

NORTHERN LAKES ARTS ASSOCIATION | 2026 SEASON & MEMBER-SPONSOR DRIVE



# 40 YEARS IN THE MAKING

Forty years of creativity,  
courage, and community.  
Now, we begin the next act.

**NORTHERN  
LAKES  
ARTS  
ASSOCIATION**



# Art lives here

because when Ely creates together, something extraordinary happens.

For forty years, neighbors have built something lasting: a community bound by art.

They've painted sets in garages, shared songs under summer skies, and turned small stages into something that feels like home.

Every curtain rise, every mural, every child's first bow reminds us that beauty belongs here.

And together, we keep it alive.

**Join us as we build the next act.**

# A Future to Believe In

NORTHERN LAKES ARTS ASSOCIATION | 2026 SEASON & MEMBER-SPONSOR DRIVE

Welcome to our 40th Anniversary Season.

Inside these pages you'll find the stories, artists, and programs shaping the next chapter of Northern Lakes Arts Association and the ways your membership, sponsorship, or gift keep it all alive.

Art in Ely is not extra.

It's infrastructure. It's the heartbeat of community life.

Thank you for standing beside us as we begin the next act.

Together, we're building **a future to believe in.**





# FORTY YEARS IN THE MAKING.

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The arts have always been a fragile kind of magic. For forty years, Northern Lakes Arts Association has proven how strong that magic can be. We've grown because people here believe in beauty and in each other, one show, one class, one act of generosity at a time.

When NLAA began in 1986, there was no theater and no steady funding, only conviction. Volunteers built sets in garages, stitched costumes at kitchen tables, and sold tickets in the cold. Out of that work, something lasting took root.

In 2024, our programming generated more than \$500,000 in local economic activity. For every dollar spent on a ticket, audiences spent six more in local businesses such as Insula, Grand Ely Lodge, and Dairy Queen. The arts lift people up and strengthen the community that sustains them.

Today, our programs reach 21,000 people each year on a budget nearing \$300,000. Every dollar is stretched to create lasting impact. The same spirit that built those first shows still drives us: neighbors showing up, keeping creativity alive in a world that doesn't always make room for it.

NLAA has grown into a living arts ecosystem. MainStage brings Broadway in the Boundary Waters, concerts, and Reflections Dance performances. The Northern Lakes Arts Academy offers year-round creative learning. Community Arts & Events fills daily life with murals, music, and storytelling. Together, they make the arts part of Ely's fabric.

Last year, 1,750 young people joined NLAA programs. Scholarships made sure every family could say yes. A student who once froze in auditions sang a solo after two weeks of camp. One parent told me, "Being part of theater again changed my life. It reminded me who I am, and it inspired my two boys to find their own place on stage."

The next forty years begin now. Our 2026 season celebrates hope, grit, and the power of story: Annie opens with optimism, Oklahoma! with courage, and Jesus Christ Superstar with reflection. Broadway in the Boundary Waters returns for ten weeks of free concerts, and Stars of the North expands with new apprenticeships and paid opportunities for young artists.

We are shaping the Northern Lakes Arts Academy into a year-round center for creative learning so that no one is ever turned away from the arts because of cost or circumstance.

The arts remind us who we are. They build empathy. They keep us connected when much around us pulls apart. Your attendance, advocacy, and generosity keep this work alive. Every gift, large or small, is an act of faith in what art makes possible.

This is not a curtain call. It is an overture. The next act begins now.

Creatively yours,  
Ian Francis Lah  
Executive Artistic Director





# Northern Lakes Arts Association's 2026 Season

## A FUTURE TO BELIEVE IN

2026 MAINSTAGE SEASON: FOUR MUSICALS, ONE STORY OF RENEWAL.

Theater gives us more than stories. It gives us a mirror and a map. It reminds us that light and struggle can live in the same breath and that belief, even when quiet, changes everything.

Northern Lakes Arts Association's 2026 season, A Future to Believe In, is built on that truth. It's a year of transformation, hope, and conviction. Each production carries its own heartbeat, and together they tell a story about the courage to rebuild and the strength to imagine something better.

### ***A Christmas Carol***

December 12–21, 2025

Redemption begins with a flicker of light. Alan Menken's musical retelling of Dickens' timeless story opens the season with melody, heart, and the reminder that generosity can alter the course of a life.

### ***Annie***

March 20–29, 2026

Set against hardship and uncertainty, Annie bursts with resilience. Its songs, humor, and relentless optimism remind us that hope is not naive. It's necessary.

### ***Oklahoma!***

June 18–28, 2026

Beneath its familiar melodies lies a story about community, change, and belonging. Oklahoma! captures the restless spirit of a nation learning how to live together and dream beyond division.

