St. Louis Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts turned 30 in 2012. It all began with Zia Gipson, who worked for the City's Arts & Humanities Commission (which later became the Regional Arts Commission). Zia knew artists and arts organizations needed access to legal services. She asked St. Louis University School of Law to help her establish our organization and, as they say, the rest is history.

We credit Jill McGuire and her colleagues past and present at the Regional Arts Commission (RAC) with our success. In 1986, their encouragement came with an invitation to be housed within the RAC office and increasing grant support that has allowed us to grow.


Finally, we thank our clients for taking the business and legal side of the arts so seriously and for enriching our lives with their work.

Here's to the next 30 years!

Greetings

St. Louis Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts (VLAA) supports the creative community by providing free legal and accounting assistance and a wide variety of affordable educational programs. We serve artists of every discipline and career level, nonprofit cultural organizations and small arts-related businesses. Our organization enhances the region’s cultural fabric and offers rewarding volunteer opportunities.

Steve Korenblat
BOARD PRESIDENT

Sue Greenberg
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ON THE COVER: THE FIRECRACKER PRESS

Founded in 2002 by Eric Woods, The Firecracker Press has grown into a healthy, full service letterpress studio, located in the thriving Cherokee-Lemp historic district. The Firecracker Press designed and printed souvenir note cards to help us celebrate our 30th anniversary. See the presses rolling and learn about the assistance Woods received by watching our video: YouTube STLVLAA.

Last year, Woods and Firecracker’s shop manager, Matty Kleinberg, joined our No Artist Left Behind artist-speaker roster.
Celebrating 30 Years

More than 130 guests celebrated our 30th anniversary at the Metropolitan Artist Lofts on December 6. Located in Grand Center, the newly-renovated building, which was developed by Dominium of Minneapolis, features 72 units specifically designed as affordable housing to suit the needs of artists. Ten tenants graciously opened their lofts for tours.

Executive Director Sue Greenberg’s toast recognizing the Regional Arts Commission and Associate Director Ken Konchel was preceded by Board President Steven Korenblat’s shout out to former board members and volunteers.

Co-founder Marvin Nodiff (below left) reminisced about our early days, and Rene Dimanche Jr. (below right), a recipient of legal pro bono assistance and a Metropolitan Artist Loft resident, thanked our organization for making the region more artist-friendly. The Thin Dimes, a blues/folk band led by Nick Pence, provided musical entertainment.

Artists toast VLAA: Kevin Hunter, Matt Bloomberg, Darius Hagens, Kate King, Sam Davis, David Hudson, Diana Cojocaru, Deborah Dalton and Paul Sableman

MILESTONES

1982 St. Louis Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts is incorporated
1984 Name changes to St. Louis Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts
1986 Regional Arts Commission invites VLAA to be housed at RAC
Sue Greenberg hired as part-time executive director
1988 Annual budget is $20,500
1989 First edition of Nonprofit Incorporation Workbook
1990 VLAA incorporates in Illinois making it eligible for Illinois Arts Council funding
1991 VLAA leads effort to exempt artists from City business licenses
1993 VLAA hosts public forum featuring Dennis Barrie on the Mapplethorpe controversy
1997 VLAA launches mediation service
1998 VLAA launches its first website
2001 First edition of Guide to Board Duties and Liabilities
VLAA moves west by recruiting volunteers in Columbia
2003 RAC opens new building on Delmar
One thousandth client receives assistance
2005 VLAA wins Missouri Arts Award
VLAA hosts national volunteer lawyers for the arts conference
2006 First edition of Guide to Financial Oversight
Business Edge seminar series for individual artists introduced
Ken Konchel joins staff
2007 25th Anniversary Celebration and Short Film Competition
2008 First annual hands-on QuickBooks training for nonprofit organizations
First annual CLE/CPE and rooftop reception co-hosted with the Greater Saint Louis Community Foundation
2010 No Artist Left Behind outreach program for college students begins
2012 First annual Step Out for Pro Bono
Last year, our volunteers donated more than $100,000 in pro bono services to Missouri and Southwestern Illinois clients who are unable to afford professional services. Accountants and attorneys volunteer their time for many reasons: to deepen their experience in an area of law or business that interests them, because of their own artistic experience or aspirations, because an artist friend or family member has exposed them to the legal and accounting needs of the artistic community, or simply because they appreciate the arts.

