



# 2021 IMPACT REPORT



Spruill Center FOR THE Arts

CLASSES • EVENTS • GALLERIES



What our students have to say about their experiences at Spruill in 2021...

**2021** marked our first full year of enacting many of the objectives set forth during the formation of our strategic plan in 2020. While 2021 was intended as a year of recovery, it was, in fact, a year

of transformation and growth beyond our expectations. We were successfully able to fulfill many of the strategic initiatives as defined by our stakeholders and in support of our mission to foster creativity and social connections through the arts.

Those benchmarks are highlighted here in our 2021 Impact Report that illustrates how we were able to put our mission into action.

“

It is wonderful to have a facility like Spruill so close to home! Not only are the teachers outstanding, but I have yet to experience a classmate I would not hesitate to call a friend. Spruill takes pride in their classrooms, keeping them clean and safe, and I feel right at home there.

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Without Spruill life would be boring.

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“

I am excited with the direction Spruill Arts is going. There is a real energy!

Involving all the stakeholders, including the city, is evident. Congratulations and thank you to all the decision-makers.

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The facility and other class members are so great, that I actually drive completely out of my way to attend Spruill as opposed to go to mosaic classes that are available closer to my house. I am also very impressed with the constant cleaning and Covid prevention protocols in place.

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Number of classes offered:

764

At the heart of our mission is our imperative to work with artists to make art accessible to everyone and to help enrich the community. We are proud of our contributions to help create public art works this past year – both at the Spruill Center and into the community. All told, eight pieces of public art were created and installed during the year. These works brightened and activated the public spaces for the community at large while helping to financially support the artists that created them. At the Education Center, we unveiled our *Doves of Hope* installation and the creation of three new murals (Diana Toma’s *Daydreaming*, Megan Reeves



# 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

## January

With the support of the community, Spruill creates its *Doves of Hope* installation with more than 1,000 origami doves installed in the entry atrium; each containing individual written notes of hopes and dreams for the coming year.

The Spruill Gallery opens *Pomp & Circumstance* with the support of Northside Hospital. The exhibit features the work of MFA and BFA graduates from University of Georgia, Kennesaw State, and Georgia State colleges to showcase their projects that were not previously displayed publicly due to COVID.

With the support of donors, Spruill begins offering the first of year-round free classes for youth. 191 students participate among 20 different class offerings in the first quarter.

Spruill completes the expansion of its dedicated hand building ceramics studio, increasing capacity for students while maintaining social distancing requirement in our most popular medium.

“

Every community needs a Spruill! It's hard for me to come up with the words to describe how this center and the ceramics program have impacted my life. I'm a better person because I found Spruill!

”

“

I am near the end of this once-in-a-lifetime course (it's taken a few years to complete). The logic, the processes, the methodical instruction have become the basis for all media I encounter. It has helped me grow personally as an artist and given me a vocabulary to see and appreciate the art around me.

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Total amount invested in public art:

**\$22,500**

Williamson's *Shine Your Light*, and Maureen Engle's *Wooded Wall*) as well as our community-based mosaic installation led by artist Julie Mazzoni. In the community, we showcased our wonderful AMPLIFY mural, *Together We Bloom* by Alea Hurst at the Spruill Gallery and the *Amacher Wall* at Nandina Lane that was created by a team of teenage artists over the course of eight weeks. All of these works reflect the creativity and vitality of our community.

Spruill partnered with other nonprofits to unleash the power of the arts and to reach a diverse audience. We've provided community support at



During the MLK holiday, volunteers complete the painting of our community Plaza to create a bright, vibrant gathering space.

Spruill receives a grant from the City of Dunwoody in support of increased sanitization and other PPE related improvements to the facility.

## February

Spruill applies for and receives a second draw PPP loan to shore up finances for the coming year.

The Spruill Gallery hosts a pop-up Valentine themed show featuring hand crafted and unique artisan gifts with a Valentine inspired theme.

Facility and operational upgrades include an enhanced registration module for enrollment, the addition of two new kilns for the ceramics department, and the installation of electronic display monitors at the entrances for an improved visitor experience.