### ***Jesus Christ Superstar***

July 17–26, 2026

Faith, love, and revolution collide in this legendary rock opera. Its questions are as urgent now as they were fifty years ago, and its score just as electrifying. This production invites audiences to see belief itself as both burden and blessing.

And while our 2026 holiday production remains under wraps, we can promise that it will bring the season full circle with wonder, light, and a story worth waiting for.

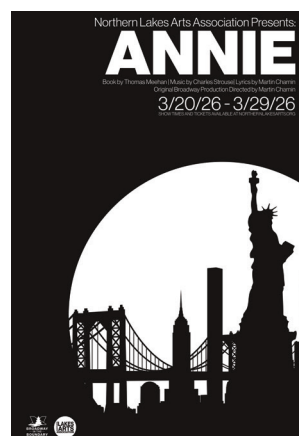
What ties these works together is not only their music or scale but their conviction that art can still move us toward something true. In every note, scene, and standing ovation lies the same quiet message: a future worth believing in begins right here.



**“This is what community feels like when it gathers in the dark and remembers what it means to see the light.”**



**When the Curtain Rises,  
So Does the Community.**





# A YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

## What It Takes to Keep the Arts Alive in Ely

To the audience, it looks effortless. Lights rise. Music swells. A story unfolds. But behind every performance, concert, and class is a community working together to make creativity possible.

Each year, Northern Lakes Arts Association produces eight major shows, supports dozens of artists, and reaches thousands of people. From rehearsals to workshops to concerts in the park, it takes vision, teamwork, and time.

Our Executive Artistic Director contributes more than 4,000 hours of labor annually, valued at \$150,000. Volunteers add another 10,000 hours, valued at \$180,000. Together, that investment builds access, connection, and belonging through the arts.

### BY THE NUMBERS

#### 8 Annual Productions

7 MainStage and 1 Youth led production

#### \$20,000

Average MainStage production budget

#### 21,000

Neighbors and visitors reached through performances, workshops, and events

#### 150+

Engaged through productions, exhibitions, and residencies

#### 15 Concerts + 13 Workshops + 4 Art Shows

Gatherings that kept creativity moving year-round

#### 1,750 Youth

Inspired through camps, residencies, and community programs

#### \$100,000 Paid to Artists

Invested directly in local and regional talent

#### 10,000+ Volunteer Hours

Given freely by the hands and hearts that make the arts possible

#### 40 Years Strong

Proving that when the arts thrive, Ely thrives

**Behind every curtain call, mural, and melody is a network of people who choose to believe in the power of art. That choice keeps Northern Lakes strong, creative, and ready for the next act.**



# CREATIVE SPIRIT OF THE NORTH

## *Rachael Pace and the Art of Connection*

In Ely, the edge of the wilderness often feels like the center of the world. Beneath its pines and along its quiet shores, stories unfold through brushstrokes, carvings, and color.

For artist Rachael Pace, those stories live in the details: the curve of a heron's wing, the geometry of a bunchberry leaf, the rhythm of a changing season.

As the 2025 Creative Spirit of the North, Pace embodies what this award was created to honor: resilience, curiosity, and the power of connection.

Her path to this point has been anything but linear. She began as a photographer, capturing weddings and stories of love and community before turning toward something quieter and more personal. It was in the wilderness, while leading expeditions across the deserts of Big Bend and the forests of northern Arizona, that she found her way back to art.

"The wilderness taught me to push through weather, exhaustion, and doubt," she reflects. "Art has a similar rhythm. You trust the process. You keep going."

Those lessons are visible in every mark she makes. Her linocuts and

watercolors blend precision with chance, allowing the natural world to guide her hand. Each piece invites pause and attention. A print of migrating birds or a sketch of a single tree becomes both observation and meditation.

Pace's work also speaks to something larger: the way art builds belonging. Through teaching, collaboration, and community projects, she creates spaces where people can gather, make, and share. Her next endeavor, a community-printed quilt, will invite participation from across Ely.

"It's about connection between people and ideas," she says. "That's what art is for me." The Creative Spirit of the North Award, presented annually by Northern Lakes Arts Association, recognizes artists whose practice sustains and strengthens the creative life of this region. Recipients receive studio support, teaching opportunities, and a platform to showcase their work.

For Rachael Pace, the recognition feels both humbling and hopeful. Her art reminds us that creativity is not a product but a practice, a way of seeing, listening, and belonging.

Because here, art connects us. And that connection is its own kind of wilderness.







