



*Pictured Left to Right:
Mary McGinnis, Mary's Carrot Cake;
Megan Whilden, City of Pittsfield Office
of Cultural Development; and
Mary Rentz, Berkshire Art Association*

Photo Credit: Nicholas De Candia

How It All Started

It was a cool fall evening in late November of 2011. Mary McGinnis, owner of Mary's Carrot Cake and a little art gallery named GALLERY 25, was featuring the opening of Joanie Palano Ciolfi, a talented designer turned visual artist who specializes in oils and acrylics. She had waited for her show for several months and her big day had come. Like so many artists in the Berkshires, she found very few locations available to showcase her work. The waiting list for GALLERY 25 was two years in the running so she had done all of her groundwork ahead of time. Family, friends, Facebook, postcards — it took a lot to finally reach her day in the sun. After Joanie's show, a group, including Mary McGinnis, strolled across the street to the local barbershop to view the work of another talented friend, Scott Taylor. Scott had partnered with artist, Michael Cohen, to exhibit his work amid the barbershop chairs and the "gallery" feel about the place. The lighting was perfect in that large room and the hospitality second to none with Esther Bronte serving delicious beverages, cheese and crackers. There the stage was set. "Why not do this every first Friday of the month?!" Mary said. Another friend quickly replied, "This happens all the time in California where I lived. We called them 'Gallery Crawls'." Well, it didn't take long to get on the Internet and research what so many other downtowns in the country had already discovered marrying the merchants with the arts world. And what a happy marriage it would be!

First Fridays Artswalk was born on May 4, 2012 with the very first night of opening receptions at over 30 locations in downtown Pittsfield. Retailers, restaurants, galleries, banks, offices and more opened up areas within their business to host an artist for one entire month ... until the next First Fridays Artswalk when another artist would be featured for one entire month ... and so on, all year long. The media has fully embraced downtown Pittsfield's First Fridays Artswalk. Each month you will find a story featured in many of the local publications, as well as, a recent feature story by Stephen Jermanok in the travel section of the Boston Globe. Even Berkshire Medical Center has embraced the program by not only creating gallery space in their lobby, but also showcasing artistic renderings of surgeons in the operating room in their advertising.



Who Are We: First Fridays Artswalk started out as a grassroots organization with support and mentorship provided by Downtown Pittsfield, Inc., the City of Pittsfield's Office of Cultural Development, and the Berkshire Art Association. The success of the program required the group to look at a more structured approach to handling the day-to-day operations. Now operating as a volunteer-based committee under the leadership of Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. in partnership with the City's Office of Cultural Development, the group, divided into subcommittees, meets monthly to discuss the needs of the program while also offering support to the artists and participating venues.



Why We're Doing It: A key factor in laying the groundwork for First Fridays Artswalk in downtown Pittsfield was a transition that happened before and during the recession known as "Creative Placemaking". The National Endowments for the Arts identifies this as a rehabilitation of the many unused and abandoned commercial buildings for the reuse of the cultural arts. Visionaries such as Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. Board Members, Mayors and City Councilors had approved saving historic buildings in the downtown corridor and researched funds to rehabilitate them for the use of promoting visual, cultural and performing arts. Many artists and artisans nestled in the Berkshire Hills of Western Massachusetts relied on the occasional craft fair or yearly outdoor/indoor arts event as venues to showcase their work. There was an urgent need to design a way to expand their opportunities because the country was in the midst of a three-year recession, and financial survival for many artists had made their creativity take a back seat. Also for businesses, it didn't help that for two years Pittsfield's downtown area had been undergoing a longer than anticipated Streetscape improvement project that made it difficult for customers to visit many of the downtown retailers and restaurants who depended on foot traffic for their business to flourish. They say "timing is everything" and in this case, Pittsfield had been hit by the "perfect storm." The downtown had been in contention for and won designation as a Cultural Arts District by the state of Massachusetts (At the time the only other cities with this designation were located completely across the state in the Boston area.); the completion of the Streetscape improvements unveiled a beautifully designed and well-lit downtown corridor; businesses wanted customers walking through their doors and artists needed a place to showcase their work.

Not to mention, due to purchases of art, vacuums, diamond rings, cupcakes, meals, ticket sales to the many performing arts centers and more have been tracked and in the first six months of the program a conservative estimate for economic direct and indirect impact was closing in on over one hundred thousand dollars in downtown Pittsfield by First Fridays Artswalk attendees.





Audience: From young singles to professionals to artists and art collectors, those that head out for a stroll on the evening of the first Friday of the month are looking for a relaxing way to spend an evening socializing, enjoying art and exploring what the downtown Pittsfield businesses have to offer.



