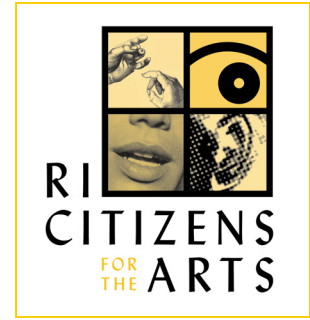


## **RI4arts : Organizing, Being Present, Taking Action**



### ***A Steady Presence at the State House***

As the only 501 c 4 statewide lobbying organization for the arts, we continue to forge new relationships with our elected officials and keep the arts front of mind through a steady presence at the State House. A direct result can be seen in how **RI Citizens for the Arts** **shepherded the reinstatement of a critical full-time staff position at RISCA**, ultimately recouping some of the proposed funding cuts to the state arts agency budget. We worked hard with legislative leadership in the last few days of the session to save the Folk and Community Arts position. And with the power of our membership behind us, we continue to build these relationships to affect positive change for the arts.

### ***Sustaining the Arts in Rhode Island – A 5-Year Strategy***

In March 2009, RI4arts released the **first ever multi-year policy and visionary strategy** towards sustaining the arts in Rhode Island. Over the course of 15 months, RI4arts analyzed the sector and gathered the collective thoughts from a broad range of artists, business and civic leaders, education officials and legislators. This plan is the guiding document for the work of RI4arts in the coming years, helping us stay the course no matter the political environment. The strategy seeks to reintegrate the arts into the conversations of our decision-makers through highlighting the importance of the creative community to our State economically, culturally and civically. And through this, become a recognized resource to not only strengthen the economy, but also position Rhode Island for future growth.

### ***A Conversation with U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and Others***

On March 20, 2009, coinciding with the release of the 5-year strategy, RI4arts hosted a Conversation with U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Providence Mayor David Cicilline, and House Finance Chairman Steven Costantino. Over 100 artists and creative business professionals attended the morning event at the Steel Yard, a 3-acre industrial arts learning facility and business incubator in Providence. In a moderated discussion, **Whitehouse, Cicilline and Costantino** answered questions and listened to concerns of the creative community, while also discussing the new federal arts stimulus funds. Our state leaders offered the creative community candid advice on advocacy and the challenges the arts face both locally and nationally.

### ***State Advocacy Captain – Connecting Rhode Island to National Efforts***

As **State Advocacy Captain** through Americans for the Arts, RI4arts is the go-to organization for all national arts advocacy efforts. Early in 2009, we spearheaded local efforts to advocate for the **Federal Arts Stimulus Funds** in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act – getting the word out to our Congressional leaders that the arts need to be included in this national recovery package. Through a targeted phone and email campaign, we generated over 100 points of contact to our Congressmen. While our Rhode Island Congressional delegation is already supportive of the arts, during our visits with them as part of **National Arts Advocacy Day** in Washington, DC, they told us this type of advocacy is important for them to continue supporting the sector. After four years of traveling to DC to meet with our Congressmen, we are nurturing a helpful and positive relationship with them on behalf of the arts in Rhode Island.

RI4arts continues to be active as both State Advocacy Captain and member of the **State Arts Action Network** – representing Rhode Island on a national scale through connecting with other arts advocacy organizations that share resources, ideas and inspiration.

### **Building Coalition – Broadening and Educating the Arts Advocacy Network**

RI4arts is currently building a **Regional Advocate Network** – calling on local leaders in towns and municipalities throughout Rhode Island to act as conduits to spread the message about the arts. These regional advocates have already begun to meet through RI4arts. Through regular meetings, regional advocates will learn the key arts advocacy messages, be empowered with information and data that will help their advocacy efforts in their local communities, and further inform RI4arts about issues or efforts happening at the ground level. This advocacy base will help broaden the work of RI4arts and ensure that we are reaching every town and community throughout Rhode Island.

### **Arts Advocacy Day at the State House – Calling on Advocates**

Each year, RI4arts hosts Arts Advocacy Day at the State House – a day dedicated to recognizing the arts and creative sector as an important resource within our State. On April 21, 2009, arts advocates and legislators joined us in **Celebrating the Creative Sector** with an inspiring speaking program followed by a wine and cheese reception in the Governor's State Room. A number of constituents connected with their legislators, helping to nurture the relationship between the arts and our state leaders.

RI4arts continues to **organize arts advocates** to strengthen the voice of the arts at the State House. When an issue is being heard, RI4arts will work to organize strategic testimonies to speak in Committee Hearings, in front of Study Commissions, and/or simply to push a message to legislators before a negative action takes place. We keep our ear to the ground and work with our colleagues to develop the best strategies to curb or influence decisions made that will affect the arts.

### **The RI4arts E-Bulletin/Action Alerts – Spreading the Word on Issues, Resources and Action**

Through the RI4arts E-Bulletins and Action Alerts, we keep Rhode Islanders informed on issues that affect the creative community. The Capwiz software allows citizens to send a letter or email to their legislators with just a few clicks. This remains **an effective tool** to engaging our arts advocates to take action and help strengthen the arts voice in front of state leaders.

### **RI4arts – The Organization**

In recent years, the board of RI4arts has worked hard towards building a strategic platform in which the organization can survive. In early 2008, a 5-year strategic plan for RI4arts was completed. Throughout the year and currently, the board has been going through a series of trainings on building coalition with a consultant. This work has laid the foundation for major support from the RI Foundation to hire a 3/4 full time Executive Director. Lisa Carnevale officially began in this first ever staff position with the organization in February 2009. We now have capacity to bring arts advocacy in Rhode Island to the next level – **creating a more sustainable future for all!**

**Rhode Island Citizens for the Arts serves as the voice for the diverse statewide arts community in order to further raise awareness and support for the arts in the public and private sector, for the benefit of all Rhode Islanders.**

#### **Board Of Directors:**

Deborah Obalil, Arts Consultant – President  
Rachel Tischler, Trinity Repertory Company - Vice President  
Carrie Zaslow, RI LISC – Treasurer  
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Kate Champa, Artist  
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Karen Malcolm, Artist

Lisa Carnevale, Executive Director