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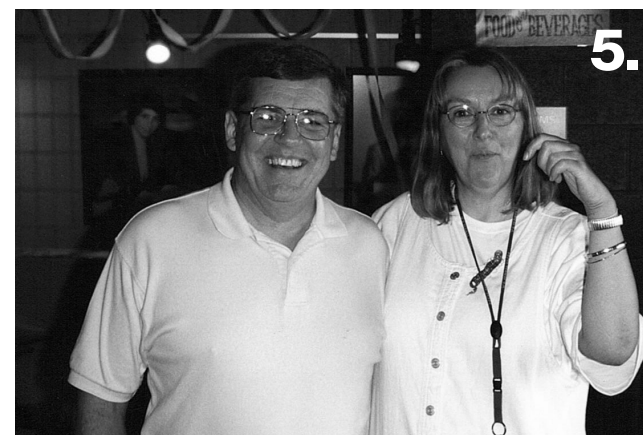
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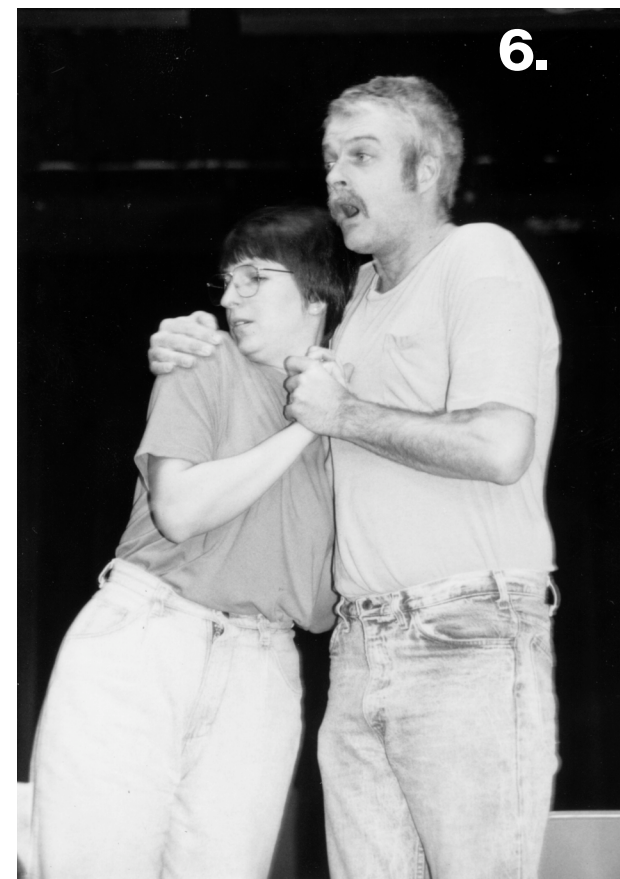
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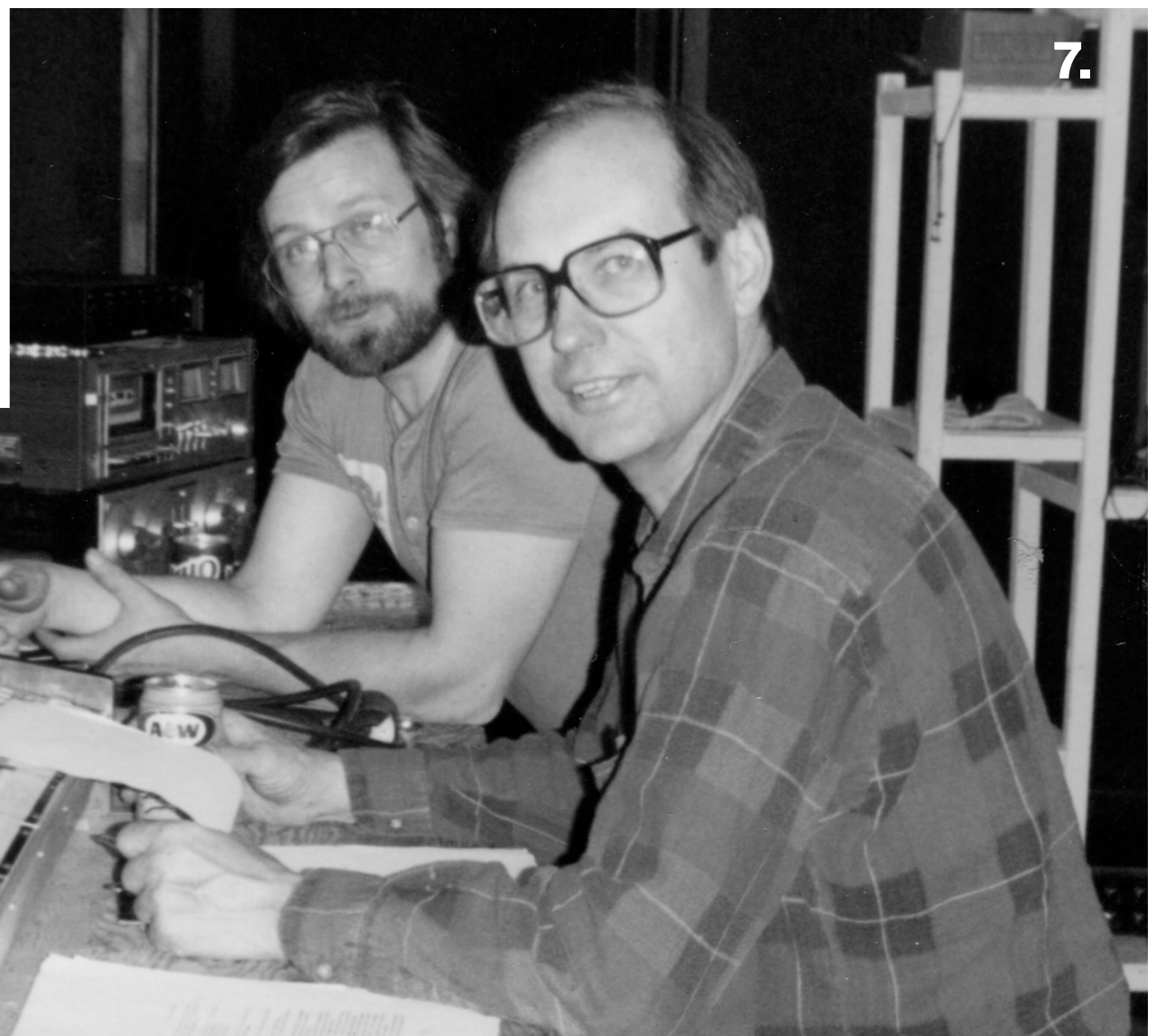
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1. Community members rehearse for the 1998 production of *Brigadoon*.
2. Bernie Hutar and Theresa Jamnick were mainstays of NLAA productions for decades.
3. Johnnie Hyde choreographs a spring musical.
4. Mary Catherine Brown works the NLAA tent at the Blueberry Arts Festival.
5. John Artisensi and Cecilia Rolando celebrate an NLAA anniversary.
6. Robyn Bertelsen and Mike Hillman rehearse the 1991 production of *Into the Woods*.
7. Peter Kess works with Walter Lepisto on lighting for a show.
8. The cast of *Amahl* rehearses music at the Vermilion Fine Arts Theater.
9. The cast of the 1989 production of *Grease*.
10. Susan Germek music-directs an annual spring musical.
11. Kasha Hyde and Larry Lozar rehearse for a show at the Vermilion Fine Arts Theater.





