

## **For Art's Sake**

There are a lot of reasons to live in my town. It has two libraries, three large parks, good restaurants, and a town fair in the summer. It also has acres and acres of apple trees as far as the eye can see. But my town doesn't have everything. It doesn't have an arts center. My town needs an art center for a few reasons.

First, teenagers in our community need a safe place to express themselves. Right now there is a problem with teenagers hanging around the local stores after school and on the weekends. They get into trouble because there just isn't a lot to do in town. A community arts center could offer music and arts classes. Teens could get involved in projects like painting murals or forming bands. I have been involved in community theater and drawing classes in other towns. These experiences have helped me to develop confidence, character and creativity. An arts center would be a great place for kids to spend quality time without their parents having to worry about them.

Second, I believe that an arts center could solve the problems faced by our community's theater groups. For example, right now the group puts on two plays and one musical each year. They have to rehearse in the basement of the church. This is very inconvenient and uncomfortable. The basement is drafty, and actors, especially the singers, find it difficult to rehearse. Also, the stage is small and the lighting is bad. The director just has to hope that the staging and special effects will look right on the night of the performance. Space for the performances is also hard to find. Often the high school auditorium is used. This creates scheduling problems for groups at the high school. If the theater group performed in an arts center, it could have a more comfortable place to rehearse and stage more productions.

Finally, an arts center could be located in the old Town hall, which is vacant right now. This could bring more business to the restaurants and shops surrounding it. There is already an empty lot across the street where people could park.

Of course, not everyone agrees with my ideas. Some people feel that spending money to build more office space would be better than creating an arts center. The fact is, we already have plenty of office space in the Oak Street office park. In fact, there are empty offices there now.

An arts center would offer something to all kinds and ages of people-not just business people. In addition, an office space would probably be empty on the weekends. So the restaurants and shops nearby would not get more customers during this time. An arts center would make the downtown area a lively place to be on any day of the week.

In conclusion, a community arts center would be a great addition to our town. It could solve many problems, from poor working conditions for our theater groups to teen violence. I believe the Old Town Hall is the perfect place for such a center. Right now many volunteers for the arts center have begun sending letters out to citizens asking for their support. Why not get involved and make our great town even greater? By working together, we can solve our community's problems.