

# Arts Council Silicon Valley gives community a new 'Glaze'

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The business of the arts can provide an irresistible lure. It beckoned **Nancy Glaze** out of retirement into two different interim executive director positions before she landed in the permanent role at Arts Council Silicon Valley in July.

Glaze stepped down from full-time work for personal reasons in 2006 after 23 years as director of arts grants-making at the prominent Los Altos-based **David and Lucile Packard Foundation**.

Then Montalvo Arts Center approached her to fill in as interim executive director in November 2008 – she decided to return to the work world.

"I realized after having worked with hundreds of nonprofit organizations at the Packard Foundation, I had developed a great deal of knowledge and perspective on how to successfully run arts organizations," she said.

She stayed at the Saratoga center until May 2009, when **Angela McConnell** became full-time executive director. At the beginning of this year, Glaze was tapped again to become an interim executive director after **Bruce Davis** announced he would leave the top position at Arts Council Silicon Valley after 17 years. Last month, she dropped the "interim" from her title.

The Arts Council is a nonprofit umbrella organization that nurtures local arts and cultural groups. Founded 29 years ago, the Arts Council has made a total of \$26 million in grants.

During the 2010-11 fiscal year, grants to artists and arts organizations totaled \$576,000. It has an annual budget of \$2.8 million, drawing on support from individual arts patrons, foundations and Silicon Valley corporate giants including **Adobe Systems Inc.** and **Applied Materials Inc.** Grants of varying sizes up to \$10,000 are made to arts organizations with annual budgets ranging from \$100,000 to \$2 million. Client organizations range from the Stanford Jazz Festival, TheatreWorks of Palo Alto, San Jose's Cinequest Film Festival, the Nova Vista Symphony of Sunnyvale and Children's Musical Theater of San Jose.

As executive director, Glaze aims to increase the organization's grant-making ability by reaching out to more corporations.

Glaze hasn't always been behind the scenes. She worked as a professional singer and dancer in Los Angeles as a young woman. She still performs on the amateur stage as part of the annual fundraising event for the Bus Barn Stage Co. in Los Altos. She also co-authored the book "And the Band Stopped Playing: The Rise and Fall of the San Jose Symphony" with **Thomas Wolf**.

Below is an interview with Glaze that has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: Describe the role of Arts Council Silicon Valley.

A: Our nonprofit organization offers funding, marketing and other kinds of support to more than 600 local arts and cultural groups in Santa Clara County. We bring leadership and support to artists and arts organizations. We are official partners with the **California Arts Council** and Santa Clara County.

Q: How can the Arts Council help?

A: This organization is uniquely positioned to help. Over the next two years, I want to triple the amount of grants available for direct support, from just under \$1 million today to \$3 million. We see this as an opportunity as funding diminishes from other sources such as the National Endowment for the Arts and the California Arts Council. We want to continue our outreach work with corporations, foundations and individuals.

For example, Applied Materials provides two "Excellence in the Arts" grants to regional arts organizations annually, focusing on small and mid-sized groups. These are technical assistance grants of up to \$2,500 and project support grants of up to \$5,000. The Arts Council reviews the applications and awards the grants.

And we will be making grants to six arts organizations to establish programs that use social media to attract audiences thanks to the **Knight Foundation**. We need to address this chronic gap in funding that has developed in recent years. We would also like to expand the ArtsChoice program where employees can make contributions through payroll deductions at their jobs. Arts groups in other parts of the country, in communities that are beginning to see the same kind of diversity as we have here, are watching us to see how we do.

Q: What is the state of the arts in Silicon Valley?

A: It's a challenging time, but not a doomsday scenario. We have seen 10 years of erosion in support for the arts locally and nationally. To some degree, it's a reflection of the shifting way people and organizations want to make contributions these days. Donors today want to have a sense of accomplishment. They want to know their dollars are being used wisely, and they like to see the impact their contributions are having. Accountability is extremely important.

Q: Are you seeing an increase or decrease in the arts groups sector?

A: We have seen a huge increase in the number of arts and cultural groups here, mainly because of immigration and tremendous diversity in our valley. The biggest growth has come in the area of non-professional, or "participatory" groups, as we'll call them. They range from African drumming to Aztec dancing to choral singing. We have many artistic treasures in our area, such as the wonderful art design program at **San Jose State University**.

Q: Besides the value of their artwork and performances, what can artists bring to a community?

A: Artists can be a strong force in rejuvenating a community. Consider the resurgence of the SoFA (South First Area) district in San Jose. Artists are the trendsetters in our society.

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**NANCY GLAZE**

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**Career path: Executive Director, Community School of Music and Arts, Mountain View; Director of Arts ; grantmaking, David and Lucile Packard Foundation; Interim Executive Director, Montalvo Arts Center and Arts Council Silicon Valley**

David Goll covers commercial real estate, retail, economic development and transportation at the Business Journal.