## March

Our virtual fundraiser exceeds our financial goal and participation numbers. Thanks to our Guild, supporters and sponsors, the 2021 Artistic Affair netted \$39,550. This is almost \$10,000 more than our projected goal. The number of people

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It was a delight to be part of a community project to beautify the Spruill Center. Our instructor was caring and helpful, guiding us through cutting and placing the glass tiles on the mandala forms. It was all a new experience for me, but one that will be long treasured. Thank you for a wonderful experience.

”

the Dunwoody Arts Festival, the Fourth of July Parade, Lemonade Days, and the Dunwoody Farmers Market. We’ve hosted two free artists markets in our newly renovated plaza with live music and more than 15 artists displaying their wares at each event, drawing participation from more than 500 community members at each event.



“

These classes changed my life. Like continuing education for adults. The atmosphere in the class rooms are always welcoming and stress free.

”

Another highlight of the past year was the funding of scholarships for 425 youth artists to take classes at Spruill Center for the Arts at no charge. This was vital to the creative and mental health of students – most of whom were unable to attend in-person with classes until later in the year. Without the resource of these classes, many students could have gone the entire year



Number of students enrolled:

8,147

(including open studios)

registered for the auction increased 40% over the previous year.

Spruill completes the first quarter of classes with 1,029 enrolled students, a 42 percent increase over the Fall 2020 quarter.

At the same time, our first quarter survey of students, employing a Net Promoter Score model, reveals a total overall score of 90.31, and a recommend score of 85.71, both of which are considered “world class.”

## April

We activate our newly refreshed plaza with the first Artist’s Market and Superjam. More than a dozen artists display their work and more than 500 people attend.

Spruill continues its free youth art classes program for the spring quarter with enrollment of another 166 students across 18 classes in six different mediums.

*Daydreams* – the first of many planned aesthetic and functional improvements at the Spruill Center – is painted by artist Diana Toma on the front wall entrance to the Education Center. This 9’ x 24’ mural is the first public art approved by the new City of Dunwoody Arts Commission and welcomes visitors to the center.

“

The fact that XX creates a safe environment where people of all experience levels feel free to experiment and the camaraderie that our group shares are the reasons why I cannot imagine my life without these classes, especially now during the pandemic, where playing with clay became even more important from a mental care perspective. It's sure our happy, safe place!

”

“

Being part of the Spruill community is truly an honor. I feel that I am learning new things all the time.

”



Total daily visitation:

44,097

without continuing their arts education.

At the Spruill Education Center, we are seeing the revitalization of enrollment in creative classes and artistic pursuits. We surpassed 1,000 students for all four quarters of the year – a 50% increase from the fall of 2020 and a 100% increase from last summer. Our final fall quarter reached an even higher level and saw more than 1,500 students come through our doors, another 50% increase from the previous quarter. For the year, we offered nearly 800 courses in a variety of mediums and also provided more than 100 different workshops during the year for those who wanted



Both the Gallery and the Education Center receive “Best of” awards from publications including North Atlanta, Perimeter, and Atlanta.

## May

Spruill partners with the Crowne Plaza Ravinia for a Mother’s Day program for families to create painted canvases.

Spruill participates in the Dunwoody Arts Festival (one of Spruill’s first outdoor festivals since the pandemic) and provided guided art and craft supplies to create a card and a beaded bracelet for Mother’s Day.

## June

Summer Camps begin with nearly 500 students enrolling in June Camps, and a total of 870 students for the summer – exceeding previous enrollment highs achieved in 2019. Each week of camp features a Gallery exhibition in the hallways for families and a performance from our performing arts camps as part of #FantasticFriday.

The Student & Instructor Juried Exhibition at the Gallery receives 165 entries from 59 artists. A total of 19 pieces sold over the course of the exhibition.

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**Spruill has been a nice retreat after many months of isolation and quarantine.**

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“

**I feel completely positive that ANY Spruill course I recommend to a friend - will be a pleasure for them. If they just show up - you guys make magic happen between the students and instructors. I am impressed how you find such special artists who also excel at instruction - that's the real secret of Spruill.**

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Students supported via scholarships free classes

**425**

to try their hand at a new endeavor. More than 60 different artist instructors were able to reach students through their instruction at Spruill.

