

The Akron Area Arts League Fund

When looking for art, one might think that they have to travel to a large metropolitan city packed with galleries, theaters, and concert halls. However, with the help of some local community members of Fulton County, residents can enjoy these amenities locally.

The spirit of Fulton County's art scene is vibrant and very much alive because of people like Karen Drone. As a longtime art enthusiast and the three-year director of the Akron Area Arts League in Akron, Indiana, Drone says she isn't a practicing artist, but her passion for art is obvious. Sculptures, paintings, stained-glass artwork, and numerous other pieces are on display in her home amidst some of her personal artwork and her husband's photography. An upstairs room, lined with newspaper and blotches of color, (remnants of her last creation) is allocated to her creative work.

"Art is the window to the world," she said. "It teaches you to see."

While Drone has always made room for her own masterpieces, she, along with others from the community also wanted to help find a permanent home for art in Fulton County.

"There was not much in this area representing the way of art, so we decided to establish something to help us meet local artists," she said.

Drone says the Akron Area Arts League's slogan, "Look... Art is everywhere!" is perfect because of its power, truth, and simplicity.

"People simply need to open their eyes in order to see all of the art that surrounds us every day," she said.

The league was established when twenty-one visual artists from Fulton County displayed their art during Akron's annual Fourth of July celebration. Since then, the organization has traveled to many different art-related endeavors, organized exhibitions for local artists, held music performances for local musicians, offered an annual children's art camp, hosted a cultural festival, and even presented awards to local artists. The Arts League emphasizes that they support all different types of art.

"We are interested in providing an opportunity for artists to have their personal expression in art, and yet at the same time, having an opportunity for the community to appreciate what they've done," Drone said.



Although Drone left her hometown of Akron after college, she eventually returned there to her family and community in 2006. She said that by partnering with the Community Foundation, she has been able to give her community the opportunity to indulge in and experience the world of art.

"The community wants to see an art group in this area," she said. "Without the help of the Fulton County Community Foundation, we would have had a hard time getting our feet off the ground."

The Community Foundation supports several other organizations similar to the Arts League that are working to better communities now and will continue to do so in the future. Drone said that with the permanence and security of the fund from the Community Foundation, she can't wait to see how the Arts League will blossom and help artists of all ages. She hopes to help people explore the world of creativity for many years to come.