

United Arts of Central Florida Engages Next Generation of Arts Supporters

United Arts of Central Florida is proactively researching best practices to engage a Central Florida demographic that is experiencing substantial growth — the millennial generation (18- to 36-year-olds). Between 2010 and 2015 this group grew by 12.7 percent in the Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford region, which brought the millennial generation to 25 percent of the overall population in Central Florida. This region is experiencing one of the largest growth trends in the United States. As the most diverse generation in history, the millennial population pulls from their own rich cultures, resulting in novel business ventures and exemplifying the entrepreneurial spirit.

From establishing trendy boutiques, coffee shops, microbreweries and high-end pet shops to participating in public art displays, heritage festivals and rallies, the millennial generation is vital in contributing to a unique environment that draws more visitors and residents to the region. Despite a lack of consistent interaction with established arts groups, these young and emerging leaders have established their own relationship with art and culture in “The City Beautiful” and are making the region more innovative and vibrant. Now, imagine the impact to the cultural sector if this population were intentionally and authentically engaged as audience members and participants of Central Florida’s cultural establishments.

United Arts was aware that individual local cultural institutions hosted events millennials tend to enjoy but recognized the need to provide a coordinated effort under a single organization that would keep millennials informed and engaged. United Arts saw this as an opportunity to create a millennial membership group that will engage the next generation of audience members and help maintain a stable art and cultural community. The millennial initiative is being spearheaded by United Arts Development Coordinator Alexis Sammons, who is organizing a



Millennials gather at an Art & History Museums – Maitland event.

brainstorming session comprised of leading young professionals from Disney, the Central Florida Urban League, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and a wide range of non-arts organizations. The purpose of this meeting is to challenge this advisory group to develop an incentive program that engages millennials with the arts.

Research thus far has included a conversation with The Arts Council of Winston-Salem that created a successful millennial group called Art Nouveau. Their group established social relationships between art enthusiasts and artists, and the cultural venues in their region. The monthly cultural experience, usually in a social setting, made the program a big hit and has helped the agency raise additional funds to support the arts.

Another initiative that United Arts is pursuing is an incentive-based arts attendance program. The idea is to provide millennials with a wide variety of unique events, at a discounted rate, and after attending a certain number, they would receive a reward. What a fun way to introduce young professionals to the arts and cultivate future audiences and patrons.

For those interested in learning more about United Arts’ millennial initiative, contact Alexis Sammons at Alexis@UnitedArts.cc.