



## **Arts Community of Lewis County**

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### Community Arts Grant 2016

The Arts Community of Lewis County (ACLCLC) in conjunction with Double Play Sports Community Center, the Lowville Town Hall Theater and Valley Brook Drive-In Theater propose a continuation of the Reel Alternative film series in Lewis County. This program has provided cultural enrichment and has served as a general quality of life activity for Lewis County and the surrounding community. Reel Alternative has provided a one of kind experience in our area and has helped increase Lewis County's uniqueness.

The goals of the program are to:

- Provide a unique opportunity for movie lovers from a variety of generations to gather to watch films.
- Increase cultural awareness and intellectual fulfillment for many individuals and families of all ages.
- Promote Lewis County and two of its most interesting landmarks; The Town Hall Theater and The Valley Brook Drive-In Theater, by attracting individuals and families that are not familiar with the community.
- Be a fun social activity for the community

### **Organization Profile:**

The Arts Community of Lewis County is a non-profit organization whose mission is to enrich the cultural lives of the people of Lewis County by nurturing and encouraging growth and opportunities in the arts. We hope to expand the communities' awareness and appreciation for The Arts through the planning of diverse events, exhibitions, educational activities, and promotional support.

Double Play Sports Community Center is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation located in and serving Lowville and greater Lewis County. Double Play Sports Community Center has a clear mission: to improve the quality of life 12 months a year while providing the premiere facilities, programs, equipment, and staff to meet the needs of all community members, including children, youth at risk, athletes, families, adults, people with disabilities, and senior citizens, creating "something for everyone".



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### **Venues:**

The Lowville Town Hall Theater was originally constructed in 1899. The Theater holds 687 people and has a 17 by 34 foot screen. On the walls, six large clay and plaster sculptures depict North Country settlers. Two decorative murals flank the screen. One shows three Indians crouched behind rocks beside a waterfall, peering down at a settler's log cabin. The other depicts a Daniel Boone-type character watching a paddleboat in the distance. The fluorescent-lighted murals and sculptures were created by Belgian-born artist Oscar Glas during the theater's renovation in the 1940s.

The Valley Brook Drive-In Theater was originally constructed in 1952 and has spots for up to 400 cars to park and enjoy films. Currently there are only approximately 30 drive-in theaters in New York State and approximately 300 nationwide. There are only 4 drive-in in our region with two operating in Jefferson County and one operating in St. Lawrence and Lewis County. The Valley Brook Drive-In operates seasonally from May to September and features a full concession stand serving everything from popcorn and candy to hamburgers and pizza.

### **Program History:**

The film series originally funded in 2012 with grant funding and named Reel Alternative was intended to consist of a minimum of four films from various genres and time periods. The series format has included foreign language films, critically acclaimed classics, the previous year's Academy Award for Best Motion Picture, classic comedies and obscure independent films. These genres have generally fit into the series four themes of Timeless Classics, World Cinema, Oscar Night and Just for Fun. Admission for the films is charged at the same rate as regular first run movies at the theaters. Films being shown at the Town Hall Theater are on Mondays at 7:00 pm at approximately two week intervals from September to November. Films being shown at the Valley Brook Drive-In Theater are on Mondays at dusk at approximately two week intervals from July to August.

Proceeds from the films go back into showing more films and the program typically operates at a 50 percent loss. Proceeds from the first season of Reel Alternative allowed for a second season in 2013 to be shown without the need for additional grant funding. There was not a 2014 season due to funds running out for the program and no grants being secured for another season. A third season in 2015 was made possible by a Community Arts Grant from the St. Lawrence County Arts Council.

The films shown were:

#### **Season 1**

Casablanca  
The Goonies  
Let the Right One In (Swedish)

The Artist (Silent)  
Blazing Saddles



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### Season 2

The Thin Man  
Stand By Me

Seven Samurai (Japanese)  
Argo

### Season 3

The Sand Lot\*  
American Graffiti\*  
Jaws\*

The Birds\*\*  
Ida (Polish)\*\*  
The Wolfpack (Documentary)\*\*  
It's a Wonderful Life\*\*

\*Valley Brook Drive-In

\*\*Scheduled for October-December 2015

Average attendance has been 46 people per film at the Town Hall Theater with a total of 420 attendees. The Timeless Classics and Just for Fun films have proven to be the most well attended of the films, partly due to them being better known and we believe partly due to them being scheduled first in the season.

2015 was the first year for Reel Alternative at the Drive-In and was a great success with a total attendance of 500 people and an average attendance of 165 people per film over three films. The amount of people that attended the summer series was greater than the total that attended the previous nine Reel Alternative films. One of the reasons for the increased attendance was free admission to The Sandlot (250 in attendance) which was made possible by the SLCAC grant. We are hoping for similar success at the Town Hall Theater in 2015 with It's a Wonderful Life also being free admission.

### Pricing / Fee Increases

Currently, the cost to show a film averages \$642 at the Town Hall Theater and \$450 at the Valley Brook Drive-In with rights to show the films costing \$200 - \$300 or 35% of the gross revenues through ticket sales, whichever is greater. Costs are reduced in part at the Drive-In due to ACLC members donating their time to work in the ticket booth. Factors that increase costs include whether the film is shown on a weekend (an additional \$200 per showing), whether the rights for specific films can be purchased at a discount and any increases in booking fees that are charged to the theaters.

