

ArtsLink NB  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
July 01 2014-June 30 2015



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## ABOUT ArtsLink NB

### MISSION

ArtsLink NB was founded in 2009 to advance the arts in New Brunswick by linking and unifying artists and arts organizations and promoting their value. We represent artists of all disciplines, from all parts of New Brunswick.

### MANDATE

- Establish a network that connects individual artists and arts organizations locally, regionally and provincially;
- Foster public awareness of arts and culture throughout New Brunswick and promote the value of arts in society;
- Create a community culture that acknowledges arts professionals and treats them with respect;
- Provide guidance, resources and assistance for artists and their organizations;
- Promote arts education;
- Advocate for issues relating to professional artists and the arts community;
- Facilitate growth, prosperity, and excellence — socially, economically, artistically and culturally.

## Message from the **PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

This has been a banner year for ArtsLink, as the organization has demonstrated like never before its unique role as a connector and a catalyst for New Brunswick's arts and culture sector. This year saw ArtsLink springboard from the internal focus of 2013-2014 into a much more visible phase of outreach and activity. ArtsLink NB is increasingly finding innovative, entrepreneurial, and broadly collaborative ways to raise the socioeconomic status of artists in New Brunswick.

Growth was the byword for ArtsLink in 2014-2015, as it expanded on a number of fronts, including human resources, revenues and programs. Our staff went from one employee to three, our revenues have more than doubled, we are building a robust paying membership, and delivering an exciting lineup of programs.

Connection, communication and collaboration are the core of ArtsLink NB's approach, and the organization has continued to engage in a wide range of exchanges and partnerships, including high-level discussions with different levels of government, and increased collaboration with other arts groups, in particular l'Association Acadienne des Artistes Professionnel.le.s du Nouveau-Brunswick (AAAPNB), and **artsnb**, the provincial arms-length funding agency.

ArtsLink NB has reached out to the private, public and non-profit sectors, and has been particularly encouraged by partnerships with organizations outside of arts and culture, including those in business, entrepreneurship and innovation. Whatever the project, whoever the partner, the final aim is the same: to make New Brunswick a place where artists can have long careers that are creatively satisfying and financially viable.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of the board of directors, the volunteers, and especially the members of ArtsLink. Without your support and participation, our organization could not function.



Dr. Kathryn Hamer, President



Kate Wallace, Executive Director



## Executive SUMMARY 2014-2015

ArtsLink significantly expanded the range and quantity of its programming. There were a number of firsts in 2014-2015, including the launch of Catapult Arts Accelerator, a pilot program whose unique, intensive curriculum aims to develop entrepreneurship in the sector. Another significant addition was a new series of professional development workshops on the themes of grant-writing, crowd-funding and social-media marketing. We've been reaching out to Aboriginal artists, too, visiting a number of New Brunswick First Nations in partnership with l'AAAPNB and **artsnb**, to better understand their needs and how our organizations might serve them. We deeply appreciate the welcome we received in those communities, and the candid, thoughtful comments of the artists we met there.

ArtsLink NB's 2014 forum, **The 506: Creative Placemaking in New Brunswick**, was ambitious and timely, providing an opportunity to showcase a large and diverse group of New Brunswick artists in the context of a global movement to build community through culture. And ArtsLink was very honoured to be invited by the Atlantic Ballet Theatre of Canada to partner on **The HOMEbody Symposium**, an exciting demonstration of the role of artists in exploring important social issues.

ArtsLink NB accomplished all this while continuing to participate fully in a number of provincial initiatives and partnerships, including the transition committee for a new cultural human resources council for New Brunswick, and the ongoing work of the Premier's Task Force on the Status of the Artist, which has been taken up by Premier Brian Gallant.

Looking ahead, ArtsLink is now focused on sustaining the funding and programming gains made in the past year. As ever, our highest priority is to develop a relevant, enriching and sustainable program and services for our members.

