

Letter: 'Churchapalooza' great first step for Salem arts center

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To the editor:

The organizers of the Salem Community Center for the Arts at St. Mary's Italian Church want to thank the community for their support of our ongoing efforts and especially our recent "Churchapalooza" music marathon and raffle held Sunday, Sept. 20.

So many people contributed to making this amazing day happen. For those who couldn't make it, we encourage you to visit [www.salemcommunityartscenter.org](http://www.salemcommunityartscenter.org) where where you will see a complete list of contributors, pictures and video from the event.

We are humbled by the many musicians who gave up their day to be part of this event; lending us their talent, time and spirit. They include the Willie Alexander Band, Sal Baglio, Erinn Brown Band, Brian Corcoran, Julie Dougherty Band, Lisa Marie Band, the Marty Rowen One Man Quartet, Squeezebox Stompers Trio and Radio Scottvoid.

We would especially like to acknowledge the Salem Waterfront Hotel for donating space and resources, Steve's Market, Gulu Gulu and Front Street Coffee House for the musicians' meals; and most especially, Julie Dougherty and Woody Woodward for organizing the music and producing the show.

Everyone we talked to who attended had a great time. We were able to raise awareness of our efforts with those who attended throughout the day and night. We were also able to raise some respectable funds to help advance the cause as we move forward. For this and for your support, we can't thank you all enough.

It takes time to build awareness, audience and community. We are happy that so many joined us on the ground floor as we begin constructing something that can be a core for the downtown Salem performance and art scene.

Creating a community performance space inside a building that already has historic and cultural relevance is something that can be great for everyone involved. The Salem Community Arts Center adds another level by connecting performers and audience with the Salem Mission's goals of helping the homeless. In this concept is the possibility of creating a new community, new understanding and an exciting new model.

Joe Cultrera  
President  
Salem Community Arts Center  
Salem