

# gg GoggleWorks Center for the Arts



## **GOGGLEWORKS ANNOUNCES GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY IMPACT AND ECONOMIC RELIEF DURING 15th ANNIVERSARY, DESPITE HEALTH CRISIS**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**READING, PA – MAY 28, 2020** - GoggleWorks Center for the Arts (GoggleWorks) announced today that nearly \$500,000 in emergency grants have been received to support its continued community impact and financial sustainability during the COVID-19 pandemic. Critical funds came from the Windgate Foundation, based in Arkansas, which awarded roughly \$215,000; the Berks County Community Foundation, which awarded \$20,000; and federal grants through the CARES Act designed to retain employees.

“We were looking forward to hosting our 3 millionth visitor by autumn of 2020, which happens to mark the beginning of our 15th anniversary year,” said Levi Landis, Executive Director. In 2005, the nonprofit art center, which derives its name from the goggles that were manufactured on its campus for nearly 150 years, began offering art classes, artist studios, exhibitions, films, after school programs, and outreach, among other programs.

“This health crisis has kept our focus on people—our community residents, artists, students, staff, visitors and supporters,” said Landis. “It’s reminded us that GoggleWorks is much more than a building. So we have innovated our programs to serve these very people and continue to transform lives through unique interactions with art.”

Landis said the first priority during the emergency was the health and safety of the community. “Aside from closing and encouraging our community to stay at home, we wanted to tangibly aid those on the front lines fighting the coronavirus,” he said. “GoggleWorks became ground zero to a network of artists and makers who pivoted their work with 3D printers to produce thousands of masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers, first responders, and others who are keeping our community healthy.” This group, called the Berks PPE Network, gathered orders from the community and coordinated with a network of 97 volunteers who operate 3D printers at their homes or organizations. Those in need could pick up cost-free face shields and other PPE, totaling 31,889 items, at GoggleWorks each week until the demand was completely met.

Landis said GoggleWorks is closed for public programs, but open to its tenants, including over 35 on-site studio artists and over 40 arts partner organizations. “We decided not to simply take all of our classes and force them into an online model,” said Landis. “Instead of competing with the many art education organizations offering online classes, we are curating a variety of unique virtual experiences that are meaningful to our audience and developing an online library of creative content.”

Before the closure, GoggleWorks installed two exhibitions in its premier Irvin and

Lois E. Cohen East and West Galleries, featuring Georgette Veeder and John Chang respectively. GoggleWorks leaders said they are now hosting interactive tours of these exhibitions on their revamped website. Landis said they are utilizing their blog and social media to support artists, encourage community groups, present art demonstrations, feature work from studio artists, bring after school programs into underserved students' homes, and more.

“We are so honored by this grant support,” said Landis. “Since 2016, we have served nearly 250,000 visitors annually. Our community continues to crave access to high quality art and we’re committed to providing that through compelling initiatives during this crisis, and on our campus as soon as it’s safe to do so.”

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### **About GoggleWorks Center for the Arts**

Located in downtown Reading, PA, GoggleWorks operates in a former goggle factory and is composed of 145,000 square feet of creative space. During normal operations, GoggleWorks offers year round arts education, including workshops, classes, and visiting artists; community outreach programs; a summer residency; youth programs and camps; 35 on-site studio artists; over 40 on-site arts partners; The Albert & Eunice Boscov Theatre; three galleries for exhibitions; the Berks Launchbox maker space; the New Store; a restaurant; and eight communal studios—hot glass, wood, 2D print, warm glass, metals, ceramics, photography and virtual reality.

More at [www.GoggleWorks.org](http://www.GoggleWorks.org)

### **About Windgate Foundation**

Windgate Foundation provides grants for significant educational programs in contemporary craft and visual arts, art education to support K-12 schools, higher education support for visual art and scholarships, and programs for disadvantaged children in Arkansas. The foundation has provided over \$855 million in grants since its formation in 1993.

More at [www.WindgateFoundation.org](http://www.WindgateFoundation.org)

### **About the Berks County Community Foundation**

Berks County Community Foundation was founded in 1994 to help individuals, families, organizations and businesses achieve their charitable objectives and improve the quality of life for the residents of Berks County. The mission of Berks County Community Foundation is to promote philanthropy and improve the quality of life for the residents of Berks County, Pennsylvania.

More at [www.BCCF.org](http://www.BCCF.org)

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