

Arts for All Ages

Tri-State Community School for the Arts

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Savannah Humbertson participating in "Glee Club Extravaganza."



Tyler Corwell and instructor, Justine Clites having "Fun with Paint."

In 2002, Cumberland became one of the first communities in Maryland to earn official designation as an Arts and Entertainment District, a key component of a community plan to revitalize the downtown area via the arts. By 2009, its success earned the city Maryland's first Outstanding Achievement Award and recognition as a model program. Nationally, *American Style* magazine has recognized the City of Cumberland as one of the "Top 25 Small-Size Art Cities" from 2004 through 2010.

Given Cumberland's burgeoning arts scene, it seems inevitable that a school for the arts would arise as part of the downtown mix. And so two area musicians and instructors, Amy Riffle-Kouyas and Jody Mosser, recently established the Tri-State Community School for the Arts to help fledgling artists of all ages develop and contribute their talents in a range of creative disciplines.

Located on the downtown mall at 115 Baltimore Street, the School offers classes in music, fine arts, creative writing, acting, and specialized arts instruction for home-

schooled students. Private lessons in music and acting are also available. More than 100 students are currently enrolled, with 30 new this year. While some classes are designated for specific ages, others seek participation from all age groups. Ten faculty members bring a wide range of talents, background and experience to the School.

Examples of classes include "The Meisner Technique for Actors," "Cumberland Rock," "Glee Club Extravaganza," "Fun with Paint," "Make Your Own Story" and "Music Movers." Many supplies needed for classes are offered at Hobbies Plus, conveniently located in the same building as the School. A monthly newsletter on the School web site features spotlights on students and updates on coming classes and events of interest.

The School's founders follow the non-profit Community School of the Arts model that brings together local artists and community members to provide high quality arts instruction and opportunities for expression to all, regardless of age or income. Established by Americans for



Voice instructor, Amy Riffle-Kouyeas with (left to right) Hailey Geiger, Allie McManus and Aryana Briner.



Cain Adams on guitar and Noah Miller on drums.



the Arts, a national arts advocacy organization, this model works to foster a strong community centered on the arts.

To achieve this goal, the School works with the business community and arts organizations to establish scholarships and sufficient financial support to keep instruction affordable. Community partners include the Allegany Arts Council, Allegany Arts Alliance, Cranberry-jade Services, Bon Ton, DelFest LLC, Cumberland Community Trust Foundation and Queen City Performing Arts Development Group, which provides performance space in Windsor Hall.

To learn more, visit the School's Web site at www.tristatearts.com, call 301-876-1562 or send an email to tristatearts@gmail.com.

Amy Riffle-Kouyeas (background), Hailey Geiger, and dance instructor, Kim Rowley.