Our summer camps were a bright spot full of bursting energy as we had the honor of fueling the creative aspirations of nearly 900 children through our camps – more than we have ever had in our history. If anyone deserved a fun, engaging summer with their peers after the past year, it's certainly these children.

We hope to have supplied them with the social interactions and intellectual curiosity to start them on the right path towards their return to in-person learning at school this year.



This year the Juried show also included a “Teen Invitational” with six selected teenage artists.

Spring quarter completes with 1,061 students while maintaining very high NPS numbers with an overall experience score of 90.31 and a recommended to a friend score of 85.71.

## July

We are awarded a \$5,000 arts education grant from Georgia Council for the Arts to continue the successful free art classes for youth students into the fall.

More than 25 staff and volunteers join together to march in Dunwoody's annual Fourth of July Parade – the state's largest such parade.

Two additional murals, *Shine Your Light* by Megan Reeves Williamson and *Wooded Wall* by Maureen Engle are created in the plaza courtyard area.

Spruill hosts the second Artists Market and Superjam with approximately 400 guests in attendance. A series of garden beds are also added to the plaza as part of an Eagle Scout project.

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We are so fortunate to have all that Spruill art has to offer the community. The variety of classes is excellent.

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“

My kids absolutely loved their Sunday class at the Spruill Arts Center. They were excited to come every week and so proud of what they proud home and were always excited to share it with us. We signed them up for a couple summer camp weeks because they enjoyed it so much!

”

Internally, our board of directors has grown to 15 active, engaged members whose committee responsibilities help our staff further our mission. We've updated systems, software and visitor engagement to create a welcoming environment, whether visiting online or in person. We've expanded the classroom space for some of our most popular mediums, allowing for social distancing while maintaining a safe, yet creative environment.

And we've been diligent stewards of our resources, having received City, County, State, and Federal grants in support of our programs and operations.



As a driver of economic impact, Spruill generates

**\$1,200,476**

in direct payment to artists and art administrators



## August

Camp concludes with 870 students enrolled in 55 camp offerings, providing them with instruction, creative learning, and social interactions with their peers prior to returning to in-person learning at school, many for the first time in 18 months. Students created more than 3,600 unique works of art during camp.

As part of our outreach program, Spruill hosts a booth and provides craft project to visitors at Lemonade Days. Throughout the course of the year, Spruill also provides creative activities at the Dunwoody Farmers Market

The ceramics department reaches a total of 14 tons of clay used in programs (and more than 19 tons by year-end), making the program the second largest user of clay in the metro Atlanta region.

## September

Spruill marks the return of Back to Spruill Week with more than 100 participants and visitors to our Open House that features demonstrations in leatherworking, ceramics, jewelry and painting.

The Spruill Gallery presents *Open Spaces* in conjunction with Atlanta Celebrates Photography and features a two-person show of Acquille

“

Friendly, relaxed, accommodating environment. A pleasure to take classes there. During the pandemic Spruill has bent over backwards to keep everyone healthy. This was very important to me.

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“

As a complete beginner I had no idea what to expect from the class. By the time the class was finished, I had a working knowledge of throwing, firing, and glazing, six pieces to take home, and a lifetime hobby.

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While we take a moment to reflect back on the impact Spruill Center for the Arts has had in 2021, we are eager to continue our momentum into the current year and collectively harness our ability to bring the arts to an even larger audience. We are well on our way to our vision of serving as a beacon for the Arts in the community.

Alan Mothner  
CEO

Robin Adams  
President,  
Board Of Directors



Gallery  
visitations:

3,241



Dunkley's *The Calmness in Cognition* and Kathryn Nee's *Fingerprints*. Both artists also provide free artist lectures and open houses during the installation.

Our summer quarter completes with 1,057 students enrolled in 147 classes, with another 520 students enrolled in open studios.

Spruill begins our community art project creating Mosaic Mandalas. Nearly 100 participants from the community help to create three unique mandalas. The three pieces utilize 7,606 individual cut pieces of glass to complete the project.