## OVERVIEW of ArtsLink NB Activities: 2014-2015

### ARTSLINK 2.0: WEBSITE & SOCIAL-MEDIA STRATEGY

ArtsLink 2.0 is a major digital project featuring two related but separate components: a new website, and an updated social-media strategy. Together, they comprise a critical means of ArtsLink NB fulfilling its mission of advancing the arts in New Brunswick by linking and unifying artists and arts organizations and promoting their value. The website went live at the end of the last fiscal year, in May 2014. In the fall, it was officially launched, and the social media strategy was developed concurrently and put into practice beginning in November 2014.

The website is vital to ArtsLink serving a diverse and geographically dispersed membership. It is a dynamic tool designed to address the top three concerns voiced by the artists of New Brunswick: public advocacy, market development, and training. While the website is not the sole means of delivering services, it is foundational to these aims.

The new website is attractive, intuitive and resource-rich. It is a toolbox for members, who have access to career development and promotional resources. It is a locus of information for other stakeholders, as well, featuring daily news updates, events listings, research and more. Smart, streamlined, and rich in content, it demonstrates the vitality, range and professionalism of the arts community in New Brunswick. Since the relaunch, ArtsLink NB has used it to promote over 500 news items and 1,000 events. We have added to the site as our programming has grown, including sections on workshop subjects, Catapult Arts Accelerator, creative placemaking and more.

The ArtsLink newsletter goes to almost 1,000 subscribers. Based on member feedback, we have increased its frequency and refined its design and content, making it more compact, focused and user-friendly. Since the redesign, the newsletter has quintupled the number of opportunities ArtsLink NB publishes. These include culture-sector jobs, residencies, grants,

awards and other calls for proposals. Subscriber feedback has been almost entirely positive, and the number of subscribers has increased 15% this fiscal year. Open and click rates are consistently between 30-40%, which is very strong.

ArtsLink NB's social media streams are also very active, with an average of 1 to 3 daily posts Monday to Friday on Facebook, Twitter and Google+. All metrics indicate the success of the social-media strategy. Twitter followers have increased 60% in this fiscal year to nearly 2,000; Facebook 'likes' are up 33%; our Facebook group has grown by 20% to include more than 900 members.

## MEMBER RECRUITMENT

ArtsLink NB reintroduced membership fees in autumn 2014. Approximately 170 members were enrolled as of June 30, 2015 (the end of this fiscal year), an encouraging figure that reflects the excellent value ArtsLink NB has created for its members, including exclusive benefits, free registration to all programs and events, an expanding advocacy role, and a growing online resource section. This figure is particularly encouraging in light of the fact that very little active recruitment took place this fiscal year, an area of development ArtsLink intends to undertake in 2016. Enrolment patterns demonstrate a clear correlation between ArtsLink events and programs, which are free to members, and new members joining, with significant bumps noted in the lead-up to workshops, for instance, or the 2014 forum.

ArtsLink has four member categories, whose composition consists of:

- Emerging: 23%
- Professional: 37%
- Organization: 18%
- Friend: 22%

Membership fees are more than just a revenue stream for the organization. More than just a monetary commitment, they demonstrate the membership's support for ArtsLink NB's mandate and mission, and demonstrate to funders and partners the strength and solidarity of the organization and sector.

## EXPANDED HUMAN RESOURCES

ArtsLink NB significantly expanded its human resources in 2014-2015, which directly translates into increased services and programming for members, and greatly improved internal operations. Thanks to funding support through the One Job Pledge, a provincial workforce expansion program, ArtsLink was able to hire Julie Whitenect, a recent graduate of Mount Allison University's Bachelor of Fine Arts program, in September 2014, in the role of communications coordinator. Her competence in social media, communications, and design has greatly enhanced the quality and range of our online presence. Possessed of superb organization and general administration skills, Julie is contributing significantly to operations. It is especially gratifying to be able to offer employment and experience to a recent graduate, and develop her as a potential future leader in the sector.

In December, ArtsLink hired again, this time for the position of a contract coordinator for Catapult Arts Accelerator. Sarah Short, an economic development expert with a passion for growing sustainable businesses, was the successful candidate from over 50 high-calibre applications from across Canada. She has managed the pilot accelerator program with great professionalism, confidence and aplomb.

