



Your Invitation to Attend!

As you may know, Jo Mueller, recently retired Executive Director of George A. Spiva Center for the Arts, is being awarded the 2016 statewide **Leadership in the Arts Award** by the Missouri Arts Council and the State of Missouri. Five awards will officially be presented in a Missouri Arts Awards public ceremony on February 10, 2016, at 2pm at the Missouri Capitol Rotunda in Jefferson City – in conjunction with Missouri Citizens for the Arts Day at the Legislature.

From 2003 to 2015, Jo was a committed and proven leader – truly an “arts hero” who made Spiva and the arts in Joplin not only her vocation but her avocation. During her 12-year career as Spiva’s Executive Director, her leadership and passion for the arts was transformative for Spiva, the lives of the region’s citizens and its children. We are so proud that Jo is receiving this distinguished award which keeps Joplin, our citizens and organizations in the spotlight! The awards ceremony, as well as the activities planned, will allow us to focus on one of Joplin’s leaders when we will have the attention of the Governor, our state legislators and Missouri citizens.

This is a special invitation for you to attend this important day at the Capitol to show your support for Jo, for Spiva Center for the Arts, and recognize the importance of the arts in our community.

Connect2Culture, in conjunction with Spiva, is organizing a group of Jo’s friends and supporters, Joplin city and community leaders, arts leaders and interested citizens to attend this eventful day.

You are invited aboard a chartered bus organized to transport a large group of Joplin supporters to Jefferson City. At present four bus sponsors have stepped forward. They are Choice Marketing, Corner Greer and Associates, First Financial Wealth Management, and Nancy Good. We so appreciate their support. Two additional sponsorships at \$250 each are still available by contacting Connect2Culture.

Seating is limited to the first 56 reservations. Of course, you are also welcome to drive yourself or car pool. All registered Joplin attendees will also be provided a complimentary box lunch courtesy of Connect2Culture. This luncheon is organized for guests and our legislators. The more supporters at the Capitol, the better!

Since 1983, the Missouri Arts Council and the State of Missouri have been honoring our state’s art heroes – the people who make the arts happen. These are individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the cultural and artistic climate of the state. Honorees are selected by an independent panel. Other 2016 award winners who will be recognized at the ceremony include: Arts Education – Halcyone Ewalt

Perlman, Columbia; Arts Organization – STAGES St. Louis; Creative Community - Community of Chillicothe; and Individual Artist – John L. Schaefer, Kansas City. The Missouri Arts Council is a division of the Missouri Department of Economic Development.

Schedule for the Day, Wednesday, Feb. 10

6:45–6:55am	Bus boards at the southeast end of the Central Christian Center parking lot, 501 Virginia. Parking is available in Central Christian Center lot, southeast end.
7am	Bus leaves for Capitol in Jefferson City.
11am	Bus arrives at Capitol in Jefferson City.
11–11:50am	Tour Capitol or meet with your area legislators.
12–12:30pm	Performance by the St. Joseph Community Chorus in Capitol Rotunda, 1st Floor.
12:45–1:45pm	Complimentary box lunch for Joplin attendees with area legislators on 2nd Floor, Senate side, Inner hallway by Senator Onder's Office #226, arrangements made by Senator Richard's office.
2–3:30pm	Missouri Arts Awards Ceremony Presentation, Capitol Rotunda, 1st Floor.
4pm	Bus returns to Joplin.
8pm	Bus arrives in Joplin.

Please check your calendar now and see if you can plan to join us in Jefferson City. Then reply to this email and complete the following information. Reply to sbeshore@hotmail.com or call 417-437-1772. She would be glad to answer any questions.

_____ **Make me a reservation to ride the bus to the Capitol on Feb. 10 to support Jo Mueller in her acceptance of the 2016 Leadership in the Arts Award. This will include a reservation for a box luncheon (please notify us of any dietary restrictions with your RSVP).**

_____ **I plan to drive my car or car pool on Feb. 10 to support Jo Mueller in her acceptance of the 2016 Leadership in the Arts Award. Please make me a reservation for the box luncheon (please notify us of any dietary restrictions with your RSVP).**

_____ **I cannot attend, but support Jo Mueller in her acceptance of the 2016 Leadership in the Arts Award.**

We hope you can plan to attend this important day! You are welcome to share this email with others who may want to attend to recognize and honor Jo and the importance of the arts in Joplin!

Very Sincerely,
Sharon Beshore, Chairman of the Board, Connect2Culture
Clifford Wert, President and CFO, Connect2Culture
Emily Frankoski, Community Arts Director, Connect2Culture

Below, we have included a Joplin Globe article and an editorial for your information regarding Jo retirement and her leadership.

Our View: Jo Mueller and the art of leadership
The Joplin Globe, Tuesday, June 30, 2015

Many hands and resources were needed after the 2011 tornado that hit Joplin and Duquesne.

In fact, there were so many ways that people were helped, we had almost forgotten the huge impact that Joplin artists and the Spiva Center for the Arts had as part of the community's healing.

And they did so under the leadership of Spiva executive director Jo Mueller, her staff and many talented volunteers.

