



OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

YEAR IN REVIEW

'23



Jersey City is one of the most culturally diverse cities in the nation. As such, the Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA) is responsible for the coordination and execution of numerous art fairs, cultural festivals, flag raisings and performing arts events taking place throughout Jersey City.

Some highlights of the year include:

- \$1,062,984 in grants administered from the Arts and Culture Trust Fund, a 23% increase in grant dollars from 2022
- Completed Jersey City's first nonprofit arts and culture impact study with Americans for the Arts, showing that this sector contributes \$46 million dollars annually to our community
- Permitted 316 public events, representing an 8% increase from 2022
- OCA also supported public initiatives such as Jersey City Art Week and the transition of the historic Apple Tree House to the new Museum of Jersey City History





The following transformational projects are currently underway in Jersey City:

- Cultural Affairs transitioned operations of the historic Apple Tree House to The Museum of Jersey City, which opened its doors for an inaugural exhibition on December 2, 2023
- A new 500-seat theater in the Powerhouse Arts District will complete construction in 2024
- The multi-year restoration project for the Loews Jersey Theater will transform the century-old theatre into a state-of-the-art 3,300-seat venue
- Journal Square will host the Centre Pompidou's only North American outpost, featuring the largest modern and contemporary art collection in Europe, educational programs for local students, and a partnership with the Jersey City Free Public Library





FOURTH OF JULY



The annual Jersey City Fourth of July Street Festival and Fireworks Show welcomed 200,000 residents and visitors along the Hudson River waterfront. In partnership with the Jersey City Night Market, this year's event featured 90 local vendors and food trucks, 80% of which were minority and/or woman owned businesses. July 4th created opportunities for 37 performing artists across 3 separate stages curated by Lovelisa Dizon of the Jersey City based Chilltown Collective. This year also featured a US Army simulator, and activations by the New York Red Bulls and New Jersey Devils. The event was capped off by Grucci Fireworks launching from two barges on the Hudson River to produce an unparalleled fireworks display framed by the New York City skyline.





EVENT PERMIT OFFICE

2023 Permitted Events:

- 104 Park Events
- 73 Special Events
- 14 Block Parties
- 32 City Sponsored Events
 - 38 Festivals
 - 47 Parades
- 8 Farmers/Flea Markets

OCA is responsible for facilitating special events across the city.

A major component of this is the Event Permit process. OCA helps event organizers navigate this process to ensure the safe and successful use of City property for public events.

In 2023, OCA received 339 permit requests for special events including festivals, farmers markets, parades, block parties, park events and religious processions. This represents a 4% increase from 2022.

In addition to permitting, OCA provides a range of support to event organizers, including on-site staffing, event planning assistance, use of City equipment, rental equipment, marketing and advertising.





CITY HALL EVENTS

- **46 Flag Raisings, 27 of which also had cultural programs**
- **29 City Hall Events**
- **21 Programs supported by Cultural Affairs including ribbon cuttings, press conferences and ground breakings**

Highlights of the year include:

- Winter Apparel Drive for the Mayor's LGBTQ+ Taskforce, collecting and donating 100 pieces of winter clothing to nonprofit organizations assisting LGBTQ+ homeless youth and families
- Presenting the Key to the City to UConn Coach and Jersey City native, Dan Hurley
- 5 year Anniversary program honoring the Sisterhood with General Santos City (Philippines)
- 4 panel discussions
Topics included : Domestic Violence, LGBTQ+, and Hispanic Heritage
- Free public screening of Jersey City Landmarks Conservancy: Oral Histories featuring the incredible life and stories of 104-year-old India N. Edwards
- The International Sculpture Conference, as part of Jersey City Art Week
- The Conservatory of Fine Arts Multicultural Holiday concert
- Mayors Toy Drive providing toys for a record breaking number of 1800 children





MURAL ARTS PROGRAM

JCMAP & PORT AUTHORITY

The Commuter Gallery

- 11 exhibitions by local artists at Journal Square Path
- 100% of artists sold artwork and merchandise
- 100% of sales went directly to the artists
- Programming included fashion shows, live painting sessions and art/poetry nights

Public Art

- 4 large scale new murals created in 2023
- 2 interactive pillars painted at JSQ Path Station in partnership with Port Authority