Coverage/Press/Marketing:

- Hundreds of articles in various publications, including the Boston Globe, Our Berkshire Times, Berkshire Eagle, Berkshire Trade & Commerce and the Pittsfield Gazette
- Over 1,000 brochure maps printed monthly with new featured artists for the month distributed throughout downtown Pittsfield and select hospitality locations
- Berkshire Chamber of Commerce Member with printed and online directory listing
- Berkshire Visitor's Bureau Member with a listing online at Berkshires.org, the #1 Google ranked website for the Berkshires, berkshires.org referred visitors to over 1.4 million pages of member business information last year.
- Listing and display ad in *The Berkshires* tourist directory booklet with 150,000 copies distributed annually at over 500 distribution points throughout the Berkshires and surrounding areas, including at 200 lodging and time share properties.
- Half page ad in the Barrington Stage playbill distributed to 51,000 patrons who visit their three theatres from May through October.
- Half page ad in the Berkshire Theatre Group playbill distributed to over 100,000 patrons who visit their five theatres year-round.
- Two (2) ads per month in the Berkshire Eagle with a 53,610 daily readership
- One (1) ad per month in the Pittsfield Gazette
- First Fridays Artswalk flags distributed to all participating venues and hung outside their location
- Guided Tour each first Friday of the month bringing groups of attendees to each participating venue
- Over 5000 First Fridays Artswalk flyers distributed throughout the Pittsfield Public School system to students and their parents
- Press release distribution monthly to over 200 media contacts promoting the upcoming event

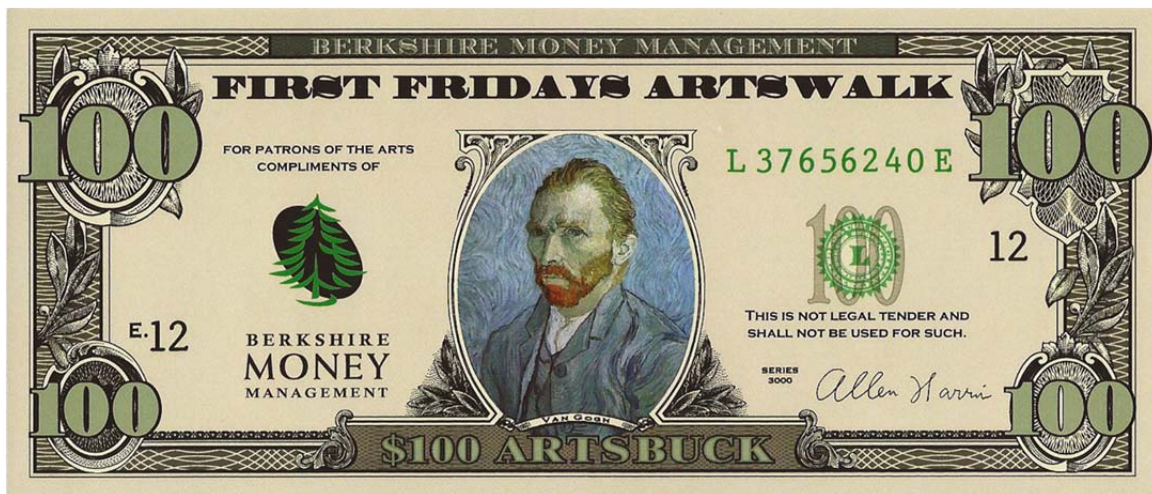


How Can You Help?

First Fridays Artswalk is a year round event and needs an annual operating budget of approximately \$30,000 to cover marketing costs, professional services, and general office expenses. Since its inception, the program has operated through the support of cash contributions from sponsors, in-kind exchange opportunities and several thousands of hours by devoted volunteers.

What Are You Really Supporting?

Your own business and the sustainability of this community! By supporting our event you are associating yourself with a positive movement to continue the growth, vitality and sustainability of downtown Pittsfield to position downtown as the creative and business hub of the Berkshires for the benefit of all.



Sponsorship: Cash contributions are important to the sustainability of First Fridays Artswalk! By becoming a sponsor, your company will receive extensive recognition and provide an opportunity for you to show your support for the growth of the community through a program that has already made a significant positive impact on the economy and perception of Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The Artsbuck (pictured above) is just one of the creative sponsor ideas presented by Berkshire Money Management, a Lead Sponsor.

In-Kind: We recognize that all gifts do not come in the form of a check. Your donation of goods or services is of tremendous value to us. Several businesses contribute their service at no cost to support an initiative recognized for making a positive impact on the community.

