

Volunteer Spotlight



Arts Advisory Council

Capital Regional District | January 2020



Emmy Beaton, AAC Member

Emmy Beaton heard about the Capital Regional District (CRD) Arts Advisory Council (AAC) from an acquaintance who encouraged her to apply when a position came open. Beaton has worked as a public servant on a provincial and national level for 13 years – but she wanted to make difference in the region.

“I wanted to volunteer locally and use my experience in public funding and developing projects,” explains Beaton who joined the AAC in 2017. The AAC is a group of volunteer advisors to the CRD Arts & Culture division. They adjudicate grant applications and provide advice on issues related to arts and culture in the region.

The arts sector was a natural fit because she grew up in an artistic family. “My father is a drummer and my mom is a painter,” says Beaton who frequently seeks out art, music and dance locally as well as when she travels. “I love getting a comprehensive understanding of the arts community in the region. We read about the whole upcoming season for many organizations. It’s an eagle eye view of arts in the region that few people get,” reflects Beaton.

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CONTRIBUTION OF THE AAC

The AAC makes funding recommendations that boost the work of local not-for-profit arts organizations. The members read through the grant applications then meet to discuss the applications and what recommendations to make the Arts Commission. Their recommendations become the basis for the decisions for how to best distribute regional arts funding.

“After the first big Operating Grant plenary, I realized that this is a very powerful thing we are doing. It’s humbling,” she says. Now entering her third year on the AAC Beaton is starting to see the longer term impact of the work. “You can see the trends in the broader picture. We read about what the challenges are for all of these groups. We often see the same challenges and the same issues.” Not-for-profit arts organizations often struggle with capacity. Public sector funding enables arts and cultural groups to employ more people and see a return in the local economy.

RECOGNIZING THE VALUE AND BENEFITS OF ARTS & CULTURE

Beaton also recognizes that the value and benefits of the arts go beyond dollars. “It’s not just about profit margins and audience numbers. We also look at how artistic output strengthens ties between people and communities, and how that deepens peoples' sense of self expression and belonging. Those are such important benefits from the arts.”

Interested in applying for the AAC? Visit www.crd.bc.ca/arts 250.360.3215