



OCAF Spotlights and Salutes: Julia Fister

This article by Robert Parker appeared in the January 2020 OCAF Newsletter.



What happens when the Chilly Midwestern Breeze delivers a hard-working, talented Artist and Educator to our city? Great things.

Julia is the Executive Director of Studio ACE, an arts education non-profit serving students of all ages. ACE is an acronym for Arts, Community and Education. We will share more about Studio Ace, later.

Growing up in the midwestern town of St. Louis, Missouri might have contributed to a hard-wired work ethic, that served Julia well, when she earned a BA in Finance from the University of North Carolina, and a BA in Art from Fontbonne College in St. Louis. In 2001, her journey towards our good fortune began in Los Angeles, California, then on to San Diego in 2003, where that work ethic once again delivered results.

Julia obtained her Masters in Art History at San Diego State, while living in Rancho Santa Fe in a guest house, taking care of residents in the Main House.

After volunteering at the Oceanside Museum of Art in 2010, she moved to Oceanside in 2012, after being hired by the museum.

Interview:

Are you aware that city of Oceanside has been designated as a Cultural Arts District?

"Yes I am!"

Are you involved in Arts related activities here in Oceanside and how often?

"I am involved in the arts every day in Oceanside through my non-profit. We have classes for all ages at our brick and mortar location, next to the Mission branch of the Oceanside Public Library."

We also work with Laurel Elementary and San Luis Rey Elementary through our **ArtsConnect** program, where we integrate the arts (visual, music, movement and performance) with the teacher's science, history, math and language arts lessons, so the students learn the lessons from a different point of view.

We also participate in fairs and festivals by providing a free art project for people in attendance."

In what Arts organizations are you currently or have you been active?

"2010-2016 Director of Education at the Oceanside Museum of Art
2016-17 Art Teacher and Docent, City of Carlsbad Art Department working with the school programs at the Dove Gallery and Leo Carillo State Park.
2017-2018 Director of Education at Museum of Making Music
2017 to present Executive Director at Studio ACE
2019 to Present Member of the City of Oceanside's Arts Commission"

Do you have family who also pursue careers in the Arts?

"My grandfather designed shoes in New York City and at Brown Shoe Company in St Louis. My sister is a watercolor artist and two nephews have graduated with art degrees, one is a ceramicist and the other graphic design."

What do you remember to be your first Arts experience?

"Tap Dance and Ballet class in first through third grade. I loved it, even though I was never very good at it."

What are the Arts projects you've been involved with in Oceanside, of which you are most proud?

"I am very proud of my work at the Oceanside Museum of Art. I developed the education department and raised money to build the classroom (now The Van Hunnicks Education Center). Many of the programs I started are still thriving today."

And in starting Studio ACE, it has been a dream come true to help provide arts education programming in the City of Oceanside and North County on a daily basis. It never gets old to see a Toddler, a Teen or a Senior or anyone create art! I am very proud of our community collaborations particularly with the Oceanside Public Library and Oceanside Cultural Arts Foundation. We have also provided free art projects at Oceanside Art Walk, Oceanside Firefighters Open House and many of the other festivals in the area including the Filipino and Samoan festivals this past year."

Do you have any projects in progress currently to share?

"We just opened an exhibition at the O'side Bakery with art from El Camino High School students. This was in collaboration with Oceanside Cultural Arts Foundation, who has been very generous in helping Studio ACE through various community collaborations. It is on view through mid-February.

We also have an Art Contest going on right now for students ages 12-17. The winner receives 6 months of art lessons with artist Margaret Chiaro. The deadline for this is February 29th, so plenty of time to enter! Time to get creative!"

Finally, what one thing would you like to see in the future to enhance or improve the quality of life thru the Arts in the city of Oceanside, that is missing?

"Just more of it, though they are doing a great job of it! The Arts enhance, improve and expand people's minds whether through the making of it or the watching of it or participation in it. I've never failed to see people be moved by a piece of music, a powerful play, an exquisite dance or the creativity and imagination in visual art. I believe so strongly in the power of the arts and how its effects ripple through people's lives.

Dana Gioia, former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts said, "The true purpose of arts education is not necessarily to create more professional dancers or artists. [It's] to create more complete human beings who are critical thinkers, who have curious minds, who can lead productive lives."

And that's why I would like to see more of it in Oceanside. Besides that, the Arts are Fun!"

To learn more about Studio Ace;

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