In the summer of 2014 and 2015, ArtsLink NB received funding support through the Canada Summer Jobs program, to hire a student for an eight-week term. In 2014, ArtsLink NB hired Emily Craft, a public relations student at Mount St. Vincent University, who provided communications support; in 2015, Kenzie Hancox, a student of modern languages at Mount Allison University, took on much of ArtsLink NB's social-media responsibilities during her term.

Professional development has been a focus of the past year. Executive director Kate Wallace was selected as a member of the 2014-2015 New Brunswick cohort of 21 Leaders, a leadership development program for young Maritimers who demonstrate exceptional leadership skills and are attuned to the needs of their communities. This intensive, one-year program provided valuable networking opportunities, leadership development training, as well as the chance to work with a high-profile mentor from the private sector. Kate also participated in Project Management Essentials in December 2014, which was delivered by Procept, while Julie Whitenect completed Understanding Social Business in November 2014. This three-session course by Sociallogical, a Saint John social-media consultancy, also included a valuable customized one-on-one consultation.

## PRIORITY PROJECT

### Catapult Arts Accelerator

In January 2015, ArtsLink launched Catapult Arts Accelerator, Atlantic Canada's first intensive arts entrepreneurship program designed to serve all artistic disciplines. ArtsLink NB started the program because of the tremendous talent of New Brunswick artists and the great potential to expand their markets and increase their commercial success. Creative industries and cultural businesses are a large and growing segment of the economy in Canada and beyond—Catapult Arts Accelerator capitalizes on this opportunity. It is based on the belief that an entrepreneurial approach will give artists greater independence, wealth, and sustainability.

Catapult held two cohorts in its pilot year: the first in Saint John, the second in Fredericton. Each session consisted of six two-day bootcamps and one-on-one mentorship. The program placed specific emphasis on financial planning, business modeling, customer identification and acquisition, and branding. Catapult is free for participants, so as to remove financial barriers to deserving candidates. All program materials were provided, and ArtsLink NB covered mentor-related costs, as well.

Already this pilot program is showing strong results in achieving its aim of helping high-calibre arts entrepreneurs identify and access new markets. Among the 12 participants from the first two cohorts, early indicators have been very promising in the areas of job creation, new businesses, new products, refined branding and marketing plans, financial literacy, increased revenues, and outsourcing.

### Aboriginal Outreach

In 2014, for the first time, ArtsLink NB embarked upon a series of outreach sessions with artists living in New Brunswick First Nations, including visits to Tobique (October 2014), Metepenagiag (November 2014 and April 2015), Indian Island (November 2014) and St. Mary's (April 2015). The outreach was conducted thanks to funding and an invitation from the AAAPNB and a partnership with **artsnb**, whose full-time aboriginal outreach officer, Natalie Sappier, offered a crucial liaison with these communities. While the ultimate goal is greater connection to these communities, and a deeper understanding of their professional development needs, this initial series of visits provided an opportunity to meet and begin to create lasting relationships. Most of the visits took the form of a talking circle, in which local artists and artisans shared



insights and information about their work, the challenges they face in their art practices, and ideas for support and ongoing connection.

### Professional Development Workshops

ArtsLink NB is very grateful to the AAAPNB, which offered funding and mentorship for our organization to offer a pilot series of workshops similar to those offered to Acadian artists. For ArtsLink NB, the project was of great value in terms of administrative capacity-building, networking, and visibility.

ArtsLink NB developed a program of three workshops in 2014-2015, on the subjects of grant-writing, social-media marketing, and crowdfunding, which were selected based on member feedback.

ArtsLink NB felt it important that the program reflect the organization's provincial mandate, so each subject was offered in three different communities, and in towns of varying size. In all, sessions were held in seven communities, including several small and rural towns such as St. Andrews, Sackville, Miramichi and Sussex.

The workshops were free to ArtsLink members so as to eliminate financial barriers to participation. Non-members were charged a nominal fee to encourage enrolment.

ArtsLink NB feels the program was a strong success. Through nine workshop sessions in seven different communities it was able to develop the professional skills of nearly 100 participants. Participant satisfaction was high, with the vast majority of post-survey respondents reporting an increase in their knowledge, skills and confidence in the subject matter.

A number of participants at various sessions expressed the hope that the workshop series would be ongoing, and ArtsLink NB will seek funding to continue it.

