

SageArts Quarterly Newsletter

Dear SageArts Community,

SageArts continues to grow and develop in exciting ways since our last newsletter in July.

- An Introduction to SageArts and Singalong was held at the Gov. Clinton House in Kingston on Oct. 16 and was a great success. Some 25 elders were in attendance. Colette, songwriter Elly Winninger, and elder Carlo Travaglia spoke to group about SageArts and its goals. Elly, with Carlo's assistance, then led the group through a process of story sharing and writing song phrases based on themes that emerged from the group's discussion. Elly conducted a group singalong that was enjoyed by everyone. The SageArts Story and Song Circle will continue with three meetings in November, December, and January; there will be themes for each of those months, serving as prompts for resident storytelling and singing. Ten seniors signed up to attend these sessions. Jim Gordon, who works for Edible Independence, a food service for seniors, provided a full lunch. The Senior Club at the Clinton House was holding a bake sale on the day of the singalong, and donated \$25 to SageArts.
- On Oct. 26-27, Karen Leiner of Elders Share the Arts conducted a Life Review Facilitation Training for SageArts songwriters. Karen is an actress and teaching artist who leads theater and storytelling workshops for children and older adults using theater games, improvisation, and living history theater techniques. She has worked with Elders Share the Arts since its inception, facilitating groups with older adults as well as intergenerational workshops. She is a certified trainer for TimeSlips, a creative storytelling project that helps people with dementia connect with friends, family and staff.

Each day began with a warm-up exercise. On the first day Karen guided the group in how to create meaningful dialogue with elders, through listening skills and knowing how to ask questions. The second day went deeper into exploring how to make heartfelt connections. The songwriters—both new and veteran—were paired off to interview each other about a turning point in their lives. From these probing conversations, the songwriters created and presented songs, following the process they will use with elders. All agreed that the training was professional, informative, and quite powerful. In attendance were veteran songwriters Bonnie Meadow, Dave Kearney, Elly Wininger, and Elizabeth Clark-Jerez, as well as new songwriters Vickie Russell, Mark Brown, Heather Masse, Sarah Perrotta, Sarah Kramer-Harrison, and Kelleigh McKinsie, along with visual artist Susan Togut.

- We are excited to announce a new collaborative project to honor and celebrate our local elder farmers—*Unsung Heroes of the Rondout Valley: Songs of Our Elder Farmers*. Eight farmers who have incredible stories to tell will be paired with songwriters to write original songs based on their lives. The songs will be professionally performed at a concert next April featuring local musicians and young singers, to celebrate the launch of the 2016 growing season. The Ulster County Department of Tourism awarded SageArts a \$2,000 grant for the farmer's project. We're thrilled to be the beneficiary. Many thanks to the department and to Rick Remsnyder, tourism director.
- SageArts was profiled in Nov./Dec. issue of *Ulster Magazine*, featuring the work of Elly Wininger with elder Rosalind Mae Stark and Dave Kearney with elder Carlo Travaglia. It is the first article that profiles SageArts in detail. Please read it and pass it on to friends and those who might be interested in our work.
- Our planning for the Woodstock concert next May continues. We're working with the Ulster County Office of Aging, Family of Woodstock, and Seniors Stay in Place to

identify diverse elders in the Woodstock area. Please let us know if you have any leads for elders we might work with.

- Al Desetta has joined the board of Sage Arts as secretary. Al is a Woodstock resident whose mother lived at the Ten Broeck Commons nursing home for seven years. He works as a ghostwriter and book editor.
- Please continue to support us by sharing leads for potential business sponsors for both the Woodstock and Elder Farmer projects.

Thanks you for all the support you have given SageArts to date!

With love and appreciation,

Colette