



ARTS COUNCIL For Monterey County

Enriching the lives of our community through the arts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monterey County Nonprofits Invest in Local Filmmaker, Mixed Media Artist, and Visual Artist & Muralist to Engage in Year-long Community Projects Resident Artists Selected by Monterey County Central Coast Creative Corp Grant Recipients

[MONTEREY COUNTY, CA. November 21, 2023] The Arts Council for Monterey County, (Arts4MC) along with the California Arts Council, and the Central Coast Creative Corps (CCCC) is pleased to announce the selection of three talented local artists who will be collaborating with the latest round of CCCC grant recipients.

Selected artists include:

- Filmmaker, Brenda Avila Hanna
- Mixed Media artist, Adam Gota
- Visual Artist and Muralist, Amy Burkman

Each recipient of the CCCC grant has received a total of \$140,000 in funding. This grant will support these artists from various disciplines to work with community partners for 12 months. Together, they will produce a sustained outreach and engagement initiative, focusing on one of the four priority areas identified by the California Arts Council. These priority areas include Public Health Awareness, Climate Impact, Civic Engagement, and Social Justice and Community Engagement.

Arts4MC serves as the local intermediary to aid the grantees in fulfilling all the requirements of the funding. The funding is divided into three parts: \$100,000 for the artist, \$20,000 for production and/or implementation expenses, and \$20,000 for the organization to oversee the project.

Monterey County CCCC grantees and their projects include:

Safe Ag Safe Schools (SASS) is a coalition of more than 50 organizations and individuals with the mission to address agricultural pesticide exposure and the threat to human and environmental health, particularly in Central Coast farmworker communities. The three branches of SASS are based in Greenfield, Salinas, and Watsonville, with growing participation by youth in Greenfield. Through regular coalition meetings and trainings, we build local leadership to create a movement for reform and to develop the skills and confidence of our members to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Currently, SASS is focused on grassroots pressure to increase the right to know about nearby hazardous pesticide applications, phase out the carcinogenic fumigant 1,3-dichloropropene and other hazardous drift-prone pesticides, take action to reduce pesticide use near school campuses and increase the responsiveness of state and local decisionmakers to the communities most impacted by their decisions and actions.



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SASS Project: Pesticide use is one of the greatest environmental injustices in California, found in a recent study by the California Environmental Protection Agency to be the pollutant with the greatest racial disparity in impact. Pesticides contribute to the chemical-induced public health crisis of burgeoning rates of asthma, autism, cancer, Parkinson's and more, while also contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and inhibiting the ability of soil to sequester carbon.

SASS is partnering with **local filmmaker Brenda Avila Hanna** to make a documentary film highlighting the local organizing work of our SASS coordinator Yanelly Martinez as she builds a local movement battling the overuse of hazardous agrochemicals in the fields of the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys. These chemicals cause untold suffering and death in the communities near where they are applied, yet those most impacted are too often ignored when decisions are made about the use of these poisons in our neighborhoods. SASS works to build the skills, knowledge, and confidence of local residents so that they can engage in these decision-making processes and can counter pressure from the agricultural industry with the truth of their lived experience.

[The Village Project, Inc.](#) provides residents of historically underserved communities in Monterey County with culturally appropriate mental health services enabling them to become productive members of the community.

The Village Project, Inc., Project: The Village Project, Inc., is excited to declare a year-long partnership with artist **Adam Gota, distinguished for his contemporary exploration of mixed media** that delves into the Japanese American diaspora and societal dynamics. Gota's emphasis on fortifying the resilience of post-pandemic youth perfectly resonates with The Village Project, Inc.'s dedication to civic engagement and public health.

Civic Engagement: Using workshops and exhibitions, this effort actively encourages the participation of the local community in art projects, nurturing a feeling of community and empowerment. This partnership involves young individuals collaborating with the Monterey Museum of Art and artist Mark Steven Greenfield, exploring their 'halo' or inner light. The youth are actively researching and exploring the possibility of submitting their artwork for display at the Avery Gallery located within the City of Seaside City Hall.

Public Health: Acknowledging the Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community needs, the collaboration addresses public health through culturally congruent art engagement, providing therapeutic benefits for mental well-being. This aligns with The Village Project, Inc.'s commitment to empowering the community's well-being through art.

[El Sistema USA/Salinas, Inc.](#) is a program of YOSAL, a non-profit organization committed to social change in our youth and communities through the inspiration, discipline, and performance of classical and ensemble music.

El Sistema USA/Salinas, Inc. Project: After an enthusiastic selection process, YOSAL is delighted to introduce **Amy Burkman, a professional visual and muralist artist**. Amy specializes in creating educational murals through live art performances.

This collaboration is geared towards showcasing the incredible talents and stories of YOSAL students while fostering community connections. It will engage residents of Salinas, including YOSAL students, in the design and creation of a large interactive mural. This collaborative effort is a fantastic opportunity to unite the community



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and encourage meaningful dialogue around essential topics, ensuring that our artistic endeavor contributes positively to the local environment.

Project Vision: Art is a powerful medium for inspiring others and conveying essential messages. The vision for this project is to showcase YOSAL students' stories, highlighting the programs' positive impact on their lives and encouraging civic engagement through interactive elements that spark conversations about issues affecting us all.

"As an artist born and raised in Salinas Valley, I'm thrilled that YOSAL selected me as their Artist Partner and grateful for this tremendous opportunity. I believe art is a powerful way of inspiring others and sharing important messages. My focus here is to highlight why programs like this are vital to creating social change for youth and communities. I'm excited to connect with the students and families to help share their stories through art." -Amy Burkman, YOSAL Artist Partner

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Arts Council for Monterey County (Arts4MC) is committed to enhancing the quality of life for all residents in our region through the arts. We provide a variety of ways to make art more accessible to everyone, including but not limited to providing **Arts Education** programs through schools and community organizations, offering business resources for artists and nonprofits through **BusinessWorks**, creating studio and public art spaces for local artists by **Curating Public Exhibitions** and via our **ArtWorks** locations, awarding **Scholarships**, and providing **Grant Funding** to individual artists and nonprofits for community programs and events related to arts and culture. To learn more, visit arts4mc.org.

About the Central Coast Creative Corps

Central Coast Creative Corps is a program of the six-agency Central Coast Arts Coalition, funded by the California Arts Council. The Arts Council for Monterey County aims to improve the quality of life for everyone in the region through the arts. Arts Council Santa Cruz County nurtures and invests in artists, culture, and the arts throughout Santa Cruz County. The San Benito County Arts Council is dedicated to activating and connecting people, spaces, and communities through art, culture, and creativity. The San Luis Obispo County Arts Council's goal is to advance the visual, literary, and performing arts through programs that promote public access to the arts, arts in educational settings, local arts planning and collaboration, and opportunities for artists and arts organizations. The Santa Barbara County Office of Arts and Culture is committed to nurturing a sustainable arts and culture sector, promoting equitable access for all, and empowering creative communities to innovate, collaborate, and thrive. The Ventura County Arts Council advocates for the arts and creates partnerships among artists, arts supporters, businesses, foundations, county organizations, and schools with an emphasis on diversity.

To learn more about the Central Coast Creative Corps Grant visit centralcoastcreativecorps.org.