

Comedic performance arts experience in Southington

BRIAN M. JOHNSON
@BRIANJOHNSONBP

SOUTHINGTON — Southington Public Library and Southington Community Cultural Arts (SoCCA) have received a \$4,065 grant from the Main Street Community Foundation to offer a “comedic performing arts experience” program for “neurodiverse” adults.

The Southington Library and SoCCA All Access Art Program received a grant from the KAWFY Memorial Fund at the Main Street Community Foundation for the “Reading the Room” program. The program will provide arts instruction and supplies for this program-



Grant will aid cultural inclusiveness for Southington residents.

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ming series. The program will include improvisational comedy classes, music therapy sessions, hip hop dance lessons, “sketch” comedy drawing classes, book discussions, community service projects and generating visual art using technology.

James Brunelle, director of SoCCA’s All Access Art Program, explained the idea of “neurodiversity” is that “no one ‘right’ way of thinking, learning and behaving exists and everyone experiences and interacts with the world in unique ways.” The All Access Art program, he

said, provides weekly interactive art sessions taught by professional artists to more than 50 neurodiverse adults with learning differences and disabilities. The Southington Library also said it is “committed to growing ongoing, sustainable programming for the neurodiverse and developmentally disabled community through its BELONG: Building Equitable Library Opportunities for Neurodiverse Groups initiative.” “It’s exciting for the All Access Artists to expand their experiences in the Arts within this partnership,” Brunelle said. “They are primarily working on visual arts projects in the SoCCA classroom studios, where this funding and project will offer a variety of performing arts activities and workshops to prepare for performance. Some have already stated that they have found their ‘thing’ in the most recent ImprovAbility sessions.”

ImprovAbility was a Summer 2023 SoCCA and Southington Library partnership and the impetus behind Reading the Room. All Access Art Artists completed improv workshops with Hartford-based Sea Tea Improv Comedy Theater and created collaborative mixed-media art pieces inspired by their comedic experiences.

“Working with SoCCA’s All Access Art Program has made me question the meaning and relevance of the term ‘neurotypical,’” Southington Librarian Lynn Pawloski said. “Each of us have strengths, differences and creativity that should be acknowledged as contributing to the whole.”

Events in the “Reading the Room” program will run through Aug. 2024. A final performance with Sea Tea Improv Comedy Theater will take place in the new Southington Library, which is scheduled to open in Fall 2024.

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