



...ped out into
...ight from the
...of the movie
... only two things
...nd. Paul Newman
... a ride home."

The Outsiders
by S.E. Hinton

MID-AMERICA
science park

ARTS & RECREATION

EXPANDING OUR ARTS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

“Together we will establish more opportunities for residents to safely engage in recreation, healthy activities, and entertainment through facilities, education, and enrichment programs.”

Arts and recreational opportunities can account for a significant portion of a community’s entertainment options and culture. The value of supporting initiatives related to arts and recreation go far beyond economic benefits, improving physical and mental well-being, emotional health, and social relationships of residents. Related programming can be catered towards education for the county’s youth, activities for seniors, and community-wide events for families and could include theater, historic tours, concerts, or hiking. These types of community activities can be low cost and can greatly benefit families of all income levels by being able to find entertainment locally.

Supporting the expansion of arts and recreation within Scott County can not only provide entertainment options and promote healthier lifestyles, but it can also support the economic vitality of the community by serving as attractions. Additionally, arts and recreational programming provides residents of Scott County a base to enhance tourism efforts and draw visitors. Event venues and trail networks can be regional draws for a community potentially offering activities which are not available nearby, while local historic and cultural amenities can become educational and enrichment opportunities for visitors and students. Leveraging these assets can encourage development of similar programming and spaces and also attract retail and service-oriented development desired by residents and visitors alike.

WHY IS THIS GOAL IMPORTANT TO SCOTT COUNTY?

- Arts can form a foundation of culture within a community and be leveraged to attract new residents and visitors.
- Scott County residents believe existing recreation spaces can be better utilized and leveraged to influence tourism and new development.
- Quality of life and quality of place are heavily influenced by the entertainment options that arts and recreation bring to a community.
- Fostering art and creative expression in the county’s youth is essential in developing strong critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

HOW CAN WE MOVE THIS GOAL FORWARD?

Many organizations and groups are working towards enhancing arts and recreation within Scott County. The following action items work towards the goal of building upon and expanding existing arts and recreation programming within the county. Some of these items are currently being addressed by one or more organizations while other action items were identified as gaps that need to be solved. Two catalyst projects were identified for Arts and Recreation that will build momentum, address critical and immediate needs, and create a sound base for future action steps.

Action Items

Catalyst
Project

Catalyst
Project

1. **Build upon school-based theater, community theater groups, and performing arts programs through a performing/visual arts center.**
2. **Increase the number of in-school and after-school programs including art programs, youth sports, clubs, and volunteer opportunities.**
3. Expand recruiting efforts to gain additional volunteers and leaders for in-school, after-school, and community clubs, recreation activities, and arts programs.
4. Use local libraries and public parks to support increased access to arts and cultural, physical, and civic activities.
5. Create a public arts commission that identifies permanent art opportunities, temporary art exhibits, and builds an online arts presence.
6. Identify funding, space, and programs for an arts and music program in every elementary school as well as scholarship programs for students pursuing art after high school.
7. Establish a community theatre non-profit group that focuses on youth and adults.
8. Create new programs and increase participation in celebrating local history and culture.
9. Install infrastructure to support events in towns, such as speaker systems, electricity/water hookups, or event spaces that could be used year-round.

CATALYST PROJECT - ACTION ITEM 1: Build upon school-based theater, community theater groups, and performing arts programs through a performing/visual arts center.

There was an overwhelming consensus by residents that Scott County is lacking in the arts. Youth and adults greatly value the programs available through Scott County Schools, Ross Theater, and Scott County Heritage Center and Museum and see the potential of expanding these programs and facilities. The arts can be a crucial part of instilling entrepreneurship and innovation in children, allowing them to explore new creative careers outside of more typical options. Theater groups and performing arts programs are also a key component of Scott County's quality of life, building community through shared experiences, offering entertainment options, and contributing to the community's cultural experiences. Development of a specialized space through new development or expansion of existing facilities can support the growth of these programs within the county.

WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT TO SCOTT COUNTY?

Theater and performing arts provide educational, economic, cultural, and entertainment benefits to the community, enriching the lives of students, residents, and visitors of all ages. A facility dedicated to these types of programs would not only allow for their expansion, but it could lead to greater economic impacts within the county. More seating and easier accessibility could increase attendance at events, which may lead to an increase in dollars being spent within the community. In addition, performing arts programs provide entertainment and social elements for many students within the county, offering a way for them to stay engaged with friends outside of school hours.

A performing/visual arts center could also be used for additional programming as well as event rental space. Classes and workshops could be held to introduce students and adults within the community to unique experiences which may lead to a career or hobby in the performing arts or related fields. The building could also hold social gatherings, such as weddings or family reunions, and other community events held by the organizations with the county who may not have space for such activities.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

- Expand the community's theater and performing arts presence to include new avenues of artistic expression.
- Establish a new performing arts/visual arts center in partnership with Scott County Schools that builds from the success of existing programming within the county.
- Create new programming within the county which celebrates the community's culture.
- Promote new programming as a tourist attraction for the region.

WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

1. **Immediate:** Complete a feasibility study to inventory existing facilities/programs, identify school facility and programming needs, and analyze the financial feasibility of implementation.
2. **Short:** Identify additional partners to implement performing arts programs throughout the county and within local schools.
3. **Mid/Long:** Work with local partners to determine costs in improving local cultural amenities and developing new programming within the community focused on arts and theater in downtown Scottsburg.

WHO ARE THE POTENTIAL PARTNERS?

Scott County Schools: The school districts could provide financial and technical support in the creation of a performing/visual arts center to fulfill the needs of students and arts-based programming, potentially expanding their own facilities.

Scott County Community Foundation: The foundation can provide coordination between the multiple organizations and entities within the county who have similar interest and intent in creating a new performing/visual arts center.

Local Governments: These entities could provide financial and technical assistance for the creation of a center (such as tax abatement or even funding) and could also identify potential properties and existing structures which could be utilized or expanded.

Businesses and Industries / Anchor Institutions: These groups can work with the local governments, school districts, and other organizations in supporting a center's creation and developing supporting amenities.

WHERE HAS THIS BEEN DONE SUCCESSFULLY?



Plainfield, Indiana recently approved the plans for the construction of a new performing and fine arts center. This development had the goal of attracting and cultivating talent in art, music, theater, and dance. The \$27 million investment will become a new anchor of the city's downtown, sitting next to various restaurants, retail, and other entertainment venues. The new building will not only create space for existing programming, but it is intended to draw local and national performers.

If Scott County, school districts, and other partners wish to develop a new performing arts theater, community and school leadership should identify what other uses could be held within the center. Allowing for additional uses within the center could maintain its use year-round and help offset costs. Social events and private rentals can also expand access to more residents of the county.

CATALYST PROJECT - ACTION ITEM 2: Increase the number of in-school and after-school programs including art programs, youth sports, clubs, and volunteer opportunities.

After school programs provide enrichment and entertainment options for children and teens. These programs provide a safe social environment for students and are beneficial for parents who may work later in the afternoon and are unable to be home before the end of classes. After-school programs are also ways to teach students items outside of the curriculum and get them involved with the community. This helps foster new interests and hobbies in children and teens, gets them active, builds friendships and confidence, and improves their focus on academics. Although after-school activities bring multiple benefits to the table, they are often impacted by lack of funding, transportation, and available staff.

WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT TO SCOTT COUNTY?

One of the major benefits of after-school programs are their ability to increase social connections and physical activity in students through expanding the curriculum past normal school hours. After-school programs can also include academic support, allowing students to explore educational topics not taught during regular class time. Perhaps most importantly, these activities allow children to interact with one another in a non-school setting and create a sense of community between everyone involved. These interactions may be extremely valuable to youth who have difficulties functioning in a typical classroom setting or those with difficult home lives and benefit from social interaction with their peers.

After-school programs also benefit families where both parents are working by providing supplemental child care in the place of traditional, often more expensive, methods. Extending a student's time at school can be the difference between a parent being forced to find child care or children being home alone. These types of programs do not need to be located at a school specifically and can include affiliated organizations which serve similar needs. In either situation, transportation often becomes a barrier to these programs. After-school programs such as these are especially beneficial to vulnerable populations where neither parent is able to stay at home.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

- Increase the availability and participation in after school programs within the county.
- Increase transportation options for children for after school programs.
- Increased partnerships between schools and community organizations to better serve the needs of children and their parents.

WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

1. **Immediate:** Inventory existing organizations and programs within the county that provide after school programming and determine gaps in services, transportation, and facilities.
2. **Short:** Identify partnerships between county schools and community organizations who can provide after school services.
3. **Short/Mid:** Prioritize underserved areas and vulnerable populations and work with local partners, funders, and Indiana Afterschool Network (IAN) to secure funding for continued or new programming.

WHO ARE THE POTENTIAL PARTNERS?

Scott County Schools: The schools could partner with outside organizations to develop new programming for students who need to stay after school for educational purposes or due to working parents.

Scott County Community Foundation: The foundation can provide coordination between the multiple organizations and entities within the who assist in running and developing after-school programming for the county's youth.

Non-Profit Organizations: These groups could assist in planning, financing, and running after school programs within the county which may not be covered by schools or are specific to certain populations.

Early Childhood Committee: This group could work with schools in developing programming which could assist in expanding child care options and support whole child learning.

WHERE HAS THIS BEEN DONE SUCCESSFULLY?



One of the major barriers of developing after school programs is funding, staffing, and technical resources. While there are other potential funding sources available, the Indiana Afterschool Network (IAN) is an organization dedicated to connecting after school programs with the resources they need. IAN provides assistance for those looking to start an after-school program, acquire professional training for youth education, and other critical resources. In addition to funding, IAN also assists in curriculum creation, digital

learning, resources for families, and COVID-19 programming. IAN has assisted hundreds of organizations, schools, and individuals over the last 20 years.

Forming partnerships at the local and state level may be needed in order to expand after-school programming for youth in Scott County. These partners can provide outside funding and hold experience in developing and implementing programming which targets students and children in rural areas.