# Northern Lakes Arts Academy

## Where Creativity Takes Root

The Northern Lakes Arts Academy is the next chapter in NLAA's story, a year-round home for creative learning in Ely. Born from the same conviction that launched Broadway in the Boundary Waters, the Academy brings people together to learn, teach, and create side by side.

It began with summer camps where young actors found their voices and adults rediscovered their confidence. Those first workshops grew into something larger: a movement to make the arts part of daily life in Ely.

Today, the Academy welcomes everyone: children discovering performance, teens exploring design, and adults returning to creative practice through acting, voice, movement, dance classes, visual arts workshops, and more. Each class becomes a place to belong.

Scholarships and pay-what-you-can tuition keep participation open. Local businesses donate materials, and teachers volunteer because they believe in what it does for this town. Every rehearsal, brushstroke, and class carries the same spirit that built NLAA forty years ago, the belief that the arts belong here and that learning together keeps them alive.

### 2026 SEASON OFFERINGS

**Winter:** Take the Stage Acting Classes (Teens & Adults) • Artistic Ely Workshops • Reflections Dance Company

**Spring:** Musical Theater Series (Teens & Adults) • Artistic Ely Workshops • Reflections Dance Company

**Summer:** Newsies Jr. Theater Camp (Grades 3–12) • Teen Intensive: Mean Girls (Grades 7–12) • Greenstone Art Camps • Reflections Summer Session

**Fall:** The Actor's Process Workshops (Teens & Adults) • Artistic Ely Workshops • Reflections Fall Session

Every class strengthens the circle of creativity that began forty years ago and still grows here, one student at a time.

Visit [NorthernLakesArts.org](https://NorthernLakesArts.org) and click Programs to explore acting and voice training, dance classes, and visual arts workshops throughout the year.