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

- Hosted an Accessibility in the Arts panel and art show in partnership with Sip Studios & St. Joseph School for the Blind

JC BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Hosted Annual Permanent Student Art Collection & JCARTS Senior Show at the Commuter Gallery located in Journal Square
- Partnered with PS 30 to install a mural for the 2nd year in a row

JCMAP YOUTH PROGRAM

- 9th year
- 28 youth hired for the program
- 1st ever partnership with the Jersey City Board of Education & The Juvenile Bureau
- One large scale building wrap created at the Juvenile Bureau
- Mural inspired by the interviews of police and children that went through the Juvenile Justice System
- Documentary created for the 2023 program
- Art Exhibition and panel discussion featuring the artwork of participating youth





THE BETHUNE CENTER

2023 Highlights:

- **Completed crucial maintenance, facilitating upgrades and public safety projects**
- **Installed wood floor in the dance/yoga studio**
- **Built a Bethune Center Gym**
- **Increased space rentals for both public and private events**
- **Sponsored our most successful community events to date, including 50 Years of Hip-hop and the Juneteenth Commemoration event**

The Mary McLeod Bethune Life Center, located in the Greenville community of Jersey City, has become an epicenter for creativity and inspiration. The center offers residents and visitors an unparalleled experience to engage in cultural arts, fitness, wellness, and educational activities. Dedicated to preserving the culture of Jersey City and enhancing interactions amongst diverse groups, The Bethune Center offers a welcoming atmosphere for adults, seniors, and families. We also serve the community by providing space for meetings, workshops, trainings seminars, and classes, as well as rental space for private events and expos.

For a more detailed overview of the Bethune Center 2023 please [CLICK HERE](#)





SUMMER IN THE CITY

SUMMERFEST LIBERTY STATE PARK CONCERT SERIES

The longest running free concert series in the state of NJ

- The Jersey City Free Public Library partnered for this year's series
- Established its 46th Year
- 10 Performances
- 3 New Bands Added
- Genres include Latin Jazz, Funk, Motown, Pop, Jazz, Classic Rock, & Caribbean Steel Drum, Swing, Little Big Band, NJ Indie/Folk "Powerhouse"

BERRY LANE PARK CONCERT SERIES

- 7 Performances
- Genres include New Age R&B, Reggae, Rock 'n Roll, Blues, Country, Pop, Jazz, Soul Band, Tropical Salsa, Tropical Latin Soul
- In partnership with Friends of Berry Lane Park

MOVIES IN THE PARK

- 17 Movies screened
- Added Bergen Hill Park as a venue at the request of the Park Association
- 4000 residents served
- Average of 6 movies per month
- A wide variety of movie categories including Comedy, Animation, Fantasy, Action and Drama



POET LAUREATE



Ann E. Wallace, Poet Laureate of Jersey City

Ann E. Wallace, PhD was confirmed in December of 2022 as Poet Laureate. 2023 was the first year of her two-year term.

Dr. Wallace is a Professor of English at New Jersey City University and a nationally recognized Long Covid patient advocate. Her new poetry collection *Days of Grace and Silence: A Chronicle of COVID's Long Haul* is forthcoming from Kelsay Books this winter.

2023 Highlights:

- Jersey City Art Book Fair, Mana Contemporary, JC
- "Poetry of Crisis and Community: A Women's History Month Benefit for Earthquake Relief," Froth on Franklin, JC
- "Women of Action Award Ceremony," City Hall Chambers, JC
- "The Path of a Poet," City Hall Chambers, JC
- "Healing Voices: Caregivers' Stories on Stage," Art House Productions, JC
- September 11 Tribute, September 11 Memorial, JC

Representing Jersey City across the Nation

Wallace represented Jersey City as Poet Laureate at events throughout the country:

- Participant at The Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference, Seattle WA
- Visiting Writer, Allan Hamilton Dickson Writers Series, Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre, PA
- Panelist at the Massachusetts Poetry Festival, Salem, MA
- Featured Poet, Friends of the Writers Center, Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua, NY



ARTS & CULTURE TRUST FUND

The Arts & Culture Trust Fund supports art organizations and artists that benefit the culture, well-being, and economy of Jersey City. It also provides increased arts education opportunities for youth.