### Advertising

Advertising has been proven to be cost prohibitive although increasingly necessary as the program matures. Paid advertising increased in 2015 for newspaper advertising to include more ads and more newspapers. Radio advertising will also be used for the fall season of REEL Alternative. Free advertising consists of community calendar events on local newspapers and radio and television stations as well as social media and the Town Hall Theater and Valley Brook Drive-In marquis.



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Recently, Facebook has changed how organizations are able to reach out to followers, requiring payment in order to reach the majority of users that like a page. Outreach through Facebook for free was typically 80% in the past and is now approximately 15%. Paying for increased outreach on Facebook has proven to be effective but has, increased costs for all of the ACLC's marketing and promotions, especially the Reel Alternative program. In 2015 a forum was also created on Facebook to gather input from viewers for which films watch.

**2015 REEL Alternative Budget**

Title	Sandlot	American graffitti	Jaws	Birds	Ida	Wolfpack	It's a Wonderful Life	Total
Venue	Drive-In	Drive-In	Drive-In	Theater	Theater	Theater	Theater	
Rights (varies with each studio)	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 300	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 1,650
Booking fee (Booker)				\$ 50	\$ 50	\$ 50	\$ 50	\$ 200
Alternative content Fee (paid to studio)				\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ 100
Theater Rental	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 1,400
Heating				\$ 50	\$ 50	\$ 50	\$ 50	\$ 200
Holiday/Weekend Fee							\$ 200	\$ 200
<b>Total Screening Costs</b>	<b>\$ 450</b>	<b>\$ 450</b>	<b>\$ 450</b>	<b>\$ 625</b>	<b>\$ 525</b>	<b>\$ 525</b>	<b>\$ 725</b>	<b>\$ 3,750</b>

Newspaper ads	\$ 32	\$ 32	\$ 32	\$ 57	\$ 57	\$ 57	\$ 57	\$ 324
Facebook	\$ 30	\$ 20	\$ 20	\$ 30	\$ 30	\$ 30	\$ 30	\$ 190
Radio WLLG				\$ 75	\$ 75	\$ 75	\$ 75	\$ 300
<b>Total Advertising Costs</b>	<b>\$ 62</b>	<b>\$ 52</b>	<b>\$ 52</b>	<b>\$ 162</b>	<b>\$ 162</b>	<b>\$ 162</b>	<b>\$ 162</b>	<b>\$ 814</b>

<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$ 512</b>	<b>\$ 502</b>	<b>\$ 502</b>	<b>\$ 787</b>	<b>\$ 687</b>	<b>\$ 687</b>	<b>\$ 887</b>	<b>\$ 4,564</b>
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Attendance ( <b>Actual</b> /Projected)	<b>250</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>125</b>	50	50	50		
Revenue ( <b>Actual</b> /Projected)	\$ -	\$ <b>330</b>	\$ <b>380</b>	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ -	\$ 1,460
Grant								\$ 3,600

Actual Local Share \$ 964.48  
Required Local Share \$ 900.00  
Funds remaining \$ 496

The remaining funds from the 2015 season will be going towards the screening of Warren Miller Entertainment's - Chasing Shadows, a winter sports film, in November of 2015 at the Town Hall Theater.

**Program Changes / Grant Request**

The 2015 grant funding from SLCAC allowed Arts Community of Lewis County to increase advertising, lower admission costs and provide two free films. We are requesting funds for a six film series with three films at the Drive-In and three films at the Town Hall Theater. The following is a budget for 6 films including two free showings in 2016 and reduced admission prices of \$5.00 per person at the Town Hall Theater and \$3.00 at the Valley Brook Drive-In.



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**2016 REEL Alternative Budget**

Venue	Drive-In	Theater
Rights (varies with each studio)	\$ 250	\$ 250
Booking fee (Booker)		\$ 50
Alternative content Fee (paid to studio)		\$ 25
Theater Rental	\$ 200	\$ 200
Heating		\$ 50
Holiday/Weekend Fee (\$200 per film)		\$ 67
<b>Total Screening Costs</b>	<b>\$ 450</b>	<b>\$ 642</b>

Newspaper ads	\$ 32	\$ 57
Facebook	\$ 30	\$ 30
Radio	\$ 75	\$ 75
<b>Total Advertising Costs</b>	<b>\$ 137</b>	<b>\$ 162</b>

Costs per film	\$ 587	\$ 804
<b>Total per season (3 films at each venue)</b>	<b>\$ 1,761</b>	<b>\$ 2,412</b>

Average Attendance	160	50
Revenue	\$ 750	\$ 500

**Total Expenses \$ 4,173**  
**Projected Revenue \$ 1,250**  
**Grant Required \$ 2,923**  
**Percent Grant 70%**

In order to continue and improve the Reel Alternative Film Program the Arts Community of Lewis County is requesting \$2,900 in funding. It has been a very enlightening and enriching experience for our members as we have had to learn about the film industry, marketing, advertising, scheduling, budgeting and building community support for the program. We believe that this program has grown with funding from the St. Lawrence County Arts Council and will continue to grow if we can take what we have learned and continue to experiment in order to draw larger audiences.