

## **Donating With Purpose and Poise: The Kick-Off of Action Agency and a Celebration of Legacy**

For more than two decades, Art-Reach has been touched by dozens of donors, all of whom have enabled the organization to have an incredible impact on the arts community throughout the tri-state area. Generous financial gifts have empowered Art-Reach to fulfill and expound upon its mission of enriching lives by connecting underserved audiences with cultural experiences so that they may enjoy and benefit from the transformative powers of the arts for nearly 24 years. Last year alone Art-Reach served over 17,000 people who would otherwise not have had the means to access the arts. And though it is a well established pillar in the arts sector, the organization is just getting started as it continues to build bridges in the community while transcending fearlessly above current national economic perils.

On Tuesday, May 11, Art-Reach members, staff, volunteers, current donors, board members and friends gathered at the home of Don (an Art-Reach board member) and Lynn Haskin in Old City Philadelphia to celebrate the launch of a new fundraising program, the [Art-Reach Action Agency](#). This program provides donors the opportunity to connect on a much more direct and personal level with the organization's mission and individuals benefiting from its programming. To become an Action Agency member, donors make gifts of their choosing at various levels each containing benefits that are uniquely received by both the donor and an Art-Reach member agency of the donor's choosing. For example, some of the benefits received by donors who give at the Fanatic level (gifts of \$500-\$999) include 2 passes to attend 4 Art-Reach events per year, reserved VIP seating to those events and 10 FREE tickets to a live theatre arts event that go to an Art-Reach member group of the donor's choosing.



Don and Lynn Haskin hosted the Action Agency Launch party at their home in Old City Philadelphia.

Joyce and Ron Burd, Virginia and Harvey Kimmel, Patricia A. Gritzan (all in attendance at the kick off celebration) and Carole Haas Gravagno comprise the Action Agency Leadership Council. They have contributed a combined \$20,000; and posed a challenge for other dedicated donors to join them. Art-Reach is striving to meet their challenge so it can raise a minimum of \$40,000 by June 30, 2010. Presently, Art-Reach is 80 percent of the way towards the challenge match. Go, team, go!

Sarah Nathan, representing Art-Reach member [Compeer Philadelphia](#), was present and touched by the passionate display of support for Art-Reach, so much so that she made her own gift in response to the Action Agency leadership Council's challenge.

“There are times when I connect with an agency and experience the very ‘depth’ of what they offer our community. This is how it is for me with Art-Reach,” Sarah explains.

“When I was invited to the event last week I was delighted to attend not really knowing what to expect. I was pleasantly surprised with the very lovely and likeable crowd, but the greatest thrill was realizing the wonderful support that goes to Art-Reach to make it come to life.

After thinking about the evening and the very unique gifts that Art-Reach offers, I decided to give a gift to Art-Reach. Arts and culture nurture us humans, they are life enhancing to say the very least. I feel so proud to contribute. I feel so proud to be a part of those that make Art-Reach available to so many - so they don't miss out on the joys available to the rest of us here in Philadelphia.”

Art-Reach founder and Agency Leadership Council Member, Joyce Burd offered insight into Art-Reach's history during the event. When she started the organization in 1986, she had most recently come from the Boston Ballet where she was a dance therapist. She worked to promote the mission of Art-Reach from its inception until 2003 when she retired and passed leadership to Michael Norris, the current Art-Reach Executive Director. “Michael has taken Art-Reach to another level,” says Burd. In regards to the Action Agency, she comments that it is “very mission driven.”

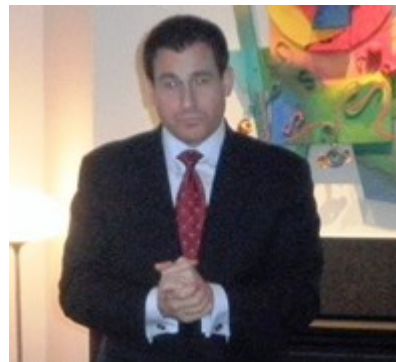
Among the special guest speakers at the festive event was Mr. Drew Becher, the new President of the [Pennsylvania Horticultural Society](#), who emphasized his commitment to furthering the relationship with Art-Reach in his inaugural year at PHS. Says Becher, “I hope that horticulture and art can go hand and hand.” Becher continued to say that he wants to build a network with Art-Reach via the Philadelphia Flower Show, with next year's theme being Springtime in Paris.



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Linda Miller, Activities Coordinator for [Bancroft NeuroHealth](#), a long time Art-Reach member serving individuals with neurological disabilities, was thrilled for the opportunity to meet Mr. Becher and share with him all the good that the Philadelphia Horticultural Society has done for her clients through the years. “I thought it was AWESOME to be able to describe to Drew how important Horticulture has been for the individuals at Bancroft. I have learned that the environment, the landscape and the beauty has a direct impact on the mental health of the individuals we serve,” she explained. Pennsylvania State Senator Larry Farnese also attended, addressing the guests and emphasizing the importance of art to him personally, the Philadelphia community, and the statewide economy. Farnese stressed two critical points in his speech: the educational opportunities available through arts and the statewide economic improvement opportunities through this richly important component of our community. “I represent the highest concentration of [arts and culture] organizations in any senatorial district,” says the Senator, “You think about the opportunities for education [with arts]... Everybody has an opportunity to enjoy art. It doesn’t matter where you come from.”

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Between the brief presentations and mingling, good cheer permeated the air as did a feeling of anticipation, excitement and strong purpose. Board member Steven D. Logue believes that the Action Agency “expands our network of individual donors, which is

critical.” The organization’s newest board member, Florine Tubb anticipates that continued funding support will aid Art-Reach’s efforts in reaching more people, ultimately making the arts more accessible, sharing that her “hope is that the Action Agency is going to bring more funding to increase programs.”



Thanks to all of our guests for supporting the launch of the Action Agency!



This newest initiative certainly has people talking. The Action Agency will most assuredly continue attracting new faces to the organization; heighten the experience of long-time, dedicated existing friends and make the organization even more healthy and vibrant; all the while providing each generous donor a means to connect with Art-Reach

in a way that they feel best represents their philanthropic interests and furthers a great cause.

To learn more about this program, please access the Action Agency [brochure](#), listing on our [web site](#) or the spotlight article highlighting Action Agency benefits.

-By Talia A. Stinson

Talia is a [Special Projects Ambassador](#) in the Art-Reach [Ambassador Program](#).