### 'The 506: Creative Placemaking In New Brunswick'

Held in Saint John November 14-15, 2014, **The 506: Creative Placemaking in New Brunswick** was a dynamic, diverse and innovative forum that brought together stakeholders and thought leaders to explore Creative Placemaking, an evolving concept that is being adopted by communities around the world to intentionally leverage the power of arts and culture to make them stronger, and more successful. It was a great opportunity to learn, network, debate and discuss creative placemaking in the New Brunswick context, and to explore how we might better engage art, culture and creativity as catalysts for community vibrancy, sustainability, prosperity and inclusiveness.

The forum kicked off Friday night with a cocktail reception and contemporary multidisciplinary arts performance. Saturday offers a full day of speakers, interactive sessions, and keynote address by Tim Jones, President & CEO of Artscape, a Toronto organization that is an international leader in creative placemaking. In March 2014, the Schwab Foundation named Mr. Jones a Social Entrepreneur of the Year 2014.

The program also featured a number of New Brunswick artists, including:

- *Tropos*, a work of original dance, music and paintings by Andrew Miller, Connection Dance Works, and Deanna Musgrave
- Joel LeBlanc, Fredericton musician, lead delegates in a Sound Choir Wakeup Call, a collaborative creative exercise.
- Linda Rae Dornan's collaborative work, *Interpretations/Translations*
- Christiana Myers' installation, *This is as Good a Place as Any*

## ‘The HOMEBody Symposium’

The HOMEBody Symposium was a bilingual, one-day symposium to help shape the future of New Brunswick by positively promoting it as a place of innovation and opportunity. ArtsLink NB was very honoured to be invited by Atlantic Ballet Theatre of Canada, the presenting organization, to be a partner with the event. Taking place May 6, 2015, in Fredericton, HOMEBody invited a broad cross-section of emerging entrepreneurs, place-makers, students, artists, newcomers and activists who are succeeding in New Brunswick to share their stories, both personal and professional.

Approximately 200 delegates attended, including post-secondary students, entrepreneurs in all fields, social innovators, emerging professionals, artists, thought-leaders, and industry specialists. The program had three components: a daytime conference; a performance of HOMEBody, Shannon Litzenberger’s original dance-theatre piece that evening; and a wrap-up session and reception following.

The symposium demonstrated that arts organizations are relevant leaders of important social discourse, and that art provides a meaningful way to engage emotionally and intellectually with urgent issues.

## Government WORKING GROUPS

ArtsLink NB promotes the growth and development of the New Brunswick arts sector through information, education, member services and by representing the membership through participation in provincial, regional and national government, business and cultural forums and initiatives. ArtsLink NB has been extremely active in the past few years in a number of high-level discussions and working groups that aim to improve the working and living conditions for New Brunswick artists.

- **Premier’s Task Force on the Status of the Artist:** ArtsLink Executive Director and President were appointed to the Premier’s Task Force on the Status of the Artist, which will work closely on the file over the next 18 to 24 months.
- **Cultural Human Resources Transition Committee:** ArtsLink Executive Director and Secretary are members of a select group that is developing a new provincial council to address human resources needs in the sector, including continuing education and professional development for professional artists and cultural workers.
- **Maine/N.B. MOU Taskforce:** ArtsLink Executive Director is a member of this important transborder initiative. She participates in a taskforce conference call every six weeks in which stakeholders discuss areas of mutual interest, as well as hold one face-to-face each year.



## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The summarized financial information is extracted from financial statements reviewed by Belyea Colwell & Associates, Chartered Accountants. A copy of the complete financial statements is available from Executive Director, Kate Wallace at [katewallace@artslinknb.com](mailto:katewallace@artslinknb.com).

