



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**READING CULTURAL COUNCIL AWARDS FUNDS TO 17 ORGANIZATIONS
Bringing Arts and Culture Events and Activities to Reading Residents during the
2020--2021 Coronavirus Pandemic**

March 2021-- The Reading Cultural Council is elated to support an eclectic range of arts and humanities programming to entertain and enrich Reading residents during the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020 and 2021. Thanks to additional funding awarded by the Town of Reading for cultural activities, the Reading Cultural Council was able to distribute \$17,500 to support programs presented by 17 different organizations.

Reading's Quannapowitt Players received funds for its successful *Theater in the Park(ing) Lot* series, presented in a socially distanced way in 2020.

Reading Community Singers received funds for expenses associated with its popular annual holiday concert, *Making Spirits Bright*, presented as a virtual event.

Colonial Chorus Players received funds toward repaving the driveway at The Old Hose House so it could be used in 2021 and beyond for outdoor performances.

Arts Reading received funds to establish itself as a community nonprofit.

Rondae Drafts received funds to bring her **Hip Hop Chair Exercise program** to Seniors in Reading.

DRAW – Downtown Reading Arts Walk --received funds to reprise its annual showcase of local artistic talent in September 2021.

The Northeast School of Ballet received funds for a virtual performance of *Land of the Sweets* performed by students enrolled at the Reading-based school.

Denise Doucette received funds to produce a music video of Nova Scotia and bring it to long term care facilities in Reading over 2021.

Beyond Ivy Chord, the Reading Unitarian Universalist Church's popular coffee house, received support for its reformatted 2020/2021 virtual program focused on elevating social justice and featuring inclusive artists.

Birch Meadow PTO received funds to bring a virtual visit with author Sara Lynne Reul along with interactive storytelling to every grade.

Dr. “The Machine” Jesse Green received funds to bring his music-based life skills program, **CHAINSAWS, CHEESEBURGERS AND ROCK N' ROLL- LIVE**, to both Reading Middle Schools in 2021.

Andrew Buckley received funds to screen **Stephano: Shakespeare’s Shipwreck**, a [Hit and Run History](#) program, at the Reading Public Library followed by a discussion.

Barrows PTO received planning funds to develop **Racial Equity in the Performing Arts**, an enrichment program to include performances and reading materials for the 2021/2022 school year.

The **Irish Step Dancing Program** organized by Francis Keane received funds to continue in a virtual format in 2021 until in-person activity returns.

Greater Boston Stage Company in Stoneham received funds to underwrite discounted tickets for Reading students and Seniors to attend performances.

Sherri VandenAkker received funds to support *Pandemic Peace and Promise*, an original visual research project documenting the impact of the pandemic on Reading, to be presented later in 2021.

New Rep Theater of Watertown received funds to bring a 2-person virtual performance of *Romeo and Juliet* to both Reading Middle Schools in Spring 2021.

“The richness of cultural, artistic and experiential projects that the Reading Cultural Council was able to support in the midst of a pandemic is impressive,” said Reading Cultural Council co-chairs Mary Ann Kozlowski and Megan Fidler Carey. “We hope Reading residents will support these organizations and projects. We are always eager to hear your thoughts on the programming that the Reading Cultural Council supports.”

Reading’s Cultural Council receives more applications than there are funds available yet tries to partially fund worthy projects. Because the demand for funds typically exceeds available funds, programs must have alternate sources of funding and guarantee they will run with partial RCC funding. Grants are reimbursement-based, meaning the applicant organization expends its own money and if approved for a grant, submits paperwork for reimbursement.

[Apply for a Cultural Council Grant](#)

Individuals and organizations with cultural projects taking place in Reading during 2021-2022 are encouraged to apply for support from the Reading Cultural Council. Application forms will be available online at mass-culture.org/Reading in September.

[About the Reading Cultural Council](#)

The Reading Cultural Council is part of a network of Local Cultural Councils (LCC) serving all cities and towns in the Commonwealth. Reading Cultural Council members are volunteers appointed by the town’s Board of Selectmen. The Massachusetts state legislature provides an annual appropriation to the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, which then allocates funds to Local Cultural Councils which make awards based on community needs.

Learn more about the Reading Cultural Council on the Town of Reading website (readingma.gov/cultural-council). Please consider joining the Reading Cultural Council. Contact the Reading Town Clerk to apply.