Volunteering: This entire event is only possible with the gracious contribution of time and energy by dedicated volunteers. With a new event each month, the hours donated by volunteers helps us flawlessly accomplish the many tasks required to coordinate the event each month. Whether you're interested in supporting the arts, businesses or your community, your helping hand is appreciated. If you're interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities for this program, please call our office at 413.443.6501.



Sponsorship Benefits

\$4000+ Lead Sponsor (\$8000 In-Kind)	\$2000+ Major Sponsor (\$4000 In-Kind)	\$1000+ Creative Sponsor (\$2000 In-Kind)	\$500+ Sponsor (\$1000 In-Kind)
<p>Company name or logo in advertising within popular publications</p> <p>Opportunity to provide participating venues with company branded promotional items to give away during opening receptions</p> <p>Company logo on over 1000 brochures distributed monthly throughout downtown Pittsfield and well known hotels in Berkshire County</p> <p>Recognition in press releases and email blasts/e-newsletters</p> <p>Company logo and link on firstfridaysartswalk.com website</p> <p>Outreach via Facebook</p> <p>Approval to use First Fridays Artswalk logo in pre-event company advertising</p>	<p>Company name on over 1000 brochures distributed monthly throughout downtown Pittsfield and well known hotels in Berkshire County</p> <p>Recognition in press releases and email blasts/e-newsletters</p> <p>Company name and link on firstfridaysartswalk.com website</p> <p>Outreach via Facebook</p> <p>Approval to use First Fridays Artswalk logo in pre-event company advertising</p>	<p>Company name and link on firstfridaysartswalk.com website</p> <p>Outreach via Facebook</p> <p>Approval to use First Fridays Artswalk logo in pre-event company advertising</p>	<p>Company name on firstfridaysartswalk.com website</p> <p>Approval to use First Fridays Artswalk logo in pre-event company advertising</p>

<u>Previous Sponsors</u>
Balance Rock Investment
Berkshire Art Association
Berkshire Bank
Berkshire Eagle
Berkshire Medical Center
Berkshire Money Management
Berkshire Museum
Berkshire Theatre Group
Berkshires Jazz
City of Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development
Colt Insurance Agency
Downtown Pittsfield, Inc.
Francis Investment Consulting
Gallery 25
Greylock Federal Credit Union
Mad Macs, Inc.
Margaret L. Dotchin
Massachusetts Cultural Council
WJ Blueprint and Digital Graphics

Unique Gift Sponsor Opportunity!

As a **Gift Sponsor**, gift possibilities include - iPhone speakers, key chains, umbrellas, etc.

As a **Gift Sponsor**, the benefits you will receive include:

- The chance to have your company name or logo featured on the First Fridays Artswalk gift item
- Company name on firstfridaysartswalk.com website with over 1000 unique visitors per month
- Recognition in press releases and email blasts/newsletters
- Outreach via Facebook
- Approval to use First Fridays Artswalk Logo in pre-even company advertising



Sponsorship Agreement

My company/organization wishes to become a SPONSOR of the First Fridays Artswalk for the 2013-14 seasons. The SPONSOR level we choose is indicated below:

- Lead Sponsor (\$4000+)
- Major Sponsor (\$2000+)
- Creative Sponsor (\$1000+)
- Sponsor (\$500+)
- Gift Sponsor (Insert Item _____ & Value \$_____)
- In Kind Exchange
- I would like to personalize my sponsorship level, please contact me to discuss.

Are your contributions tax-deductible? Yes! The Downtown Pittsfield Cultural Association Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization, is the fiscal agent for the event and all contributions are tax-deductible.

Company/Donor Name *(Please print name exactly as it should appear on any printed material)*

Primary Contact/Title _____

Email Address _____

Address _____

City, State, and Zip _____

Phone _____ **Alternate Phone** _____

As part of this agreement, the organizers of the First Fridays Artswalk agree to provide the services outlined in the accompanying SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS. Payment for the sponsor level chosen is due within thirty (30) days of the date this AGREEMENT is signed, along with a logo in digital form for all advertising material. I further understand that these benefits will not be valid until this agreement is paid in full. Sponsorship is valid for twelve (12) months.

Signature of Authorized Person _____ Date _____

Please send sponsorship agreement with check made payable to:

The Downtown Pittsfield Cultural Association, Inc.
Attn: First Fridays Artswalk
33 Dunham Mall Suite 101
Pittsfield MA 01201

Note: Credit cards are not accepted.

Please email a high resolution version of your logo in jpg. or .pdf format to info@downtownpittsfield.com