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS (FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2015)		
	2015	2014
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Government grants	\$ 130,144	\$ 82,815
Special programs grants	93,580	3,000
Membership fees	3,453	-
Other	164	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 227,341</b>	<b>\$ 85,815</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
<b>Project Costs</b>		
ArtsLink NB Forum	\$ 17,812	\$ 23,112
Homebody Program	12,722	-
Accelerator Program	49,340	-
Workshops	11,765	-
Advertising	1,725	301
Amortization	1,052	941
Bank charges	701	415
Insurance	1,747	1,467
Meals	1,128	1,059
Office	2,822	2,104
Professional development	1,313	500
Professional fees	5,698	5,390
Rent	6,034	4,207
Salaries and benefits	85,388	45,136
Telephone	571	959
Travel and meetings	4,378	2,753
Website	443	255
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 204,639</b>	<b>\$ 88,599</b>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURE	\$ 22,702	\$(2,784)
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS (LIABILITIES) AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$ (925)	\$ 1,859
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS (LIABILITIES) AT END OF YEAR	\$ 21,777	\$ (\$925)

## ArtsLink NB DIRECTORS

### ■ **KATHRYN HAMER**, (President), Sackville

Former vice-president of the University of New Brunswick Saint John and dean of arts at Mount Allison University, Kathy is a seasoned administrator with a passion for the arts. She also serves on the boards of the New Brunswick Museum and the New Brunswick Youth Orchestra.

### ■ **SUSAN CHALMERS GAUVIN**, (Vice President), Moncton

Founder and CEO of the Atlantic Ballet Theatre of Canada, Susan is a frequent guest speaker on the topics of performing arts management; the importance of Canadian arts and culture to the economy; and the role of the arts in enriching quality of life.

### ■ **MICHAEL WENNBERG**, (2nd Vice President), Rothesay

A retired lawyer, Mike is very active in the Saint John and provincial arts scenes. Former chair of the Saint John Community Arts Board, Mike was instrumental in Saint John being named a Cultural Capital of Canada in 2010.

### ■ **JULIE SCRIVER**, (Secretary), Fredericton

Creative director at Goose Lane Editions, Julie has brought her expertise to bear on all manner of art publications, exhibitions, and interpretive sites with many organizations, independent writers, and artists.

### ■ **GRANT ROBERTS**, (Treasurer), Saint John

An accountant with J.D. Irving, Ltd., Grant is a CPA candidate for the class of 2015. Grant obtained his bachelor of business administration (BBA) from UNB Fredericton in 2012.

### ■ **DAVID ADAMS**, Saint John

A violinist who has gained critical acclaim as a soloist, conductor, chamber and orchestral musician, David is artist-in-residence at the University of New Brunswick Saint John, plays principal violin with the Saint John String Quartet and concert master for Symphony New Brunswick and Atlantic Sinfonia.



■ **RAYANNE BRENNAN**, Moncton

Vice-president of the Professional Writers Association of Canada's Moncton Chapter, Rayanne runs Brennan Communications, her independent communications consultancy and editorial services firm.

■ **JOHN CUSHNIE**, Fredericton

John has taught painting and drawing at Mount Allison University, The University of Western Ontario, and OCAD University. He is the founder and Chairman of the Beacon Residencies and Heritage Trust, an inter-provincial artist residency program, and is executive director of Connexion ARC.

■ **ADRIENNE ELFNER-HAZEN**, Bathurst

A visual artist, gallery owner and teacher for over 20 years, Adrienne was a founding member and is a former president of the Bathurst Art Society.

■ **VICTORIA HUTT**, Florenceville-Bristol

Victoria Hutt is Executive Director/Curator of The Andrew & Laura McCain Art Gallery, in Florenceville-Bristol. A NSCAD University graduate, she feels passionately about making art exhibits, education, and creation opportunities accessible in rural New Brunswick.

■ **KAREN LEBLANC**, Fredericton

Executive director of the Aboriginal Workforce Development Initiative as well as a fibre artist and weaver, Karen is an award-winning volunteer and was a driving force in the founding of ArtsLink NB.

■ **ALLAN POLCHIES JR.**, St. Mary's First Nation

Community planner and culture coordinator and top councilor for his community, Allan sits on the Economic Development Board for St. Mary's First Nation and the Two Spirited Alliance core committee.



**artsLink NB**

Network ▪ Unite ▪ Grow ▪ Prosper

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**506.646.1832**

**[www.artslinknb.com](http://www.artslinknb.com)**

Design and layout: Jaye Rebecca Haworth