Mueller last week announced that she will be retiring as the executive director. When asked what had given her the most joy from her job, she was quick to talk about the work done after the tornado.

"We changed things up on a dime," Mueller told us. "We created programming that was relevant. All kinds of people came through here for those exhibits — volunteers, the people whose homes had been destroyed and the rest of Joplin."

Planned exhibits were postponed in favor of "On the Other Side," which gave voice to artists' responses to the tornado; "Dear World, From Joplin with Love," the "Shoebox Project" and "Photos from the Storm," which offered glimpses of the aftermath and the more important stories of healing and recovery. Community art projects "Rock a Joplin Bowtie" and "Rebuilding with Heart" supported the work of Rebuild Joplin. Programs were ramped up for children from the Boys and Girls Club, Joplin Family Y and Spiva's summer classes, which created drawings for the community mural at 15th and Main streets.

While some swung hammers, Mueller and her team slung paint, glue and even glitter. Amidst the ugliness and horror, some were able to find beauty and slowly began that long walk back out of the darkness. The work done at Spiva for children was perhaps the most touching.

Mueller's last day at Spiva will be on Sept. 19. We thought now — before she exits — would be a good time to thank her for her work of the past 12 years, especially for those months where she led efforts to mend broken spirits through art.

We recognize the passion Mueller brought with her to work every day. Better yet, we learned just how important a thriving art culture is to a community.

Our best wishes to Mueller on her future creative endeavors.

Jo Mueller, Spiva director, to retire
By Wally Kennedy, The Joplin Globe, Wednesday, June 24, 2015

After nearly 12 years at the helm of the Spiva Center for the Arts, Jo Mueller cannot recount the number of times where her work has brought her profound joy — there are simply too many.

Mueller, who is retiring as director of the center, said Spiva's work in support of exhibits and projects designed to foster healing and rebuilding through the arts after the 2011 tornado is the thing she will remember most.

"We changed things up on a dime," she said. "We created programming that was relevant. All kinds of people came through here for those exhibits — volunteers, the people whose homes had been destroyed and the rest of Joplin."

Planned exhibits were postponed in favor of "On the Other Side," which gave voice to artists' responses to the tornado; "Dear World, From Joplin with Love," the "Shoebox Project" and "Photos from the Storm," which offered glimpses of the aftermath and the more important stories of healing and recovery. Community art projects "Rock a Joplin Bowtie" and "Rebuilding with Heart" supported the work of Rebuild Joplin. Programs were ramped up for children from the Boys and Girls Club, Joplin Family Y and Spiva's summer classes, which created drawings for the community mural at 15th and Main streets. The SpivaKids FunFund, the scholarship fund Mueller began, ensured that at-risk children could participate.

“Everybody was trying to get through it, and they were feeling such emotion,” she said. “I had one person come to an exhibit and tell me: ‘You know, I didn’t want to come, but I feel now that it was the best thing I could have done.’”

A favorite moment for Mueller was when the center staged a motorcycle show with motorcycle art.

“You had these little old ladies with blue hair standing next to bikers with do-rags looking in the windows,” she said. “What an image that was.”

Another highlight was when children drew fish on all of the windows on Main Street from Second Street to Seventh Street.

Mueller also got to do something that is very close to her heart. She helped perpetuate PhotoSpiva, which was founded by her late brother, Jim Mueller, an extraordinary photographer who once worked with Ansel Adams. It is now the longest-running competition of its kind.

“PhotoSpiva — that one is bittersweet,” she said. “Next year is going to be the 40th anniversary. That’s a real tender spot.

“I could not improve on the format at all. Amateurs and professionals are put side by side. Last year, we had an image that was taken by a 13-year-old girl that was hung next to a photo from a professional. I absolutely love that about PhotoSpiva. It is still quite valid and wonderful.”

Mueller credited her staff with making the center at 222 W. Third St. operate so efficiently.

“It can take an extraordinary level of coordination. It’s a constant juggling act,” she said. “This staff is very creative. They know how to work within the confines of this building.”

Mueller’s retirement, effective Sept. 19, was accepted by the center’s Board of Directors earlier this month. A search committee is being formed to find a new director.

In making the board announcement, Brandon Davis, co-president of the board, said Mueller had worked not only to develop Spiva into a dynamic arts and education center, but also to be an effective voice for the arts and its role in improving economic development and the region’s quality of life.

In 2011, the Missouri Department of Tourism awarded Mueller the Spotlight Award to recognize significant contributions by an individual or entity not normally considered part of the tourism industry. The Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce presented her with the 2014 Arty Award for contributions to the arts in the greater Joplin area.

“Working at Spiva has been an incredible opportunity for me. For every artistic heart there comes a time when you need a fresh start, a new creative viewpoint, a fresh endeavor. Now is that time, both for Spiva and for me,” she said. “Spiva is blessed with an amazing network of community support, and I am truly fortunate to have been part of it.”

“The board would like to thank Jo for her 12 years of service to the art center and the community, and, wishes her well in her future endeavors,” Davis said.