## THE NEXT GENERATION

**Every summer, the lights rise on a new generation.**

Behind those lights are teachers, parents, artists, and neighbors who believe creativity changes lives. At Northern Lakes Arts Association, young people learn more than lines or choreography.

They learn courage, teamwork, and the art of being seen. For many, NLAA isn't just a stage. It's a place to belong. It's where confidence replaces hesitation and curiosity grows into craft. In a small town like Ely, that kind of support can change the course of a life.

From Greenstone Art Camps, Reflections Dance Company, and the Stars of the North Broadway Theater Camps, youth across northeastern Minnesota are learning to speak through color, song, and story. They're painting murals that brighten schools, performing shows that fill the Vermilion Fine Arts Theater, and discovering that art isn't something distant. It's home.

Apprentices work side by side with theater professionals throughout the summer season, earning a \$500 performance stipend and \$20 an hour for up to 25 hours of hands-on experience in acting, design, or technical production. The Northern Lakes Apprenticeship Program bridges education and the professional arts world. It gives students real-world skills, mentorship, and the confidence to see art as both passion and profession.

A student who once froze in auditions sang a solo after two weeks of camp. Another chose to study theater in college after learning their craft here. Each story becomes a thread in something larger, a creative community growing its own future.

**“It's about connection between people and ideas. That's what art is for me.”**  
— NLAA Youth Artist

Every generation needs a stage. You're helping build theirs.

**“Every workshop begins with curiosity and ends in community.”**  
— Workshop Leader





## A Light That Never Dimmed | Honoring Cecilia Rolando

Ely has always been a town that makes things with its hands: ore, wood, bread, music. In the rhythm of the Northwoods, art was never decoration; it was daily life. It was what people did after the mine whistle blew, what carried families through the dark winters, what turned neighbors into community.

That current of creativity runs through the story of the Northern Lakes Arts Association and through the life of Cecilia Rolando, its founding Executive Director. Her 40th anniversary reflection reminds us that the arts here were not imported or invented. They grew from the soil itself.

"This community has always been an arts community," she wrote. "It started when the immigrants moved here to be workers in the mines in the early 1900s. With them, they brought their music, dance, and theatre interests. The mines enabled the fine

school to be built and their children to have what is widely known as an exceptional education."

Ely was among the first Minnesota towns to have a school pool, a school band, and a junior college.

"Having great teachers in the public schools throughout the first years of the century, we had exceptional orchestras and bands. There were operas and plays presented. This was the foundation for a great acceptance of the arts in the community."

For Rolando and her generation, art was simply part of life.

"During my education locally, years of theatre productions, community choirs, City Band, dance programming, and instruction continued through Community Education, Ely Music and Drama Club, Ely Junior College, ISD 696, and the City of Ely connections, and we

took it for granted."

She saw how those early traditions shaped the town's identity.

"Some students educated here, with college elsewhere, then returned and contributed a lifetime to the arts," she wrote. "The schools brought in teachers who valued the arts and made Ely their home. They maintained lifelong involvement, as did others who came from elsewhere and have given so much to our lives with their talents, which they share profusely."

By the 1980s, as the mining economy faltered, so did that artistic foundation.

"In the eighties, when the town was in a downturn economically, a group of new area members and other locals, fearing a decline in the creative aspects of community, gathered with the idea of establishing a new arts

organization that would allow the arts to flourish. These were the founders of Northern Lakes Arts Association. That was 1985."

When Rolando was hired soon after through a local work incentive program, she had, as she described, "an empty desk and a phone. That was it." Grants came slowly, and volunteers often carried the weight of entire seasons. Yet she persisted. "The theater people became active with the musical Working. It brought in our first cash besides memberships. Still in a difficult financial position, after two years we were fortunate to have the newly established Donald G. Gardner Humanities Trust start releasing funds. At that time, we were the only organization applying. All this worked together, and we were off."

Momentum followed.

"Eventually, the membership was up to 350, and with a successful theatre program, NLAA provided 26 varied programs a year."

What began as a volunteer dream became a regional hub for the arts. "Because of our being an established contact in the community, we were the go-to welcoming entity when any arts group or performer wished to come to town," she recalled. "Performers arrived from across the region and from as far as Belarus, Argentina, and Finland. We had an arts committee for each discipline, and depending on those interested, we had locally created programming plus visiting performers, individual artists, and writers."

Through every season, Rolando's philosophy stayed constant.

"The emphasis on local creatives working together with others here be of foremost importance. My job was to facilitate these activities, serve as a liaison, pay the bills, do the advertising."

There were years when the future of NLAA balanced on faith alone.

