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FREE

## 'Not a luxury, a necessity'

### MoorArts' fundraiser benefits arts-based teacher grants and scholarships

By **CHRISTINE HARKINSON**  
*The Sun*

MoorArts invites residents to attend its biannual gala on Saturday, Feb. 3, at the township's community house.

This year's theme is "An Evening of Fine and Performing Arts," and the 7:30 p.m. event will include musical entertainment and original works available for purchase. Proceeds from the gala support arts-based teacher grants and scholarships.

"It's a big deal for us, it's a big effort, but we're also just really excited to be able to bring this back (the gala was last held in-person in 2019), which really is a full evening that celebrates all different kinds of fine and performing arts," said MoorArts President Amy Penwell.

Musicians expected to perform are Courtney Halpin McBride (CORii), Kyrus Keenan Westcott, Jen Rosario, Caroline Voyack, Andre Vermeulen and Laura Dishong. Artists represented will include Barbara McDonnell, Carol Bell, Catherine Kuzma, Dolores Poacelli, Eric Burro, Gwynn Walker DiPilla, Kerry Mentzer



MoorArts' bi-annual gala will feature original works from local artists and include opportunities for purchasing them.

and Tom Finley. A concurrent online gallery will feature a broader selection of artwork.

The gala will also feature food and drinks and Erica Scanlon Harr will be the MC.

"More than anything else – and what this event started off as – was just a night to celebrate the arts," Penwell explained. "We are really, really

excited to bring that back to Moorestown and we do hope to see some funds that will help us continue and expand our scholarship and teacher grant programs.

"So it should be a lovely night that's good for everybody and good for the arts and our community."

Penwell likes it when people

see or hear something unexpected from the gala.

"That could be through a piece of artwork that they (see) through the exhibit, or if they happen to hear a performer who maybe they haven't had a chance to see or some of what the talent is in our area," she noted.

"... It's just a chance to see

how much richness there is in the arts right here in Moorestown," Penwell added "It's always the best thing when people are surprised."

MoorArts is a nonprofit dedicated to supporting the fine and performing arts in the township's public schools and the community, according to its website. Its goals are to support a quality performing arts curriculum in the school district and provide venues to showcase the talents of students and teachers as well as local artists.

"This is our tagline – The arts are not a luxury, they're a necessity – and we really do see them as an essential part of being human," Penwell pointed out. "Everybody has that creative spark in them and everybody can be touched by art, moved by art and see themselves reflected in art and also have a window into seeing others."

"It's a way of connecting or a very, very essential human level," she added. "That's what makes the arts so important."

For more information or MoorArts' gala, visit [www.moorarts.org](http://www.moorarts.org).

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