and provides a model for other localities. Recognizing that the art programs are just one small piece of the recreation and parks services, the studio aids in spreading art opportunities to the community. It does not bring in the large attendance numbers that special events and large-scale programs do because of limited space, however we see and hear the impact studio programs have on each customer. Creating something special with your hands brings a sense of accomplishment and personal satisfaction like nothing else. Reaching one person at a time and offering an opportunity to shake off a bad day or cope with a difficult life situation through creativity and the support of their art community can be life changing. Our staff have seen it more than once, and being a part of that process is truly humbling. We are proud to be that place where customers know they can come to decompress and share a positive experience with friends.

How Program Was Carried Out

"The Studio at The Springs" was developed, and the first program was held on December 7, 2021, to address staff's hurdles with scheduling, resource management, and missed programming opportunities. Staff combined equipment and supplies purchased from previous years but were housed at several facilities. By evaluating our facilities and determining a location that had a room that could be converted and was also easily accessible for most patrons, the staff began the transformation. They transported equipment and supplies to the studio along with our Park

Services Division and in doing so, created a more cohesive and all-inclusive program space. Ergonomically appropriate worktables were built at a height that comfortably accommodates our customers while working on projects. We also added work mats at each table to add another layer of support for the participants standing for long periods. Studio space also allows for storing projects between sessions without worrying about them being in the way or being damaged between classes, and we can now more efficiently track our inventory and decrease waste.

New equipment and supplies have been added, and more in-depth, multiple-session classes that were not feasible in our previous structure have been offered. Some examples include:

- Two glass-fusing kilns were purchased, enabling us to add multiple new class options for our customers, including fused jewelry and fused ornaments. We are researching the potential to buy a larger kiln further to expand our offerings into larger fusion projects and pottery.
- A printing press station is now available in the studio. With this equipment, we have offered block printing and printing design classes.
- Stained glass tools, grinders, and a wide variety of stained-glass sheets are now available for our customers to enjoy traditional foil-and-solder-stained glass and mosaic classes.
- Papermaking is a popular program for both adults and youth as well. Being in the studio allows space to use multiple blenders, drying screens, and drying racks.
- Screen printing is now offered with ample space to work several screens simultaneously and with the ability to properly clean screens afterward in the industrial sink installed explicitly for this use.
- Plaster art is a particular craft that demands space for mask making, hand sculpting, and various other projects and is now offered.

Other programs that are very popular in the studio include resin art, candle making, learning to work with power tools, batik, pyrography, painting pet portraits, acrylic pour, textiles, and watercolor - to name a few. Many of these art forms require in-place curing or drying, which is now possible with space and a drying rack in the studio.

Collaborating with our therapeutic recreation section adds to our studio programming. Monthly open studio opportunities are now available for individuals with disabilities and medical conditions to explore the arts in a setting that accommodates all abilities through activity modification and structure. Projects are provided within a flexible timeframe, require no prior registration, are easily adaptable for all abilities, and encourage participants to learn, grow, and connect through art creation. It is an accessible form of recreation as it is cost-free, which affords area group homes and individuals on limited income opportunities that may not otherwise be available.

Most of our classes are taught by internal recreation and parks staff who have experience in all the classes offered. The studio structure began with three staff offering weekly classes, two hours each on Tuesday evenings, serving 12 participants per class. What became very clear, very quickly, was that classes filled within minutes of open registration. Due to popularity, many customers voiced their input on a need for additional classes due to popularity. In response, staff added two-hour afternoon and evening sessions of the same class. We also increased registration to 15 participants, doubling the opportunities to attend. The new afternoon sessions also offered those who were uncomfortable driving in the evening to choose the earlier class.

Additionally, holding classes during the day could draw an older demographic, reaching our senior and retired consumers. We continue to have wait lists, some as large as 18 people interested in

certain classes and are working to accommodate the demand. In answer to one specific class, "Introductory Stained Glass," the studio structure allows staff to expand to three or four sessions, serving up to 40 registrants and alleviating long wait lists. With our new structure, we can be more responsive to our customers' wants.

A more profound reward in the studio is a heightened camaraderie among participants. Customers share more than an art experience. Often, conversations lean into more personal topics, sharing of experiences, support, and friendship. A comfortable, supportive, creative, and encouraging space leads to far more than a completed art project. Customers regularly comment on the positive experience they have in the studio. Organic and meaningful friendships develop while guards are down, and creativity is shared. The studio promotes a healthy community experience.

