

2013 - 2017 STRATEGIC PLAN

Executive Summary

Baltimore Clayworks exists to develop, sustain, and promote an artist-centered community, which provides outstanding artistic, educational and collaborative programs in the ceramic arts.

We define our core values as follows:

- We are first and foremost an *Artist Centered* organization, committed firmly to the belief that art and its nourishment of the human spirit are central to being truly human.
- The true spirit of art is *Inclusive*. We must serve the newest students and the most professional artists; those who arrive brimming with creativity and those who need to discover their creativity; the affluent who can afford to pay for our programs and the community's poorest who cannot; students, artists and art-lovers from diverse cultural, national and geographic backgrounds. We must be responsive and nurturing.
- We strive for ever increasing levels of *Excellence* in our art and in our organization. It is how we replenish our spirit and grow. It is an essential part of how we touch others.
- *Joy* is one of the yardsticks we use to see if we are doing things right. Joy will be an essential part of the Clayworks experience as we strive and learn together. The joy of accomplishment, of working in an environment of excellence, of being inclusive and of centering ourselves around art.
- And *Integrity*. We are nothing without integrity.

The nature of the ceramic medium lends itself to the creation of both functional and sculptural artwork. It is ancient with deep roots in the arts and crafts tradition and lends itself to contemporary sculptural and interdisciplinary artwork. We strive to nurture people in their artistic journey, be they novice, experiencing the materials for the first time, or accomplished artists, community members healing through ceramics, or non-makers who appreciate and value ceramic art. We define our core values as artist centered, inclusive, excellence in art and service, joy and integrity.

Baltimore Clayworks occupies two historic buildings in the Mount Washington neighborhood of northwest Baltimore.

Baltimore Clayworks is:

- The only cultural institution in Greater Baltimore dedicated solely to the ceramic arts
- Nationally and internationally recognized for artistic excellence, artists' support, and community involvement
- The only ceramic arts center in the United States that operates off-site facilities for community arts programs
- A mid-sized non-profit organization with a budget of approximately \$1.1 million

Baltimore Clayworks, as a non-profit, combines the efforts of staff, interns, and volunteers to accomplish its goals. Revenue is a combination of earned income and contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations, and government agencies. As an organization, we maintain fiscal responsibility and employ current business and management practices in order to ensure our financial stability and sustainability. Baltimore Clayworks maintains financial transparency to its board, donors, and the community.

Baltimore Clayworks has four program areas:

- Education programs with affordable ceramic classes and workshops for adults and children taught by professional artists and skilled craftsmen
- Resident Artist program for emerging artists
- Exhibition and Sales Galleries showcasing a wide range of contemporary ceramic art
- Community Arts programs for people who are socially, economically or otherwise marginalized

All of Baltimore Clayworks' program areas are interrelated and interdependent. For example:

- Resident (emerging) Artists and Baltimore Clayworks (established) Artists teach classes, exhibit in our galleries, sell work in our retail space, and teach in Community Arts programs.
- Our two-chambered Noborigama wood kiln is fired by the artists and students of Baltimore Clayworks and is used by outside groups from Pennsylvania to Virginia, and Delaware to West Virginia.
- The exhibition galleries include shows by Baltimore Clayworks artists, nationally and internationally recognized artists, and students in the Community Arts program.
- The work of visiting artists who present workshops is sold in the Sales Gallery.
- Exhibitions are attended by people of all ages who range from students to collectors.

RESIDENT ARTIST PROGRAM

Resident ceramic artists are those who are considered to be “emerging,” and are working at a transformative time in their careers. They hold terms of residence for one year, typically renewable for three years, but not more than five years. The Resident Artist Program is an important part of the pursuit of artistic excellence for Baltimore Clayworks.

Goal: Solidify Baltimore Clayworks’ reputation for artistic excellence.

Objectives:

- Recruit outstanding creative and driven emerging artists, both nationally and internationally, as Resident Artists
- Increase the strength, diversity, and competitiveness of applicants to the program
- Track the accomplishments of program alumni and cultivate their involvement and support
- Maintain and identify international partners

Goal: Support the artistic and professional development of emerging ceramic artists.

Objectives:

- Require incoming Resident Artists to present a work plan and set of goals for their residency
- Provide state-of-the-art facilities which include traditional and new technologies and equipment used in the creation of ceramic art by Resident Artists and others
- Provide additional opportunities for residents to teach classes in Baltimore Clayworks’ Education and Community Arts programs, as well as local educational institutions and other partner organizations
- Provide additional opportunities for Resident Artists to exhibit and sell work
- Seek outside funding for partial stipends so that residents can spend more time in the studio and less time working outside jobs
- Provide opportunities for participation in conferences and symposia, writing, and publication

Goal: Provide opportunities for Resident Artists to engage in artistic discourse with one another, members of the Baltimore Clayworks community, and leaders in the field.

Objectives:

- Create an annual review process during which peers and staff will assist each resident in evaluating artistic progress made in the prior year and establish goals for the coming year
- Invite national and local talent to jury residents and fellowships
- Increase professional development opportunities for artists

Goal: Encourage the exploration of political and social ideas or commentary.

Objectives:

- Institute a Resident Artist Fellowship in Community Arts
- Create short term residency opportunities for artists working with social and political ideas

GALLERY AND EXHIBITIONS

Baltimore Clayworks currently has exhibition space in four areas of the Gallery Building totaling approximately 1,500 square feet. This includes a permanent sales gallery, a Community Arts gallery, a large multi-room exhibition space, and a small solo gallery. Exhibitions include major curated shows exhibiting work by Baltimore Clayworks Resident, Associate, and student artists, as well as nationally and internationally recognized ceramic artists. Collaborations with other arts and cultural organizations both here and abroad provide expanded opportunities for shared programming.

Goal: Expose and educate artists, students and the public about ceramics as an art form.

Objectives:

- Mount exhibitions that showcase a wide range of compelling ceramic art, from utilitarian to sculptural, both traditional and progressive
- Mount six or more major curated exhibitions a year in the main galleries
- Foster partnerships with the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance, the Maryland Institute College of Art, the Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association and numerous others to attract ceramic association conventions (such as The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts) , as well as juried and curated exhibitions
- Accompany selected exhibitions with critical and theoretical discourse
- Feature programming of specific relevance to the Baltimore community
- Host off-site exhibitions to educate and expand awareness about ceramics as an art form
- Increase professional development opportunities through exhibitions

Goal: Define and support the rotating exhibition galleries and sales gallery.

Objectives:

- Create an exhibitions committee of established ceramic artists, emerging ceramic artists, and curators to further support gallery goals
- Create an advisory sales committee of established ceramic artists, emerging ceramic artists, and curators
- Reinstate an exhibitions staff member
- Create new part-time staff positions to support the gallery and exhibitions staff
- Build stronger relationships with professional clay artists, curators, and collectors, as well as local, national, and international media and publications

- Re-brand the sales gallery

Goal: Increase patronage and of the ceramic arts.

Objectives:

- Develop an educational program for collectors of ceramic art
- Create tours, demonstrations, and cultivation events that are integrated with exhibitions programming
- Connect with collector organizations/groups
- Utilize technology to better identify and engage collectors
- Better prepare artists to engage patrons through exhibitions

Goal: Generate additional contributed and earned income revenue.

Objectives:

- Increase the number and diversity of artists' work in the sales gallery
- Invite distinguished ceramic artists from throughout the country to display and sell work
- Expand an on-line sales gallery that extends the retail presence of Baltimore Clayworks
- Rent the gallery space to outside groups for weddings, receptions, and other private and corporate events
- Solicit exhibition sponsors
- Identify grant funding opportunities for exhibitions

EDUCATION

Education was the first program of Baltimore Clayworks, having begun as daytime and evening adult classes in 1980 which were taught by the founding artists. Today, Baltimore Clayworks offers a variety of one day and four, six, eight and twelve week classes in ceramic sculpture, pottery, and hand-building at the Mount Washington facility for adults and children, with over 1,500 enrollments each year.

Goal: Provide outstanding educational programming through affordable classes and workshops taught by professional artists and skilled craftspeople who are actively engaged in the creation of their own artwork.

Objectives:

- Broaden studio options, as well as techniques and skills taught, to complement existing offerings
- Continue to offer workshops taught by nationally and internationally recognized ceramic artists who provide exposure to trends in the field and new techniques for students ranging from amateurs to professional artists, some of whom are Baltimore Clayworks' artists

Goal: Create an inclusive atmosphere and welcoming environment that provides opportunities for personal and professional skill acquisition and development for people of all skill levels and backgrounds.

Objectives:

- Institute an enhanced non-juried open studio program to provide a dedicated communal space for ceramic artists at any skill level to work side-by-side
- Offer additional professional development for teachers
- Diversify the Baltimore Clayworks teacher pool
- Strengthen the scholarship program
- Foster community among students, teaching artists, and residents

Goal: Increase revenue from classes and workshops.