"We never knew if the next grant would come," she said. "But someone always showed up with an idea, or a hammer, or a check."

By the time she retired in 2014, NLAA had become a cornerstone of community life.

"I am proud to have been a part of the early years of Northern Lakes. I cannot forget the significant individuals who generated ideas,

***"THE ARTS REMIND US WHO WE ARE. THEY KEEP US CONNECTED WHEN SO MUCH AROUND US PULLS APART."***

created local artistic programming, and provided me with their educated guidance."

She remembered volunteers who greeted audiences, helped with mailings, and carried programs at the door.

"These people built a footing for NLAA which has led to the organization today."

Rolando also wrote with gratitude for what came next.

"Eventually, I heard that Ian Lah was to be the new Executive Artistic Director. I was thrilled. I knew we were in good hands."

She recalled teaching art to Lah and his sister at her kitchen table years

***"IN TIMES OF UPHEAVAL LIKE THIS, WE MUST BE VIGILANT. WE CANNOT BE COMPLACENT AND ASSUME THIS SHALL ALWAYS BE."***

earlier and expressed confidence in the organization's future.

"For the last several years now, watching growth in the community with young individuals moving here, the upgrading of local buildings for usable facilities, Northern Lakes adding other arts groups under its umbrella, and with Ian as Artistic Director, we are seeing magic." Her reflection ends with both pride and warning.

"In times of upheaval like this, we must

be vigilant. We cannot be complacent and assume this shall always be. I'm talking to the choir here, I know, but do help out as much as you are able through participation, attendance, and donation."

Her words ring as true now as they did that night. They remind us that what began in Ely is larger than one town. It is a lesson for every rural place that has ever feared its own fading. The arts are not extras; they are essentials. They are how a community remembers who it is.

Forty years after that first meeting around a kitchen table, Northern Lakes Arts Association remains what she helped it become: a living ecosystem of creativity in the Northwoods. The light she tended still burns, steady and sure, passed from neighbor to neighbor, stage to stage, hand to hand.

***Today, her legacy lives through every gift that keeps the light burning.***







## Keep the Light Alive.

### Your support fuels the next forty years of art in Ely.

For forty years, Northern Lakes Arts Association has been proof that light can survive anything. We have weathered lean years, lost roofs, long winters, and changing times. Through it all, people here kept showing up with paintbrushes, hammers, ticket stubs, and belief. Together, they built something no budget line could explain: a community bound by art.

That light still burns. You can see it in the young actor finding her voice at camp, in the retired teacher helping youth paint, and in the families who bring dinner to cast members after rehearsal.

Becoming a member is how that light stays alive. Membership means choosing to believe in what art does for a town like ours. Every level of support creates something tangible: a child's first solo, a mural on Main Street, a play that makes someone weep and then hope again.

Across the country, the arts are at risk. Stages are closing. Budgets are shrinking. Communities are losing the places that once brought them together. That makes what Ely has built matter even more. The arts keep us connected when the world feels uncertain. They remind us who we are and what we share.

The arts do not sustain themselves. They depend on hands willing to lift, hearts willing to give, and neighbors willing to say yes. When you join Northern Lakes Arts Association, you become part of that ongoing act of faith. You make sure the doors stay open and the stage lights come on. You make sure no one is turned away because of cost or circumstance.

What began with volunteers building sets in garages now stands as a cornerstone of life in Ely. Together, we have proved that beauty belongs here. Now we must keep it shining.

**Your membership keeps the light alive.**  
**Your support fuels the next forty years of art in Ely.**



## Your Membership Keeps the Light Alive

Becoming a member means believing creativity belongs here. Your support keeps performances, classes, and community programs accessible for everyone in Ely.

Your membership is an act of faith in what art makes possible.

### **\$50 | Individual Membership**

Member pricing, event pre-sales, and inclusion in the annual member listing.

Bring a Friend passes, and invitation to the Member Celebration.

### **\$100 | Household Membership**

Member pricing for up to six people and early registration for youth programs.

### **\$1,000 | Gold Membership**

Four complimentary tickets, recognition in all programs, and invitation to a private reception with the Executive Artistic Director.

### **\$125 | Patron of the Arts**

Early season announcements, website recognition, and one Bring a Friend pass.

### **\$1,250 | Event Sponsor**

Recognition in print and online, four complimentary tickets, and acknowledgment before performances.

### **\$250 | Bronze Membership**

Printed recognition, two Bring a Friend passes, and annual Bronze listing.

### **\$1,500 | Season Sponsor**

Two season passes, recognition in all programs and curtain speeches, and invitations to exclusive NLAA gatherings.

