

Provide details about how being a philanthropic institution special permit use fits into the various uses he is proposing for the site.

Bethany, Arts & Nature (and science)

As Henry Matisse once said:

“An artist must possess Nature. He must identify himself with her rhythm, by efforts that will prepare the mastery which will later enable him to express himself in his own language.”

Like artist communities for generations, Bethany’s lawns, trees, gardens, and walking trails, are an integral part of our vision. Art, science and nature have been intimately entwined for literally thousands of years, from cave drawings of animals that inform our understanding of our past, to paintings of centuries-old experiments, to drawings, like Da Vinci’s, that meticulously document anatomy, botany, geology, and our evolving understanding of the world around us. The spectacularly detailed and beautiful glass flowers, commissioned in 1886 and on display at Harvard’s Museum of Natural History, are another wonderful example of the important connection between the arts and nature. So are John Audubon’s engravings of birds which can be seen in both art institutions and natural history museums. And, the practice of plein air painting (the act of painting outdoors) became more prevalent with the impressionists and the Hudson River School with artists inspired by the beauty and light of their natural surroundings.

The outdoors has also served as a venue for theater for hundreds of years. From the Greeks and Romans in their amphitheaters, to Bread and Puppet in Vermont, to the Public Theater's Shakespeare in the Park, to the downtown NY favorite Shakespeare in the Park(ing) Lot, the theater has a long history of outdoor performance. Owners of Theater O, Andrew and Jessica Irons, spent several years running an off-broadway adult theater company that in the summers would perform shows for children outdoors in community gardens in Harlem and the East Village, an experience they hope someday to bring to Bethany. These days, it is also quite possible the outdoors will be the only place performances can happen for quite some time.

Bethany sees all of the proposed uses of Bethany’s property as deeply connected with its arts mission and the needs of its artists. Further, welcoming both children and adults alike to create and learn about the arts is also central to the mission. Programs such as the theater camps and after school programming with the Ossining Schools, as well as partnerships with organizations like the river fund, allow Bethany to create opportunities for children from all backgrounds, including those in less fortunate and privileged circumstances.

Bethany, Arts & Philanthropy

“arts and culture are essential for advancing equity because they help people make meaning of their experiences, expose people to different perspectives, build empathy and individual

empowerment, and reduce social isolation by bringing people together across age, race, ethnicity, and other social boundaries.” MacArthur Foundation, Themes from our Participatory Grantmaking Pilot in the Arts, March 10,2020

Since the day our Founder, David Lyons, first envisioned Bethany as “a community of artists that not only interacts with each other but with the community as a whole, locally and globally”, to the day we filed incorporation papers, to the day we first opened our doors; through to our first two and half years of exhibits and programming, to our first residency program, and, as we look to the future, our strategy has remained a philanthropic effort:

“(1) To create and maintain an environment where young and old alike can experience and express artistic vision and explore their emerging and dormant artistic talents. (2) Using the arts of all forms for creative and educational awareness and betterment of individuals, the community, the environment and society for the short and long term. (3) Remove barriers that may exist to accessing, creating or experiencing the arts due to socio economic reasons.” Bethany Certificate of Incorporation

Bethany accomplishes this effort in several ways:

- ◆ Inexpensive, if not free or voluntary donation based, events (many events)
- ◆ Free access to exhibits in galleries
- ◆ Available sliding scale and scholarship “seats” in our programs (limited)
- ◆ Scholarship spots in youth programs and camps
- ◆ Affordable studio space
- ◆ Grant supported rehearsal space subsidies (limited)
- ◆ Residency stipends
- ◆ Free public program commitment to most residencies

A few examples of the enriching, free programs offered to date through our residencies include:

- ◆ Open rehearsals to Bill T. Jones, [Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company](#), nationally acclaimed choreographer, director, author and dancer
- ◆ Free master class for high school and college aged students with Bill T. Jones
- ◆ Q&A with Jo Kreiter, Choreographer and Founder/Director, [Flyaway Productions](#); Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow (2019); Rauschenberg Artist as Activist Fellow (2017-2019)
- ◆ Open “work in progress” show by John McGrew and actors, [Village of Vale](#).

The programs described in our application to the ZBA will be managed with the same strategic focus, creative tools and welcoming spirit to achieve our philanthropic mission.