## October

The second annual AMPLIFY Public Art installation is unveiled and celebrated at Spirits for Spruill at the Spruill Gallery with more than 100 guests in attendance to witness the display of artist Alea Hurst's work *Together We Bloom*.

To celebrate Dunwoody's Arts & Culture Month Spruill offers more than 40 different workshops at the Education Center and three "One-Day Fun Day" workshops at the Gallery including paper quilling, fabric dyeing, and watercolor painting.



## Dunwoody's Spruill Center for the Arts finally looks like an arts center



Diana Toma's mural "Daydreaming," located at the entrance of the Spruill Center for the Arts.

BY SAMMIE PURCELL

If you've walked around Dunwoody's Spruill Center for the Arts lately, you might notice that the building looks a bit different – brighter, more colorful – than it did before. Murals and other art pieces have begun to pop up all over the building, and CEO Alan Mothner wants to see that trend continue.

"We worked out of a 1960s old school," Mothner said about the center at 5339 Chamblee-Dunwoody Road. "[It] was a beige, stucco building that just screamed, 'I'm a municipal building.' And had no bearing at all on being an art center."

Spruill needed an evolution, needed to feel more like an art center than a city structure – but the first step involved making sure changes were possible in the first place. Back in February 2021, the Public Facilities Authority – which is made up of members of the Dunwoody City Council and owns the Spruill Center building – approved Spruill's plan to make aesthetic improvements to the building. Mothner said Spruill has a number of ideas for ways to spruce up the center, and plans to include a plethora of different mediums, whether it be ceramics, painting, or sculpture.

"We felt it was very important to practice what we preach, which is that art is important and valuable and can make a difference in the community," Mothner said. "So we want every facet of that building to represent art in a variety of forms, which is why we're incorporating many different mediums."

### First Projects – Murals

Some of the first projects to grace Spruill's walls are three unique murals,

all from the minds of Spruill Center instructors. Mothner brought the first of these murals before the Dunwoody Art Commission – which approves public art projects in the city – at a March 17 meeting.

The mural, "Daydreaming," is by artist and Spruill instructor Diana Toma, and now sits at the center's entrance. The mural depicts a person with their eyes closed, thinking – or daydreaming, as it were – about art, creation, and the world around them.

"I am so honored having it be right there at the Spruill Center entrance," Toma said. "Spruill has been a catalyst for who I've become as an artist. All the people that I've met there, the community that I've created, all the relationships that I've created through teaching those classes there – this is very important to me."

Toma, like Mothner, was interested in showcasing Spruill as a true arts center, and wanted the mural to impart what she loved about Spruill. She said she hopes when people walk by "Daydreaming," they stop and take a moment to think.

"I was looking to create a sense of wonder," she said. "So in a way, you could say that this is a visual poem of what Spruill stands for."

Along with "Daydreaming," visitors to the Spruill Center will find two other murals, both located in the center's plaza – Megan Reeves Williamson's "Shine Your Light" and Maureen Engle's "Wooded Wall."

Williamson said she was a bit apprehensive about putting her name in to create a mural. She teaches and is much more comfortable creating mixed-media collages, so a painted mural was a departure from the norm.



During Arts & Culture Month, Spruill also engages the community with its Yarn Heart Project that invites participants to use colored yarn to decorate the back fence of the plaza in heart shaped designs.

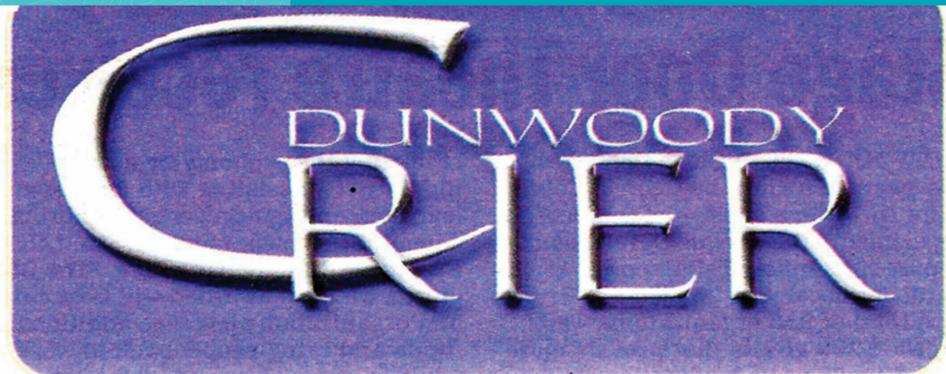
The 19<sup>th</sup> annual Free Beans with Every Bowl ceramics sale is held at the Dunwoody Annex facility and displays nearly 500 ceramic works from students and instructors. Proceeds from the event raise \$4,000 for the department.