Objectives:

- Rethink the length, scheduling, and content of classes and workshops in order to best utilize classroom space
- Expand partnerships with the Baltimore City School system, and create partnerships with new organizations that could potentially pay full-price for classes, such as retirement communities
- Look for partners and grant funding for projects
- Identify additional funding streams for scholarships

COMMUNITY ARTS

The Community Arts program at Baltimore Clayworks serves the Baltimore Metropolitan region where many residents are economically underserved and have little or no access to hands-on art creation. This leads to greater cultural disparities within our region.

Goal: Provide sensitively conceived and collaboratively designed arts programs which bring arts experiences of authenticity and meaning into the lives of children and adults in impoverished and underserved neighborhoods.

Objectives:

- Continue to partner with organizations in the community to offer ongoing clay programming at our three off-site “Clay for All” centers. Expand the number of off-site “Clay for All” centers when funding is available
- Expand contracts with Baltimore City and County agencies, educational institutions, churches, grassroots, and cultural organizations
- Develop a new funding model focused on generating earned revenue within the Community Arts program to supplement financial support from grants and gifts
- Develop more high quality, engaged Community Arts teachers through a training/orientation/apprentice program

Goal: Achieve a more permanent presence in the community.

Objectives:

- Create a stand-alone satellite, controlled by Baltimore Clayworks, with good access to public transportation, adequate parking, and ample foot traffic
- Integrate other program areas into off-site community arts programs

Goal: Formalize the tie between the Community Arts Program and other program areas.

Objectives:

- Create and fund a Community Arts Fellowship for a Resident Artist
- Diversify the community onsite in Mt. Washington

Goal: Increase revenue.

Objectives:

- Increase marketing for community arts projects to raise awareness
- Target community arts contracts in wealthy and underserved communities

FACILITIES

In 1978, the former Mount Washington Library was awarded to Baltimore Clayworks as the “best use” from a field of potential buyers. The renovated library became the Studio building and now contains three classrooms, artists’ studios, glazing areas, four gas kilns, eleven electric kilns, and one wood kiln. In 2000, the St. Paul Companies donated the former Provincial House (now known as the Gallery Building) to Baltimore Clayworks. The Gallery Building houses the exhibition galleries including: the Main Gallery, the Solo Gallery, the Community Arts Gallery, the Project Space, the Gallery Gift Shop, administrative offices, and meeting space. Ample parking is available next door on a lot that Baltimore Clayworks owns.

Goal: Maintain and upkeep facilities.

Objectives:

- Ensure all gallery exhibitions are fully ADA accessible
- Seek out additional funding for fixed asset reserve
- Improve current technology and equipment functioning

Goal: Investigate all possible options for facilities improvement.

Objectives:

- Continue renovation discussion and plans

- Improve the sculpture garden on site
- Convene a committee to investigate options for the parking lot that Baltimore Clayworks owns
- Conduct a feasibility study of a future capital campaign specific to the facilities

FINANCIAL STRENGTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Baltimore Clayworks operates on an annual budget of \$1.1 million. Of this amount: 41% comes from gifts and grants; 26% from classes, contracts, and workshops; 9% from events; 12% from gallery sales; 9% from studio rentals and kiln firings; and 3% largely from rental of an adjacent parking lot. Contributed revenues will always play a significant role in Baltimore Clayworks' budget. Nevertheless, the more Baltimore Clayworks can increase earned revenues - over which it has more control than contributed revenue - the greater will be the financial stability of the organization.

Well maintained and effectively utilized facilities allow Baltimore Clayworks to carry out its mission and programs.

Goal: Build greater financial strength.

Objectives:

- Grow revenue ahead of inflation to support existing and new programs
- Increase earned revenue from multiple sources, i.e. classes, gallery and exhibition sales, rentals of common studio space, etc., versus contributed revenue as a percentage of the annual budget
- Build working capital reserves through budget surpluses and contributions in order to finance cash shortages on a monthly basis. This will eliminate the need for a bank line of credit to bridge seasonal revenue shortfalls and make use of the line of credit infrequent or unnecessary
- Maintain the current policy that establishes controls on the timing and use of working capital funds, as well as the replenishment of any withdrawals within 24 months
- Build a second fund that can be used to finance equipment purchases and facilities maintenance and upgrades
- Make significant progress in paying down the mortgage and line of credit through the capital campaign and/or restricted gifts.
- Establish stronger financial controls, reporting systems, and "early warning" indicators that provide actionable management information in a timely fashion.
- Increase contributions to the annual fund for unrestricted purposes and also for restricted purposes, such as fellowships for resident artists.
- Review P&L with departments and monthly at staff meetings

Goal: Ensure the long term financial viability of Baltimore Clayworks by growing endowment.