### **\$500 | Silver Membership**

Program and online recognition, two

### **You keep it alive.**

Your membership keeps art within reach for everyone who calls Ely home. From the seniors who built this community to the kids taking their first bow, your support makes it possible.

### **You open the doors.**

At the next level, you help new neighbors find belonging in the arts, turning every performance, concert, and workshop into a place where our community gathers and grows.

### **You make it last.**

Your investment sustains artists, funds scholarships, and keeps Pay-What-You-Can nights on the calendar. Here, the arts aren't a luxury. They're a way of life.

### **You build the future.**

Higher-level members and sponsors bring productions to life, anchor seasons, and ensure Northern Lakes Arts Association continues lighting the way for the next forty years.

**Every gift makes Ely's story brighter. That's why it matters.**





# Sustaining Members: The Heartbeat of the Arts



Join a circle of neighbors whose steady support keeps Ely's creative spirit thriving year-round.

Sustaining Members are the foundation of Northern Lakes Arts Association. Your monthly gift provides the steady support that makes everything possible: youth scholarships, community performances, artist residencies, and the programs that keep Ely's creative pulse alive.

Whether \$10 a month or \$100, your contribution keeps the arts within reach for everyone. It is more than a donation. It's a commitment to connection, creativity, and community pride. Sustaining Members receive early ticket access, insider updates, and the quiet satisfaction of knowing their generosity keeps our mission in motion every day.

**Over 21,000 people each year**  
experience the arts through NLAA productions, programs, and community events.

***"Being part of an NLAA event makes me feel like I'm part of something bigger."***  
— NLAA Participant, 2024

Join at [NorthernLakesArts.org/membership](https://NorthernLakesArts.org/membership) or scan the QR code to start giving monthly.



# Business Sponsors: Rooted in Community



Fueling creativity, connection, and a thriving Northwoods culture.

When your business sponsors Northern Lakes Arts Association, you do more than support the arts. You're not just advertising; you're investing in Ely's creative economy. You strengthen Ely's economy and help keep our community connected.

In 2024 alone, NLAA programs generated over \$500,000 in local economic activity. For every dollar spent on a ticket, audiences spent six more in local shops, restaurants, and lodging. That is the arts at work, creating culture and commerce side by side.

More than 21,000 people experience NLAA each year through performances, concerts, workshops, and festivals. Your sponsorship puts your brand in front of this engaged audience while helping keep creativity accessible for all.

## 2026 Sponsorship Opportunities

**Season Sponsor | \$1,500** – Year-round visibility and recognition, two season passes, and a full-page ad.  
**Event Sponsor | \$1,250** – VIP tickets, full-page ad, and dedicated event recognition.  
**Gold Sponsor | \$1,000** – Half-page ad and prominent logo placement.  
**Silver Sponsor | \$500** – Third-page ad and acknowledgment in print and online.  
**Bronze Sponsor | \$250** – Quarter-page ad and listing in programs and online.  
**Patron of the Arts | \$100** – Recognition in print and online materials.

*All sponsors at the Bronze level and above also receive a social media acknowledgment.*

Partner with NLAA and join the businesses investing in a creative, connected Ely.  
Learn more at [NorthernLakesArts.org/sponsor](https://NorthernLakesArts.org/sponsor).



# Carry the Light Forward. Let Your Story Become Part of Ours.

Legacy giving ensures the arts remain part of Ely's DNA long after we're gone.

Every community has its keepers of the flame, the people who make sure beauty does not fade when times get hard. For forty years, Northern Lakes Arts Association has been shaped by those hands and hearts. From the first volunteers building sets in garages to today's artists teaching the next generation, every act of giving has built something lasting.

Legacy giving is how that story continues. It is not about wealth or recognition. It is about remembering what you love and making sure it endures. Your legacy becomes part of Ely's shared inheritance: a stage light that still glows long after the curtain falls, a scholarship that sparks a child's first song, a place where neighbors gather to create something bigger than themselves.

When you include Northern Lakes in your plans, you do more than give. You carry forward the belief that art belongs here, that creativity is essential, and that hope is worth tending.

## Ways to Leave a Legacy

### Wills and Trusts

Include Northern Lakes Arts Association in your will or trust. It is simple, flexible, and does not affect your current finances. You may designate your gift as unrestricted or direct it to a program that matters most to you.

### Retirement Plans

Name NLAA as a beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), or pension plan. This option allows your generosity to grow without reducing your lifetime security.

### Life Insurance Policies

Name NLAA as a beneficiary or transfer ownership of an existing policy. A modest premium today can become a lasting act of generosity tomorrow.

