

ARTS UMBRELLA SURREY

Arts Umbrella is a BC-based non-profit arts education organization for young people ages 2-22. Since opening its doors in 1979 to 45 students, it has reached more than half a million children, youth, and teens across Metro Vancouver and beyond.

We believe that art is powerful—powerful enough to change kids’ lives in incredible ways. Studies show that arts education improves test scores and problem-solving skills, and provides young people with the building blocks for life. The arts help children and youth develop traits like self-confidence, self-discipline, critical thinking, and creative expression. And the part that excites us most—once these traits are unlocked kids carry them for life.

In order to reach more young people in BC, Arts Umbrella saw a need to expand beyond its core facility on Granville Island. The staff and Board of Directors identified Surrey as an ideal location to grown its impact and reach.

Surrey is the second largest city in British Columbia, and one of the fastest growing in Canada; demographers predict Surrey’s population will soon exceed Vancouver’s. According to recent Surrey demographic information:

- 26% of the population is 19 years and under
- Of that population, 23% of children under six are living in poverty, and
- 30% of children entering Grade One in Surrey have been assessed as ‘vulnerable’ in terms of readiness to learn.

In 2012, Arts Umbrella established two permanent facilities in Surrey: a three-studio location in South Surrey; and a single-studio space in Surrey Centre.

Arts Umbrella South Surrey

The South Surrey location at The Shops at Morgan Crossing opened in January 2012. In its first year, nearly 500 children participated in 68 classes. Open Wednesday to Sunday with Visual, Media, and Performing Arts classes, the South Surrey facility offers tuition-based programming for young people ages 2-19.

We served 2,000 young people in the 2016/17 season, with 50% accessing our outreach programs.

In 2015, Arts Umbrella was nominated for a Business Excellence Award by the South Surrey & White Rock Chamber of Commerce in the not-for-profit category.

In 2018, Arts Umbrella launched the South Surrey Visual Arts Scholarship Program. Participants are mentored by practicing artists, and build a portfolio for post-secondary school applications.

Arts Umbrella Surrey Centre

In September 2012, the Surrey Centre location at Park Place Towers at the King George Skytrain Station opened. This location is part of a mixed-use complex and hosts both tuition-based classes and free-of-charge community programming.

Arts Umbrella Surrey Centre hosts the Westminster Savings Artful Afternoons program, a free-of-charge community program that delivers visual and performing arts classes to students ages 6-19. Since its inception in fall 2012, the program has served over 550 students. The facility acts as a staging site for community programming to be delivered at community centres and schools in the neighbourhood.

Surrey Community Response

Since 2012, community leaders in Surrey have responded positively to Arts Umbrella's presence and activities in the city. And thanks to their generosity, Arts Umbrella continues to expand its programming.

"I'm extremely passionate about teaching young people about Indian food. In the same way you take a script or an art project and add your own personality, I want these students to take a recipe and adapt it to make it their own."

—Chef Vikram Vij, Instructor, Arts Umbrella Culinary Arts program

"Arts Umbrella has become an invaluable organization in Surrey by providing our children and youth with the gift of arts education, and we're extremely pleased they have established a permanent home in our community. We know that Arts Umbrella has embraced the City of Surrey's 'Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy' and together we can continue to ensure all children, regardless of their financial circumstances, have the opportunity to explore and unleash their creativity and artistic potential."

—Dianne Watts, Former Mayor, City of Surrey

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