Philip Boehm is the author of numerous translations of Polish and German literary works, including a new stage adaptation of Kazimierz Moczarski’s post-World War II memoir, “Conversations with an Executioner.” Boehm also is the founding artistic director of Upstream Theater. Like most arts administrators, he wears many hats. But his skill set does not include accounting. Enter Robert Offerman, managing partner at Hochschild, Bloom and Co. Last year, the longtime volunteer completed Upstream’s IRS 990 form.

“We particularly appreciate Mr. Offerman’s obvious engagement in supporting the arts, an engagement that goes beyond the valuable accounting help and is a model of civic-mindedness,” Boehm said. “Thank you for connecting us.”

Lou Bonacorsi encouraged his daughter, Anna Bonacorsi, to register as a volunteer. Then he registered, too. “We’re no strangers to pro bono,” he said. Father and daughter also are active with Legal Services of Eastern Missouri and the federal court’s appellate pro bono program. Lou is a partner at Bryan Cave. Anna is an associate at Paul J. Passanante & Associates. The family of lawyers also includes her mother, Mary, a partner at Thompson Coburn, and sister, Kathryn, who is attending Fordham Law School.
VLAA connects right-brain artists and arts organizations of every discipline with left-brain accountants and lawyers who donate their time and expertise to help their appreciative clients navigate the complicated world of law and business.

Our volunteers prepare the reams of paperwork needed to establish new organizations. They help more established organizations comply with a labyrinth of employment laws, IRS regulations and nonprofit accounting practices. They answer questions about copyright and draft contracts and leases. They file tax returns and set up bookkeeping systems. And through our mediation program, they help artists and arts organizations resolve their disputes outside the court system in an informal and conciliatory atmosphere.

Last year, 122 new clients received free, one-on-one assistance from our volunteers. Many more artists, arts administrators and board members received on-going assistance or had their questions answered over the phone or by e-mail.

Lindenwood University celebrated Halloween by screening the classic vampire silent film, “Nosferatu,” with original live music composed by alumnus Adam Tevlin (above), who graduated in 2012. The university’s symphonic orchestra and concert choir performed his 80-minute composition.

“Scoring a film for a major university was a difficult task,” Tevlin said. “Working out the business end of it — dealing with contracts is even more difficult. Thanks to attorney Elizabeth Gosney and VLAA for helping artists like myself achieve my dreams while protecting my assets and rights as a composer.”

“I am a VLAA volunteer because the arts have given so much to me; I want to give something back!”

— Sarah Bantz, staff accountant
Baer and Edington, Columbia, Mo.
FOR ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Our annual hands-on QuickBooks for Nonprofit Arts Organizations was conducted by Rebecca Gorski and Katie King, Anders CPAs + Advisors, at Webster University’s downtown campus on January 25 and February 1. “Thank you for starting at the beginning,” said Dorothy Chabeda. “The two sessions were very well done.”

Our ever-popular Accidental Arts Administrator, presented in the fall and spring, provides basic training in arts management and now includes a bonus session on strategic planning. Accidental Arts Administrator is team-taught by staff members from the Arts and Education Council, Missouri Arts Council, Regional Arts Commission and VLAA.

FOR ARTISTS

Our affordable seminars feature nuts-and-bolts information, extensive handouts and opportunities for peer exchange. Our Business Edge seminar series assists the region’s individual artists plan and sustain creative careers. In addition to the ten sessions offered in St. Louis, Business Edge went on the road to Rolla on January 28. Twenty-eight (mostly visual) artists attended.

More than 175 people jammed into Regional Arts Commission’s studio on March 19 to hear Stephanie Pereira, Kickstarter’s director of art programs, and local panelists Nicole Hollway (Storycubes Sukkah), James McAnally (The Luminary Center for the Arts) and Bryan Walsh (The Screwed Arts Collective) explain how the growing crowd-funding platform is bringing creative ideas to life. The free program and reception were co-sponsored by VLAA, Regional Arts Commission and Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis.

