



# Mission and Values

## Mission

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COCA enriches lives and builds community through the arts.

## Organizational Values

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- We value the power of the arts to transform and influence the lives of all people.
- We value our faculty, staff, and volunteers and their creative talents, and are committed to providing a nurturing and professional environment.
- We value the creative potential of all children and adults, and strive to make the arts accessible to all.
- We value process oriented arts education, incorporating direct involvement with art and artists.
- We value and seek community partnerships, understanding that through collaboration we build awareness, diversity and understanding.
- We value our facility and its contribution to the architectural landscape of this region. We value the architect's original intention to make this a center for the community, a place to learn and a sanctuary to nourish the soul. We are committed to preserving the building's unique history and aesthetic.

## A Message from the Director

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COCA is an institution committed to improving the quality of daily life. We do it through the arts. Why do we choose the arts? Art is the common ground we all share; how we choose to participate is individual and personal. At COCA, we believe that the arts are your birthright. We strive to make the arts accessible to *everyone*, not just those who can afford to write a check for tuition.

We believe the arts have the power of transforming the bored student into the passionate and engaged one. We believe that rather than the thing you "make," it is the "making itself" that is the real payoff. We call this process-based education. We tell our teachers "don't worry about performance days; it is the in-between days that are important."

We believe that children are naturally creative and we want to embrace that creativity and make it last. So we like to start our work with very young children. We believe engagement with the arts should never stop. Therefore, we work with adults of every age. We believe the arts have the power to rebuild communities. COCA works in neighborhoods and uses the arts as a tool for neighborhood revitalization.

We believe that being creative involves taking risks; and we do take risks at COCA. We have our metrics and we have our evaluators. The numbers tell us a story but we also know that art is subjective and difficult to measure. We know we are touched when we are absorbed in a process. In popular language, we call it "flow" or being "in the zone". We agree with Eric Booth when he says, "*art is serious play.*"

We hope that you will find through your experience at COCA the joy, beauty and hope that the arts provide.

- Stephanie Riven