During Fall Break Camp, campers participate in a project celebrating Georgia Cities Week by recreating the city of Dunwoody in miniature scale, kicked off by a visit and inspiration from Dunwoody's Mayor. The completed work is now featured in City Hall for the coming year.

Good Cup/Bad Cup Four goes on display in the Education Center hallway, with more than 100 pieces of work and the creation of the imaginary city of Spruilltopia complete with nearly 30 Spruill inspired structures.

## November

The 28<sup>th</sup> annual Holiday Artists Market opens and includes the participation of over 90 artists, 10 of which are brand new, and 13 returning after at least a year's hiatus. The opening night of the



# Public Art bursts onto scene, led by Spruill Center artists

BY CATHY COBBS  
newsroom@appenmedia.com

DUNWOODY, Ga. — After years of study and debate, public art is debuting all over Dunwoody, with Spruill Center artists leading the way.

The formation of the Dunwoody Arts Commission last September has paved the way for artists to find public venues to display their works in public places like the Spruill Center for the Arts and beyond. And it's a welcome addition, according to Spruill's CEO Alan Mothner.

"After years of trying to implement public art, it's great to see the murals and other public art beginning to pop up around town," Mothner said. "I think the commission is finding its footing in regards to their role."

Spruill artist Diana Toma's mural, "Daydreaming," was the first sanctioned art to be approved and installed under the new public arts regime. It is installed at Spruill's entrance on Chamblee Dunwoody Road.

"The mural is amazing and inspiring," Mothner said. "My office has a window out to our front entry, and I can't tell you how many times I've seen cars driving into the parking lot just to take a picture."

Since that installation, Spruill artists have worked with the commission to install two more murals at the building — one entitled "Shine Your Light" by Megan Reeves, and "Wooded Wall" by Maureen Engle.

"Soon visitors will see a mosaic man-

dala wall, nearly a dozen ceramic totems in front gardens and the annual unveiling of the AMPLIFY installation mural at the Spruill gallery in October," Mothner said.

Dunwoody Economic Development Director Michael Starling said he thinks the program is unfolding nicely.

"Like any program, it takes a while for the process to get going, but I think we are well on our way to making Dunwoody public art a real part of the fabric of the city," Starling said.

Officials are looking into programs the city will fund, the first being a request for proposals for art-inspired bike racks placed in areas with a heavy bike presence, Starling said.

The city published a document outlining the parameters for the bike racks, with proposals due July 16.

According to the request for proposals, "the city seeks artwork that captures the spirit of Dunwoody and should take inspiration from the themes identified in Public Art Implementation Plan."

Mothner said his only criticism involves the way the proposed art must follow the themes established by the Dunwoody Arts Commission.

"I feel that the themes for art as established by the city are a bit limiting and conservative," he said. "If you look around other cities, public art is utilized to not only bring beauty, but also to elevate conversation and discussion among a diverse population. I think Dunwoody should strive toward that, allowing art to perform its magic at bringing communities together."



market draws approximately 250 guests, and the special evening shopping event featuring a wine and cheese tasting brings in another 60 visitors.

The 110-foot-long public art *Amacher Wall* mural is unveiled at Nandina Lane, featuring a floral motif in memory of long-time city founder Joyce Amacher. The wall is designed and created by area teenagers over the course of eight weeks under the tutelage of Spruill instructor Maureen Engle.

Spruill is featured in *Simply Buckhead* magazine in two areas: encouraging the arts and creativity in youth and for our efforts towards bringing public art to the community.

## December

To cap off the year and to celebrate the rebranding of Spruill Center for the Arts, we go live with our brand new website that features simpler navigation and bright, colorful graphics.