Objectives:

- Initiate a planned giving program which emphasizes gifts to the current endowment
- Generate a sustainable percentage return from the endowment that can be used for operating expenses

GOVERNANCE AND STAFF

The volunteer Board of Directors is composed of individuals with expertise in a variety of professional fields, such as business, finance, accounting, art and culture, consulting, information technology, fund-raising, architecture, construction, etc. The role of the board is to provide fiscal, legal, and ethical guidance to the organization. The board is composed of up to 35 members.

Baltimore Clayworks has an experienced and well qualified staff and a large group of loyal volunteers that utilize their skills and talents to keep the organization running.

Goal: Continue to implement and follow best practices regarding governance and management.

Objectives:

- Regularly review the skills and resources needed within the Board, and recruit new Trustees accordingly
- Implement a formal and regular review of the performance of the Executive Director
- Implement policies directing regular performance reviews of the staff

Goal: Shift in staffing model

Objectives:

- Create levels in staffing model with potential for growth
- Assess and rewrite job descriptions as needed
- Build new staff positions as needed

DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING

Baltimore Clayworks relies on contributed income and events for close to 50% of the annual budget. Annual funding is made up of donations from over 800 individuals, 15-20 foundations, 15-20 corporate and government entities, along with many in-kind donations and services. Additionally, annual fundraising events such as the *Clayworks Bash*, *Seconds Sale*, *Autumn Blaze Fire Festival*, and the *Student Sale*, contribute to the programs and initiatives that take place at Baltimore Clayworks throughout the year. These events have over 1,200 attendees and over 100 volunteers, which make them an exciting part of the year.

Baltimore Clayworks has also been awarded tax credit allocations for approximately 13 years through Maryland's Community Investment Tax Credit (CITC) program, which provides donors a 50% tax credit, in addition to the regular Charitable Contribution deduction, when making a contribution of \$500 or more. This program has allowed Baltimore Clayworks to grow our contributions from year to year.

All events, programs and other initiatives throughout the year rely on thought out marketing materials, messaging and communications to make them successful as well. While tracking and identifying segmented data, Baltimore Clayworks is able to narrow communications to effectively engage patrons and participants throughout the year.

Goal: Sustain Relationships & Financial Support

Objectives:

- Maintain relationships with current donors to ensure continued financial support and continue interactions with prospect donors to encourage new financial support
- Investigate financial support for all arms of the organization – financial donations, in-kind goods and services
- Research the feasibility of a capital campaign in the next 5 to 10 years
- Integrate a database that serves everyone and enables better tracking of patron and participant information
- Shift the membership culture from a benefits culture to a support culture to encourage and communicate the importance of organizational sustainability
- Coordinate successful and relevant fundraising activities for the organization with current donors and patrons
- Current donors are encouraged to invite and/or bring prospective donors through their networks to attend

Goal: Increase Patron Base

Objectives:

- Increase membership base through new gifts via recurring monthly donations and increased communications to lapsed donors and new participants
- Increase communications to students and encourage memberships and donations to support scholarships for those who may be unable to pay the full amount of a class
- Use the current Baltimore Clayworks community to become ambassadors for the organization – communicate the importance of supporting the organization through memberships and other opportunities
- Reach lapsed donors via special and specific communications, find out why involved and what they supported in the past
- Consider additional credit or perks for those students who bring in new students

- Coordinate a student cup-a-thon at the end of class and bring a friend – this would be a Friend-raiser

Goal: Increase Communication, Outreach & Visibility

Objectives:

- Continue to communicate the role Baltimore Clayworks has to all donors, patrons and prospects of Baltimore Clayworks to encourage participation and support
- Increase outreach and visibility of Baltimore Clayworks to the community through segmented communications and materials
- Make an effort to increase a stronger press presence and relationship with media in order to receive featured articles and coverage
- Adjust and update lists by specific demographics to better gauge audience and tracking
- Relay message of “why” – why attend, why cover, why Baltimore Clayworks is important
- Create new membership materials and increase communications and messaging to reflect updated and new structure of pricing and perks for Baltimore Clayworks members