FOR STUDENTS

By providing guest speakers and free easy-to-understand guides, No Artist Left Behind is helping students make the transition from the academic environment to their artistic careers and enrich the region’s cultural fabric. This outreach program connects students with the skills, contacts, information and services they need to make a living and a life as artists. Ten working artists make most of the presentations.

During the 2011-2012 academic year, our speakers made 46 presentations reaching 932 students attending 14 higher education institutions in our region.
Financial Highlights

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year Ended 6/30/12

REVENUES
Public Funding $40,885
Private Funding 39,233
Program Revenue 6,415
Investments 1,052
Total $87,585

EXPENSES
Program $59,919
Management & General 9,218
Fundraising 7,682
Total $76,819
Net Income $10,765

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
Total Assets 6/30/11 $71,992
Total Assets 6/30/12 $87,349

THANKS
We owe our success to the dedication of our volunteers. But to provide free legal and accounting services and affordable educational programs, we depend on government, foundation and corporate support.

FY12 SPONSORS
$15,000 and Up
Missouri Arts Council
Regional Arts Commission
$7,500
The Boeing Company
$3,000
Wells Fargo Advisors
$1,500
Greater Saint Louis Community Foundation
$1,000
Armstrong Teasdale LLP
Bryan Cave LLP
CALOP
Husch Blackwell LLP
KPMG LLP
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Thompson Coburn LLP
$500
CliftonLarsonAllen
Hochschild, Bloom & Company LLP
Missouri Lawyers Media Inc.
Paule, Camazine & Blumenthal PC
Simmons Browder Gianaris Angelides & Barnerd LLC
$251 to $499
The Brickhouse Law Firm
Brown & James PC
Schmersahl Treloar & Co.
$250
Anders CPA + Advisors
Carmody MacDonald PC
Commerce Bancshares Foundation
Cunningham, Vogel & Rost PC
Deloitte
Kerber, Eck & Braeckel LLP
Klaris, Thomson & Schroeder, Inc.
Kohn, Shands, Elbert, Gianoulakis & Giljum LLP
Lashly & Baer, PC
Lewis, Rice & Fingersh, LC.
Lopata, Flegel & Co. LLP
Musicians’ Association of St. Louis
Marvin J. Nodiff, PC
Polsinelli PC
RubinBrown LLP
Senniger Powers LLP
Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP
The Stolar Partnership Foundation
Stone Carlie & Company, LLC
TricorBraun, a division of Kranson Industries
Trio Printing
$100 to $249
Artmart
Averture
BKD LLP
Blueberry Hill
Sandberg Phoenix & von Gontard Charitable Foundation
United States Arbitration & Mediation
Weiss Attorneys at Law

SOPHISTICATED CHARITABLE GIVING
More than 50 attorneys and accountants attended our fourth annual CLE/CPE and rooftop reception on May 15, which was co-sponsored by the Greater Saint Louis Community Foundation, led by Amelia Bond (above).
Step Out for Pro Bono

Our first annual “Step Out for Pro Bono” event, held on July 12, was a smashing success. A brief educational program was followed by a networking reception with live music by Jesse Gannon Truth. The venue was Steinberg auditorium and gallery on the Washington University campus. More than 125 summer associates and interns attended. Above, Katie Hellman and Linda Habibi of Phoenix Sandberg & von Gontard greet Missouri Supreme Court Justice Richard B. Teitelman. Missouri Lawyers Weekly was the event sponsor.

“We envision ‘Step Out for Pro Bono’ as the annual community-wide event for summer associates and interns,” said Executive Director Sue Greenberg. “It promotes pro bono and nonprofit board service, provides networking opportunities, introduces young professionals to the breadth and depth of culture in St. Louis, recruits new volunteers and raises a modest sum to help underwrite our operations.”

Summer Associates

Ten highly motivated law students spent their summer vacation with us learning about how the law relates to the unique issues raised in the arts and by artists. Their time with us included several meetings with our volunteers. Kevin Webb, a rising Washington University 3L, was the program’s coordinator.

“Without VLAA, I might never have had the chance to visit these attorneys, listen to their stories and see their different firm settings. It was valuable to see how they got to where they are now.”

— Michael Murphy
Student, Saint Louis University School of Law