### Other Assets

Gifts of appreciated stock, real estate, or personal property can provide tax advantages while strengthening the arts in northern Minnesota. Every non-cash gift turns something meaningful into something lasting.

### How It Works

- Choose the type of gift that best reflects your values.
- Add Northern Lakes Arts Association (EIN: 36-3485240) to your legal documents.
- Let us know about your plans so we can steward your wishes with care.
- See your legacy take shape in the programs and people who keep the arts alive.

### Join the Legacy Circle

Legacy gifts ensure the arts remain a cornerstone of Ely life for generations to come. Whether your contribution is large or small, it becomes part of a story still unfolding.

Visit [NorthernLakesArts.org/legacy](https://NorthernLakesArts.org/legacy) or email [contact@northernlakesarts.org](mailto:contact@northernlakesarts.org) to learn more.

**Together, we carry the light forward.**



## Legacy Circle *Keepers of the Light*

The Legacy Circle honors those who have chosen to include Northern Lakes Arts Association in their will, trust, or estate plans. Their commitment ensures that future generations in Ely and across northern Minnesota will have access to theater, music, and creativity that build community and connection.

Membership is simple. You qualify by notifying NLAA of your planned gift, regardless of size or type. Legacy Circle members are recognized in our annual report and invited to special gatherings that celebrate enduring generosity and the spirit of artistic stewardship.

This is not about the size of the gift. It is about the belief that art belongs here, that creativity shapes community, and that what we build together should last. Together, we keep the light alive.

Visit [NorthernLakesArts.org/legacy](https://NorthernLakesArts.org/legacy) or contact us at [contact@northernlakesarts.org](mailto:contact@northernlakesarts.org) to share your intent or learn more.

Let us know if you've included NLAA in your plans so we can thank you in your lifetime.







# With Gratitude

Every name on this page represents belief in a creative, connected Ely

## LEGACY CIRCLE

Kari Wenger

### SEASON SPONSORS (\$1500-\$5000)

- |                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lindsey Lang                | Holly Rom               |
| Ely Outfitting Company      | Pamela Saunders         |
| Insula                      | Angel and Jeff Carradus |
| Becca Klein                 | Jim and Ruth Lah        |
| Brainstorm Bakery           | The Pebble Spa Co.      |
| Joe and Mary Bianco         | The Vermilion Campus    |
| Bernie and Kari Dusich      | Foundation              |
| New Range Copper Nickel     | Boundary Waters Connect |
| Barb Dunsmore               | The Gardner Family      |
| Larry and Catharine Bogolub |                         |

### GOLD MEMBERS & SPONSORS (\$1000 - \$1499)

- |                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Caroline and Joe Owens | Linda Ricketts     |
| Gail De Marcken        | Ravens Word Press  |
|                        | River Point Resort |

### SILVER MEMBERS AND SPONSORS (\$500-\$999)

- |                                   |                           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Carolyn Dehnbostel                | Michael Musich            |
| Debbie Prutsman                   | Norman and Debra Giertz   |
| Jan Carey                         | Wintergreen Dogsled Lodge |
| John and Candace Schindele        | Donna Arbaugh             |
| Karen McManus                     | Kurt Erickson             |
| Al Gerghardstein and Mimi Gingold | Kathy Ungerecht           |
| Karl Kubiak                       | Megan Wind                |
| Mary Anne and Marty VanRoekel     | Timber Trail Lodge        |

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and all other generous community members who made a gift in 2025.

With gratitude we extend our heartfelt thanks to every sponsor, member, and donor who makes the 2025 season possible. Your generosity fuels the performances, workshops, and creative opportunities that keep art alive in our community.

If we've made an error or inadvertently missed your name, please let us know so we can make it right.

Email [contact@northernlakesarts.org](mailto:contact@northernlakesarts.org). We're always honored to recognize those who make our work possible.

Every gift matters. Whether you give \$50 or \$5,000, your contribution builds a more vibrant, connected, and creative Ely.

Thank you for believing in the arts and in A Future to Believe In.



The mission of the Northern Lakes Arts Association is to support and develop the visual, performing, and literary arts to enrich life in Ely and the surrounding area.

For forty years, Northern Lakes Arts Association has championed creativity in Ely, bringing artists, audiences and neighbors together through experiences that make our community pulse with color and sound.

We believe art changes people, and people change communities. We nurture artists at every stage of their craft, connect local talent with visiting professionals, and open our doors to anyone ready to make or experience something beautiful.

From theater and music to visual arts and community festivals, NLAA is where Ely's creative spirit gathers, grows, and shines. Together, we are building a vibrant arts destination rooted in northern Minnesota's wild heart, inviting possibility in everyone who calls this place home.