2023 was the second year for the Art & Culture Trust Fund. It administered \$1,062,984.00 in grants, a 23% increase in grants dollars from 2022.

The Arts and Culture Trust Fund is led by the Arts and Culture Trust Fund Committee, a governing body comprised of community representatives from all Wards of Jersey City. The Fund is administered by the Jersey City Office of Cultural Affairs. Each year, an independent grant review panel scores the applications and makes recommendations to the Committee.

Average Award Amounts

- **\$11,193 (Program Grants and Arts Education) for a total of 49 grantees (28% increase)**
- **\$21,841 (General Operating Grants) for a total of 19 grantees (29% increase)**
- **\$5,000 (Artist fellowships administered by the JC Arts Council) for 20 Individual Artists**

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- **45 Program Grant Awards**
 - **4 Arts Education Awards**
 - **19 Operating Grant Awards**
 - **20 Fellowship Grant Awards**





2023 Committee members

Ward A Melida Rodas

Ward B Lisa Bellan-Boyer

Ward C Angelica Sanchez

Ward D Midori Yoshimoto

Ward E Paul Pinto

Ward F Elizabeth Lorenzo-Phillips

Mayors Representative Joe Harkins

Councilwoman Mira Prinz-Arey (Non-Voting)

Director OCA Christine Goodman OCA (Non-Voting)

Executive Director Bryant Small JC Arts Council Rep (Non-voting)

JCACTF Administrator Migdalia Pagan Milano (Non-Voting)

Support for Applicants

- Accessibility training session
- Recorded training sessions
- 8 hours of open hours session (in person and online) for Q & A
- Step by step webinar available online
- Computer access for applicants at all JCFPL Library branches with extended time
- Captioning and ASL interpreted training sessions
- Applications available in multiple languages

Arts Education Awards

City Kidz Playhouse

Future Arts Leaders at Mana

Jersey City Art School

Jersey City Print Room

Program Grant Awards

Anna Zand Presents

Art Hive Jersey City

Program Grant Awards

The Barrow Mansion

Benedicto Figueroa

Cantantes in Cordibus

CWS Jersey City Refugee Arts

Con Vivo Music

Goatchella

Abstract Movement

Zombie Opera

Folk and Roots Music Festival

In Full Color

Groove on Grove

Italian Educational & Culture Arts Center

Japanese Cultural League

JC Fab Lab

Created in J.C. Series at the JCPL

Jersey Art Book Fair

Jersey City Night Market

Jersey City Parks Coalition

Joshua Lay Comedy

Monira Fridays

The 50th Anniversary of Hip Hop Tour

Kenia Dance

Kyle Marshall Choreography

Levitate Creative

Leyte Dance Theatre

Open Gallery @ LSC

McGinley Sq. Special Events Series

REVERSAL|LASREVER Project

The Young Innovators Media Lab

Monira Residencies Program

Red Rose Community Dance Theater

NGNRD Mixing Studio

NJ Symphony Orchestra

North River Sing

Pop-Up Art Fair

Laugh Tour Comedy

Arts on Bergen Series

The Schubertiade Review

Segunda Quimbamba Folkloric

The Statuary

Pavement Arts Festival

Whole Spectrum Sensory Arts

Individual Fellowship Awards

Barbara Douglas

Brandon Nicholas

Christian Finger

Danielle Scott

Dominic Amorin

Elizabeth Tokloy

Emily Gao

Eulalia Cabrera Ibars

Hiyasmine Gaskins

Isabelle Duverger

Jason Samuels Smith

Matthew Kulvicki

Nanette Reynolds

Nicholas D'Ornellas

Sean Kiely

Stephanie Romano

Thomas McGlynn

Tina Maneca

Troy Jones

Yiqing Zhao

Operating Grant Awards

Ariel Rivka Dance

Art Fair 14C

Art House Productions

Deep Space Gallery

Drawing Rooms

Educational Arts Team

Jersey City Writers

Jersey City Theatre Center

Meenmoves Dance

Nimbus Arts Center

Non Linear Knitting Studio

Pro Arts Jersey City

Riverview Jazz

Shakespeare@

Sip Studio Jersey City

Smush Gallery

Speranza Theatre

Surati Perform Arts

The Kennedy Dancers





THANKS FOR A GREAT YEAR

