



VCIL HONORS VERMONT ARTS COUNCIL

On Dec. 18, the Vermont Center for Independent Living, a statewide disability rights organization, honored the Vermont Arts Council with an Ally of Accessibility Award.

The Vermont Arts Council has been on the forefront of accessibility for years and has shown a strong commitment to disability. The organization has a staff person dedicated to offering technical assistance to arts organizations on their responsibilities under disability-related laws. VCIL often finds that many times businesses just need some technical assistance — they are willing to make buildings and programs accessible but are not sure how. The Arts Council is an excellent resource in this regard for arts organizations.

Karen Mittelman, executive director of the Vermont Arts Council, said, "The arts have a unique ability to nurture empathy and an understanding of perspectives outside our own. There is nothing more fundamental to the work of inclusion than our ability to step out of our own shoes and understand and respect someone whose life experience is profoundly different from ours. At the same time, it's critical to remove the barriers—both physical and social—that prevent everyone from enjoying equal access to Vermont's wonderful arts landscape."

She added, "The Vermont Arts Council is honored by this award, and grateful to be working with VCIL and arts organizations across the state to ensure that the arts in Vermont are accessible to all."

Launderville said, "I'm thrilled and honored to present this award to the VAC as it shows the impact one group can make to the

larger community. Their dedication has allowed for hundreds of other arts organizations throughout the state and over the years to be more inclusive and accessible to people with all different sorts of disabilities. They take this work very seriously, and for that I could not think of a better organization to honor with this award."

The Vermont Arts Council envisions a Vermont where all people have access to the arts and creativity in their lives, education and communities. Engagement with the arts transforms individuals, connects us more deeply to each other, energizes the economy and sustains the vibrant cultural landscape that makes Vermont a great place to live. Since 1965, the council has been the state's primary provider of funding, advocacy and information for the arts in Vermont. For more information, go to www.vermontartscouncil.org.

#