The staff have also extended their reach beyond the studio's walls to help spread the word about the space. Outreach efforts include summer camps, classes at other recreation centers, and special events. These opportunities give our staff the ability to spread information about the studio to patrons who may not sign up for a class out of lack of knowledge.

Financing and Staffing

The majority of the equipment and supplies were recycled from purchases made prior to the studio's opening which aided keeping the costs for this transformation low. Staff secured much of the storage and shelving needed from the county's surplus department that otherwise would have been sold to outside individuals or disregarded. Current expenditures that were purchased through recreation and parks annual budget include:

- Shelving for drying racks: \$275

- Metal storage cabinets for flammables and paints: \$1200
- Two glass fusing kilns: \$675

Total cost of these items: \$2,150.00

The Studio is given an operating budget each fiscal year. Supplies related to specific programs are purchased using those funds from the recreation and parks annual budget. There are also funds available related to bringing in external contractors to pay for offering creative arts programs that we will be taking advantage of in the near future.

Program Results

Attendance numbers over the past few years prove success for this project, with increases in the number of classes offered and participants each year. The following are attendance records for in-studio programs offered:

Year	Number of Classes	Number of Participants
20/21	1	12
21/22	8	110
22/23	41	531
23/24* As of right now	29	459

Several customers are repeat registrants, which in any successful business model means we are doing something very right. In each class, customers ask what the next session is and when the next season of programs will be released.

Many customers have made our studio programs a “family affair” - husbands and wives, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren signup together and enjoy each other’s company while creating something meaningful. We hear many positive comments about the types of

programs we offer and the way the art staff conducts them. They enjoy the projects, camaraderie, and learning new forms of art. Many participants are excited about their final projects and leave with a sense of accomplishment. Some take their participation a step further, seeking more advanced community opportunities. Examples include: one customer who regularly enters her completed artwork at the county fair and has several first-prize ribbons and another customer who learns a technique with us, takes that knowledge back to her neighborhood senior group and teaches that craft.

Brief Summary

“The Studio at the Springs” was created to aid in art programming, a vital part of Henrico Recreation and Parks. By converting a less-used space in one of our facilities, we have exposed the community to various art forms including, traditional activities such as painting, glasswork, woodwork, and other mediums. While these classes are very introductory level, they serve as an invitation to explore and learn new avenues of creativity and self-expression, which has proven to bring a healthy, meaningful, and therapeutic value to people of all ages. Customers from all corners of the county have expressed how much they enjoy and appreciate the wide variety of mediums and supplies available. Aside from the hands-on experience, customers also share that the studio atmosphere fosters creativity, inspiration, and camaraderie among the participants in an overall comfortable space to create. Since its inception in 2020, the studio has evolved and grown beyond its doors in many different directions, with plans to continue to increase programs and expand community involvement.

Attendance numbers over the past few years prove success for this project, with increases in the number of classes offered and participants each year. Several customers are repeat registrants, which in any successful business model means we are doing something very right. In each class, customers ask what the next session is and when the next season of programs will be released.

Many customers have made our studio programs a “family affair” - husbands and wives, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren sign up together and enjoy each other’s company while creating something meaningful. We hear many positive comments about the types of programs we offer and the way the art staff conducts them. They enjoy the projects, camaraderie, and learning new forms of art. Many participants are excited about their final projects and leave with a sense of accomplishment. Some take their participation a step further, seeking more advanced community opportunities. Examples include: one customer who regularly enters her completed artwork at the county fair and has several first-prize ribbons and another customer who learns a technique with us, takes that knowledge back to her neighborhood senior group and teaches that craft.

Studio at the Springs Supplemental Material

An email received by our director from a customer:

“Their professionalism, patience, and unwavering support for the learners are admirable. They go above and beyond, taking the time to go at the pace of each student and ensuring that the arts and crafts produced bring a sense of joy and fulfillment to every participant. In an environment where true dedication and passion can be a rarity, Elaine, Cathy, and Anna stand out as exemplary professionals. They contribute significantly to the well-being and happiness of our county residents, and their impact is felt by all those fortunate enough to be a part of their programs.”

Comments made by some of our customers:

“During isolation, studio classes brought people together and new friendships formed and are forming.”

“Classes nurture creativity in the community. We get to learn to work with various tools.”

“Classes are great for stress relief.”



Before:



After:



