



STRATEGIC PLAN

WILDFIRE COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER

2017 to 2020



WHO WE ARE

Wildfire Community Arts Center is a grassroots not-for-profit organization housed in a historic structure in beautiful Old Town Berthoud, Colorado. We are dedicated to building community through the arts.

We offer a variety of classes, performances, and events across disciplines, and we strive to help people of all ages and levels of experience tap into their creativity and connect to our community.

A person is shown from the chest down, playing a djembe drum. Their hands are positioned to strike the drumhead. The background is a warm, golden-brown color, and the overall image has a soft, slightly blurred quality. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

WE ENVISION A TOWN WHERE
THE ARTS ARE PART OF EVERYDAY
LIFE, WHERE RESIDENTS LEARN,
CREATE, AND EXPERIENCE
BELONGING IN A CREATIVE
COMMUNITY.

Wildfire was founded in 2002 by a small group of residents, and over the past decade and a half, we have offered dozens of classes and workshops for youth and adults in the areas of dance and movement, music, theater, and visual arts. We contract with a variety of teachers and facilitators to lead these.

We also host two annual community events—a fall street dance and a holiday art market—and on Saturday mornings we invite the community to drop by the U-Create Studio, which offers open time to create in a fully stocked art studio.

For several years, Wildfire also operated a theater company that produced plays and musicals in various locations in Berthoud. The theater company is not currently active.

We are governed by a volunteer Board of Directors led by Liz Kearney, one of the Wildfire founders. Liz has served continuously as the Board president since Wildfire's inception.

Wildfire does not have any paid staff members. Our Board of Directors—and Liz, in particular—perform many of the tasks and responsibilities related to managing the organization.

WHY WE CREATED A STRATEGIC PLAN

In early 2017, our Board decided to embark upon a strategic planning process to assess our successes and challenges and help chart a course for the next few years. As our founding Board President anticipates stepping back from some of her Wildfire-related responsibilities over the coming years, it seemed a particularly opportune moment to reflect on where we are and be thoughtful and intentional about planning for the future.

We want to ensure that we have a sustainable operating model that will allow us to continue to positively impact the lives of Berthoud-area residents through the arts for years to come.



RIGID
RIGID

Kiddie
Brushes
for Small Hands

IAN
EST. 1978



PLANNING PROCESS

Over a period of several months, our Board worked with an arts management consultant to establish the strategic plan outlined in this document. The process included the following:

- At a strategic planning workshop, the Board participated in a SWOT analysis focusing on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the areas of programming, revenue, reputation, and structure.
- The consultant undertook a review of Wildfire's financial reports and governance documents.
- A community survey was deployed to help understand area residents' knowledge of and perspectives on Wildfire. Highlights of the survey results are provided in the Appendix.
- The Board engaged in a follow-up discussion that focused on answering several key questions germane to the future of the organization that emerged from the SWOT analysis, document review, and survey.



THROUGH THIS
PROCESS, WE
IDENTIFIED FOUR
KEY INITIATIVES.

These will serve as a roadmap for Wildfire for the next three years, and we believe that the pursuit of these initiatives will make us a stronger organization and increase our capacity to fulfill our mission and enrich our community.



01

ESTABLISH PAID STAFF POSITION & OBTAIN FUNDING TO SUPPORT IT

Establishing a paid Executive Director position is of paramount importance to Wildfire's future.

Our organization benefits from the service, dedication and expertise of a core group of volunteers, and their contributions will remain pivotal. However, having a paid staff member is critical to us achieving the other initiatives outlined in this document and to ensuring we remain sustainable and able to serve our community.

The Executive Director will report to the Board of Directors and oversee the administration of the organization in areas including membership and fundraising, finance, programming, volunteer services, and marketing and communications.

We envision this will begin as a part-time position, with the potential to grow into full-time.

To help establish this vital role, Wildfire will seek funding to support the Executive Director's compensation for a period of three years. Our Board will define specific strategies for obtaining this funding, with the goal of having the Executive Director position funded and filled before Summer 2018.

02

REVISE & GROW MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

We will revise our membership program to make the benefits more robust, and we will focus efforts and resources on acquiring, retaining and developing members. We now consider being a Wildfire member to be a fundamental part of supporting our organization.

Over the next three years we will take steps to significantly expand our number of member households, and we will aim to cultivate our members to become higher-level donors, volunteers, and otherwise make greater contributions to our organization.

The Board will aim to establish the specific levels and associated benefits of the revised membership program and roll it out by early fall 2017. Possible benefits include discounts on classes and other programming; invitations to members-only events; and recognition on the Wildfire website, in event programs, etc.

Beginning in 2018, maintaining an active membership will be a requirement of serving on the Wildfire Board of Directors.

03

IMPLEMENT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Wildfire will form several committees to take on specific and detailed work, as follows:

- Special Events
- Membership and Development
- Marketing and Community Outreach

The Executive Director and at least one Board Member will sit on each committee. The other committee members will be area residents with interest and expertise in the committee's area of focus.

This structure will help alleviate "Board member burnout" by transferring some tasks and planning responsibilities to the committees and will allow work to be addressed in right-sized groups, increasing overall efficiency. These committees will also get more people involved with Wildfire, which will help expand our pipeline of supporters and ambassadors.

Our Board will codify the purpose and scope of each of these committees, establish the length of committee member terms, and, along with the Executive Director, define strategies for recruiting committee members.

04

FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS WITH AREA BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Wildfire is motivated by a desire for residents to have ample opportunities to be part of a creative community, and we will increase our efforts to partner with other organizations to help achieve this vision for our town.

We will focus on building and strengthening relationships with other not-for-profit organizations and businesses in the Berthoud area, and we will explore establishing strategic collaborations with them to support our mutual purposes.

Ideas include partnering on marketing efforts to highlight the myriad experiences Berthoud has to offer and planning multi-organization workshops and/or events.

Over the next several months, our Board will initiate conversations with area business owners and organizational leaders to help better understand the ways in which we could support one another to help us achieve our goals.



THANK YOU

TO OUR GENEROUS AND ENTHUSIASTIC
SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS WHO
MAKE WHAT WE DO POSSIBLE.





APPENDIX

RESULTS OF COMMUNITY SURVEY
SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED IN MAY & JUNE 2017

77

RESPONDENTS

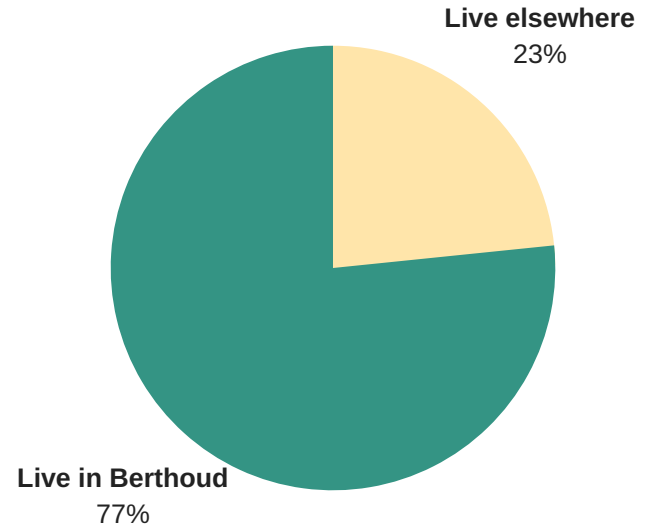
64%

HAVE PREVIOUSLY
ENGAGED WITH WILDFIRE

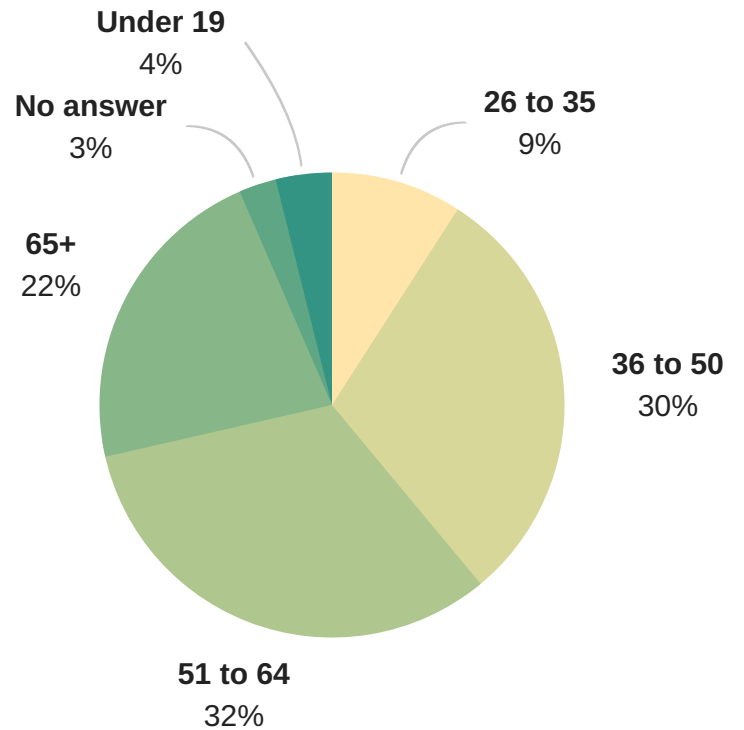
36%

HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY
ENGAGED WITH WILDFIRE

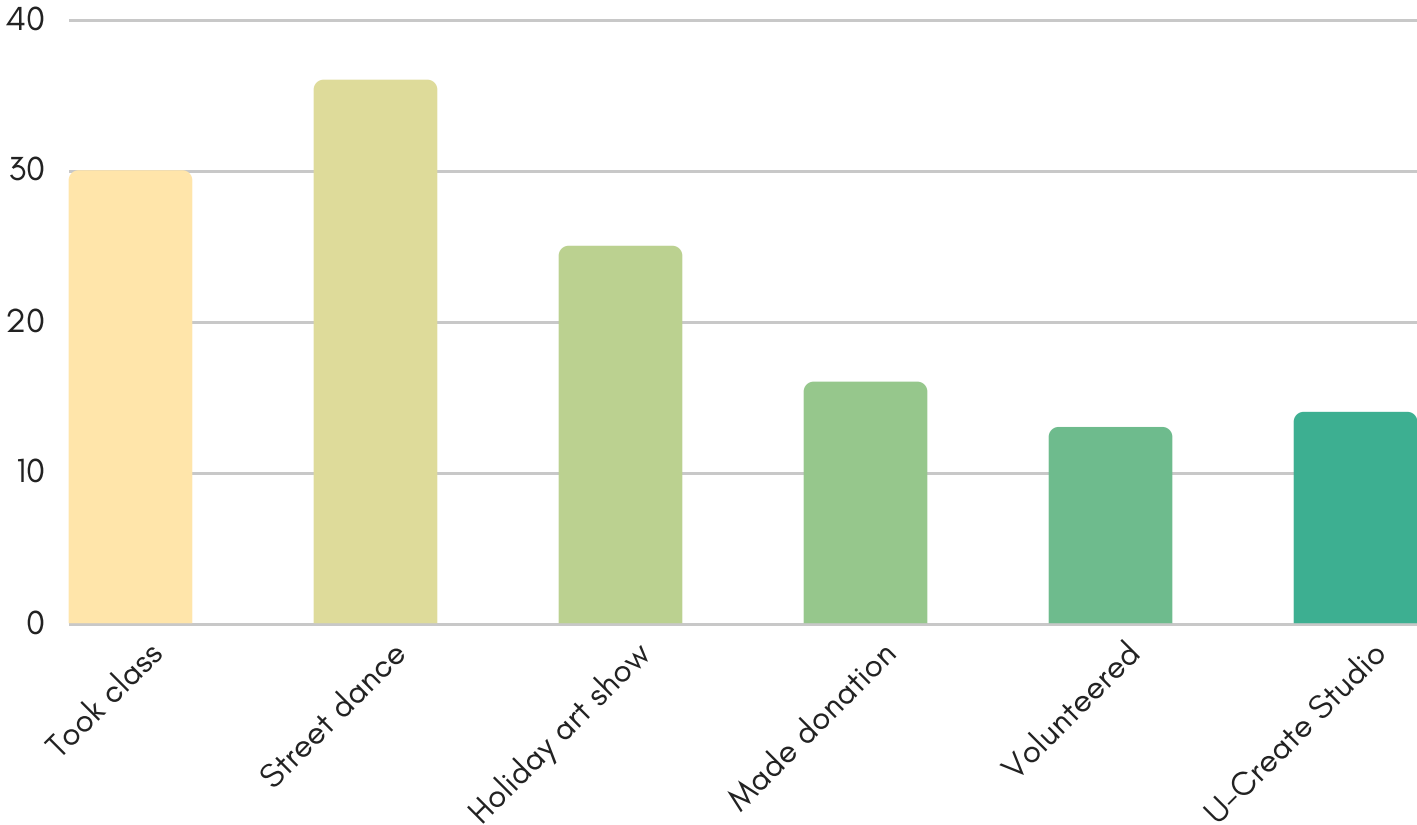
RESIDENCY



AGE



HOW RESPONDENTS HAVE PREVIOUSLY ENGAGED WITH WILDFIRE:



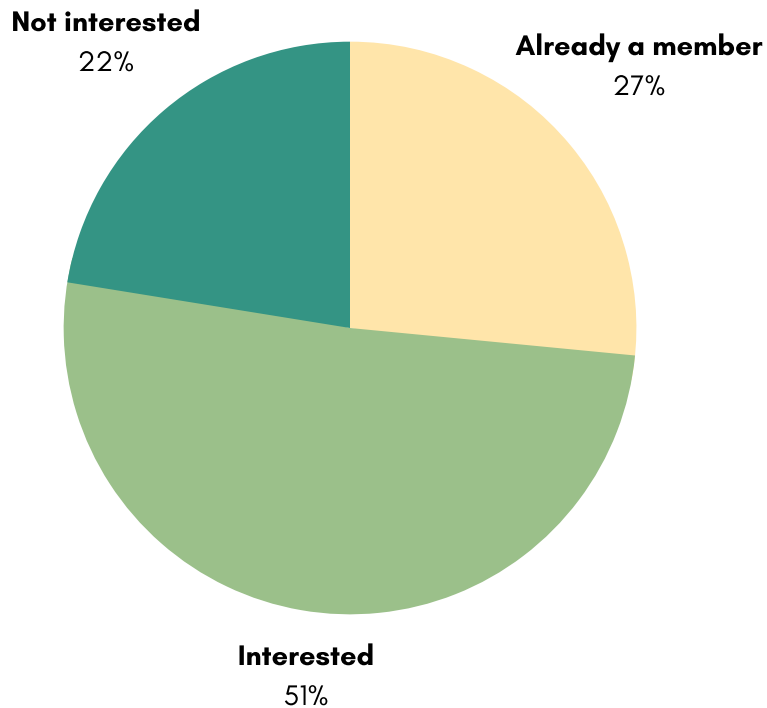
OTHER RESPONSES:

CHILD TOOK CLASS (9), TAUGHT CLASS (3), FRIDAY PAINTING SOCIALS (5), SERVED ON BOARD (2), DRUM CIRCLE (2)

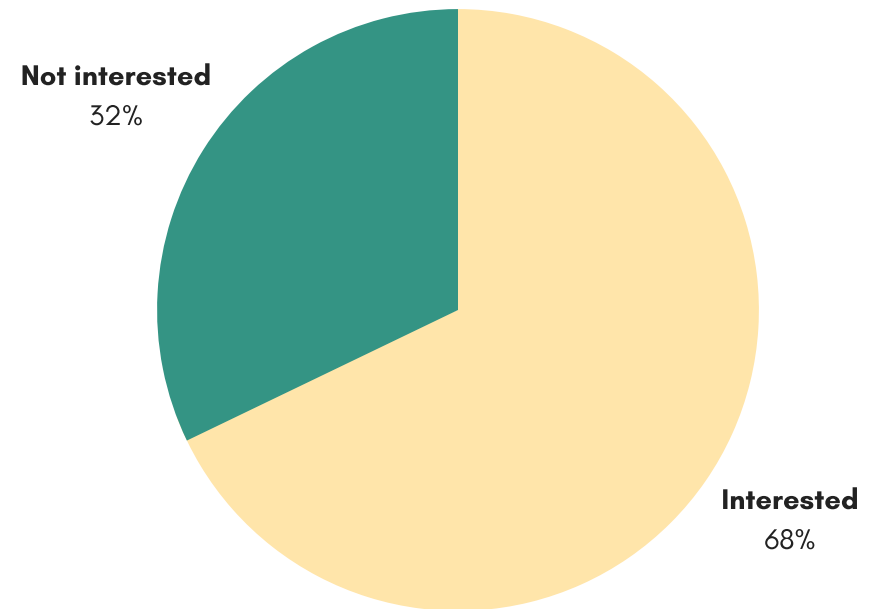
WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF INTEREST REGARDING BEING A WILDFIRE MEMBER?

I'M NOT INTERESTED • I MIGHT BE INTERESTED, DEPENDING ON THE COST • I'M ALREADY A MEMBER

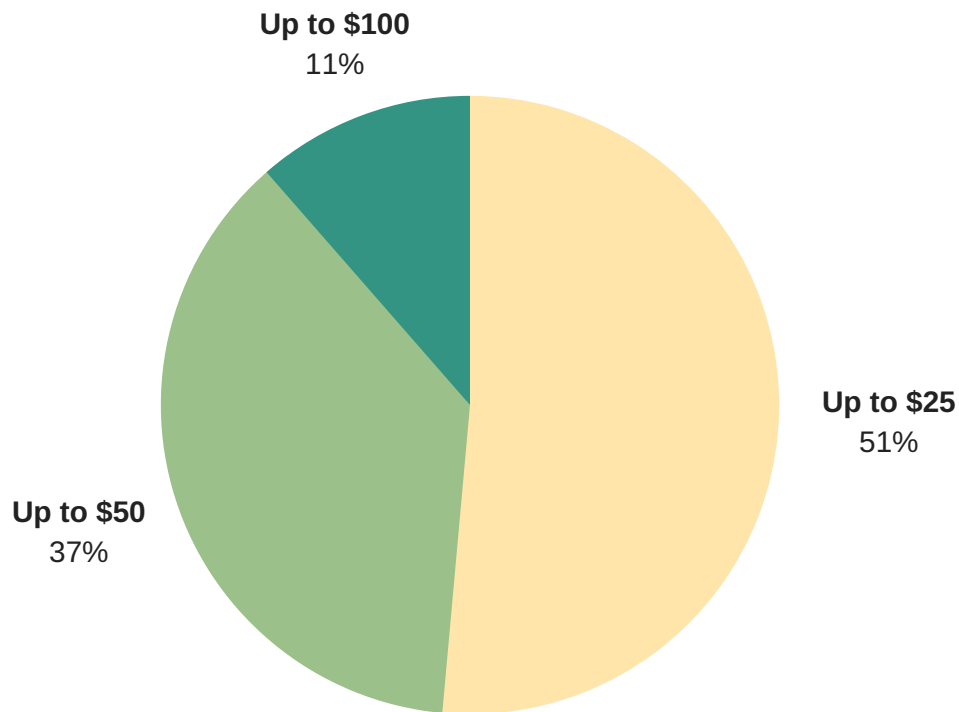
HAVE PREVIOUSLY ENGAGED WITH WILDFIRE:



HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY ENGAGED WITH WILDFIRE:



THOSE WHO SAID THEY MIGHT
BE INTERESTED IN MEMBERSHIP:
HOW MUCH WOULD
YOU BE WILLING TO
PAY ANNUALLY?



SURVEY COMMENTS

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE WILDFIRE TO START OFFERING?

More yoga classes (beginners' classes, classes during the early morning and evening so working professionals could attend)

Tai Chi classes

More art classes and workshops (life-drawing, paintings, fiber arts, encaustic)

More kids' classes

SURVEY COMMENTS

OTHER COMMENTS & IDEAS

I loved the Friday evening painting.

I never seem to know what's going on at Wildfire on a regular basis. Maybe posting more of them as Facebook events (since those show up on my calendars) would help?

Wish you to be careful with your offerings, as there are several businesses in town that offer art classes, mine included, and we are not non-profit and do not receive grants and we do depend on our paying student clientele to help keep us in business. We cannot compete with your (and the library's) \$5-15 classes, and we also have to pay our instructors, and taxes as well. I have been thinking about this a lot. I love the Wildfire concept and look forward to working with you in the future. My best wishes.

Wildfire Community Arts Center is wonderful! I drive from Loveland to take tap classes and appreciate the quality of instruction. The annual holiday art show is great, too.

SURVEY COMMENTS

OTHER COMMENTS & IDEAS (CONT.)

The tap classes and instructors are incredible. Love it!

I stopped coming to Wildfire because I was tired of being treated rudely by the "committee" or whoever was in charge. It's a very cliquish club of people who don't really want anyone else around they just want our money. You are not welcoming to outsiders.

I really appreciate Wildfire and its programs!

I check the website for upcoming classes, but sometimes it seems as though it hasn't been updated.

You are a great addition to the community, and I love what you're doing.