

An Executive Summary of Gateway to the Arts



Gateway to the Arts, Photo by Brenda McCullers, 2016

Gateway to the Arts

2770 SE Fairmont Street, Stuart, Florida 34997

Lisa Holland, Program Coordinator, 772.324.8598

<https://www.facebook.com/GatewaytotheArtsGoldenGate>

By Brenda McCullers

March 26, 2016

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Background & Mission

Gateway to the Arts, an art literacy studio, opened in the community of Golden Gate in October of 2015. Their focus is to bring citizens together to explore and celebrate the cultures in Martin County, while at the same time building an appreciation and an understanding of the arts. The studio offers classes, workshops, and presentations that are free and open to the public. Gateway to the Arts is funded by a three-year grant awarded to the Library Foundation of Martin County by the Community Foundation of Palm Beach and Martin Counties.

Lisa Holland

Lisa Holland is the heart and soul of Gateway to the Arts. Even though Holland did not spearhead the project from the beginning, she has taken it on as if she did. She stepped into the position as the Program Director one month before the studio was to open and has put into place a successful and effective program. Her job entails anything and everything that has to do with the studio. This includes, but is not limited to, coordinating events and activities, teaching and instructing, organizing, ordering and stocking supplies, and keeping records. On any given day at the studio you will see Holland answering the phone, greeting children at the door, setting out supplies, washing paint brushes, showing someone how to use a glue gun, or taking pictures to post on Gateway to the Arts' [Facebook](#) page or [Instagram](#) account.

Gateway to the Arts is provided with additional support from knowledgeable, experienced, and passionate members of the Martin County Community Development Department, the Arts Council of Martin County, and the Martin County Library System. Volunteers are also available to help visitors feel welcome and to provide extra hands during projects and activities.

Goals & Challenges

Golden Gate includes a unique and diverse mix of occupational and cultural groups. Most of the children that enter Gateway to the Arts on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons come from Hispanic families that live in the area. Many of them walk to the studio or have parents or older siblings drop them off. While most of the children speak English, a large majority of their parents only speak Spanish. Taking this into consideration, handouts and flyers are written in both English and Spanish.

In an interview with Holland, she noted the challenges she faces while preparing activities for Gateway. She began by explaining activities must be suitable for the wide range of ages that attend on a regular basis. On some days multiple studio centers are set up to provide a variety of skill levels. There may be collage materials, coloring sheets, and a painting project going on at the same time. Some participants may spend the entire time on one project while others may roam from one activity to another. In addition, materials must be ordered well in advance because the grant requires purchases to be placed through Amazon or a few other specific places. Holland went on to say that she was not prepared for the amount of “time, thought, and effort” that goes into the planning and preparation (personal communication, March 24, 2016).



Gateway to the Arts opens their doors to all ages. Photo by Brenda McCullers, 2016

The one thing Holland does not do is advertising. The studio has been in operation less than 6 months and already there is a need to move into a larger space. This is due to the fact that when the door opens, anywhere from 25 to 50 people show up to partake in whatever activities are prepared for that particular day. Retired teachers, professionals, and families attend but for the most part, the participants are children that live in the Golden Gate community.

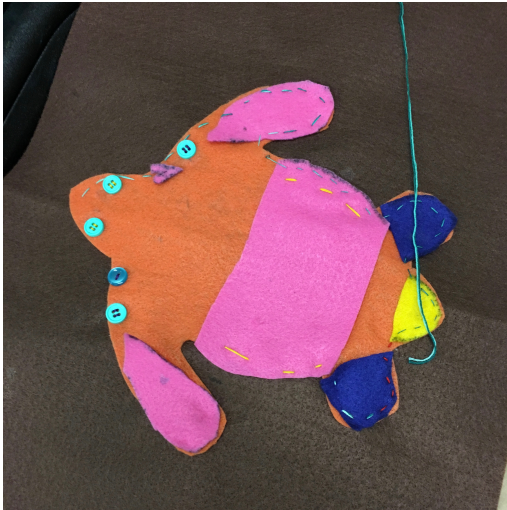
Connecting with the Community

In an effort to explore and celebrate the cultures in Martin County and build an appreciation and an understanding of the arts, throughout the year Holland invites a wide variety of artists to share their crafts at Gateway to the Arts. The artists are from around South Florida, as well as other areas. Evidence of their visits can be seen throughout the studio, a mural by Julia Kelly painted on one wall, a painting by Donn Jones hanging on another, and a caricature of Holland by Manny A. displayed above her desk. On days when no visiting artist is scheduled, other activities are planned for participants. In order to provide opportunities for families to attend together, Gateway for the Arts plans special events on selected Saturdays throughout the year. On other occasions Gateway will open for special group events.

Visiting Artists

- Carrie Sue Alvar: Miami bilingual storyteller who shares stories in English and in Spanish
- Donn Jones: contemporary artist and musician
- Duck in the Truck Puppets: education and entertainment using puppetry and storytelling and workshops to teach fabrication and presentation.
- Eran Far: abstract and expressionist Persian artist
- Gail Kosowski: environmental artist

- Giving Tree Music: facilitates interactive drum circles
- Julia Kelly: impressionist artist, watercolors & oils
- Lia-Lucine Cary: felt folk artist
- Manny A: caricature artist
- Sushi Parriott: specializes in paintings that could be done in just 2 or 3 hours.



Lia-Lucine Cary taught participants how to make felt pillows. Photo by Brenda McCullers, 2016

What Patrons Have to Say

When talking with the children that attend on a regular basis, you will quickly find out that it does not necessarily have to be a visiting artist for them to get excited about a particular activity. One of their favorites was taught by Holland—tie-dyed shirts that they got to take home. When asked about their favorite visiting artists, regular participants are quick to answer. Among the names was Carrie Sue Alvar, a Miami bilingual storyteller who shared stories in English and in Spanish. Another name mentioned quite often was Duck in the Truck Puppets. They put on a performance with puppets one day and helped participants create their own puppets the next. Everyone loved Lia-Lucine Cary's folk art pillows. Younger children used glue to create their felt pillows while older participants used needles and yarn.

**"Ms. Lisa is the best. I love coming here. I would come everyday if it were open."
Fernando**

Admission

Activities are open to the public and free

Hours of Operation

Tuesday & Thursday
3:30-5:30pm
Closed Holidays

Program Coordinator

Lisa Holland
772.324.8598

Photo Gallery

Resources

Neighborhood Scout (2016). *Stuart, Florida (Golden Gate)*. Retrieved from <http://www.neighborhoodscout.com/fl/stuart/golden-gate/#overview>

U.S. Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau (2015). *Quick facts, Martin county Florida*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/12085>

'Gateway to the Arts' grand opening. (2015, December). *Stuart Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.stuartmagazine.com/photobook/gateway-arts-grand->

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https://issuu.com/martinarts/docs/martinartsfall2015_issue

A special THANK YOU to Lisa Holland and the patrons at Gateway for the Arts for permission to use photos and information about the studio.