



FY 2022

ANNUAL REPORT

Look.

Learn,

See

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Photo Perspectives
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From the Director's Desk

Photo Perspectives experienced an exceptionally productive first fiscal year. Incorporated in September 2021, our first three months witnessed hiring of legal counsel, development and execution of by-laws and other guiding principles, formation of a multifaceted and extraordinarily talented Board of Directors, establishment of a corporation website, and the beginnings of a social media presence. Program development began in earnest in January 2022, which resulted in securing Freeport Middle School as a pilot site for development of an extracurricular photography program. Additional efforts set in motion at the beginning of the calendar year yielded our first corporate sponsored scholarship that will be awarded at the end of the upcoming school year as well as obtainment of a \$6500 grant to purchase digital photography equipment for our Freeport Middle School initiative. In between, we managed to establish an initial photo-educational greeting card line that will be sold via our website and also used for the promotion of photography in general.

Detailed within this report, the reader will find a summary of Photo Perspectives' successes and struggles in our first year of operation as well as possible future directions to be considered by our Board of Directors.

Shawn Roberts
Chair/Executive Director

PROGRAM IN FOCUS: FREEPORT MIDDLE SCHOOL PILOT

A landmark 2016 survey entitled “Maine Arts Education Census 2016: Improving Maine’s Student Success Report,” painted a disheartening picture of support for Maine Principals wanting to provide quality arts education to Maine’s youth. Although 97% of Mainers rated arts education as a high or very high priority, more than one out of every three Maine schools reported having no arts education budget whatsoever. Heightening this disappointment, 52% of principals reported having no arts related field trips, and 46% acknowledged having no arts in co-curricular activity (e.g., concerts or community events). The study confirmed the regular culprits to be at work: budget constraints, lack of time in the school day, and competing priorities. To address such needs, The Maine Arts Commission set a goal that, by 2025, 60% of Maine Schools will have forged relationships with community arts and cultural organizations as part of a larger package of recommendations for enhancing arts education in Maine.

Photo Perspectives wants to be part of that solution. Our Photo Perspectives - Middle School Initiative seeks to partner with Maine Middle Schools to provide photo-educational opportunities for 6th through 8th graders. The rapid growth in abstract thinking and desire to identify and establish one’s own voice during these transformative years makes photography an excellent companion activity to such endeavors. Photography provides the opportunity to express “a thousand words” about oneself through a single image. Photography not only allows, but actively encourages, students to view their world and those who inhabit it from multiple angles and perspectives. And, as Ansel Adams once said, “there are two people in every picture, the photographer and the viewer.” Photography permits the expression and reception of ideas in solitary format, to be pondered quietly without pressure or distraction, as well as serves as an excellent starting point for an educational discussion of different views amongst a larger audience.



ELAINE DESPRES
LEAD INSTRUCTOR

“Teaching students to slow down to look at the world through different perspectives is important to me. ... some of the most amazing wonders of life are only discovered when you’re laying on your stomach.”



PHOTO PERSPECTIVES
FREEPORT MIDDLE SCHOOL

www.photoperspectives.org/freeport-middle-school



ROZ MOISAN
VISUAL ARTS EXPERT

“My job as an art educator is not to say what is right or wrong, but celebrate the individual nature of art. My goal is to help students tap into the impulse to make, create, and be creative.”

Our pilot offers one day a week after school instruction in photography to be led by Elaine DesPres. M.Ed, a teacher employed by Freeport Middle School. The in-person sessions will focus on the technical and aesthetic aspects of photography arranged around a different photographic genre each month (e.g., landscape, macro, people, experimental, etc). In this manner, students receive exposure to the many different ways photography impacts life and drives outward expression of creativity and passion. To capture the diversity of life and beauty hidden in plain sight, one needs to move one's feet and get down on one's stomach to view our world from a perspective that perhaps no-one else ever has. Indeed, our vision is that of a world that values a look, learn, and then see approach to life. The extracurricular design of a program supported financially by a nonprofit community organization addresses the school administrator's "no time during the school day" concern as well as budgetary limitations.

The part of our pilot that excites us most, however, is The Table Round. The Table Round is the locked down, social and educational online network that is self-contained within our website. Students can enjoy a "Facebook-like" online experience that is limited to interactions with the peers in their workshop group. Each group can be monitored by the teacher, school administrator, and Photo Perspectives Executive Director. Student accounts would be established by parents so they could feel confident and help ensure that their children were participating in a safe online experience. Forums dedicated to each group would allow the building of a knowledge database as well as help new learners understand that some questions are quite common for anyone starting something new.

Online Courses would be available through the portal as well. Students wishing to independently expand their photographic knowledge would be able to do so. Additionally, students who may not be able to attend the weekly in person meetings at the school due to conflicts with sports or other extracurriculars would be able to have an analogous experience online in a manner that fits their schedules. In this way, no interested student would be forced to decide between exploring photography versus another extracurricular. Competing priorities are therefore minimized for both the school and the student.

The scalability of our project further enhances its design. The Table Round holds the capacity to host multiple schools, with their own locked down groups, with additional modules being available for interscholastic interaction. In plain English, a supportive learning environment, across middle schools in this case, would allow exposure to an even more diverse set of views and ways to express ideas. Both inter- and intra-group feedback could be monitored and moderated to help students learn appropriate and productive ways to give and receive feedback.

Future plans involve expanding the target audience to unite other groups (e.g., Girl Scouts) and/or people with other common experiences (e.g., social anxiety, Veterans, the elderly). Subgroups of student populations, such as special education students, could also be offered their own tailored program that uses student strengths to provide a positive way to express themselves and perhaps better educate their peers. As can be seen, the possibilities are endless. Our society grows stronger through the respectful communication of both common and divergent ideas and experiences - photography is simply the vehicle we use to bring people together.

Exhibition of student works and dissemination of ideas will occur in multiple ways. First, permanent frames that permit the easy swapping of images held will be mounted in the school hallways to display the students' work. In addition to the school hallways and our website, community display options include an end of the year art show, creating photo-educational greeting cards, and displaying works in publicly accessible areas around town. As such, students learn new skills as well as make a very real connection and contribution to their larger community. The goal of the pilot program is to develop and refine our approaches and implement a more complete program in 2023 that can then be expanded to include other school sites in Maine starting in 2024.

FISCAL YEAR 2022 FINANCIALS

Our initial fiscal year witnessed over \$17,000.00 in income generation. Donor generosity and patrons will allow us to fund initial offerings in two areas: a photography scholarship for a graduating senior and an extracurricular middle school photography program we are piloting in Freeport, Maine.

Realtor Sue Roberts generously provided a corporate donation that will fund a \$1000.00 college scholarship to be awarded this coming school year as well as a professionally framed print of the winning entry. The famed print will be donated to a public building in the awardee's area or the recipients school. Enhancing local communities through the power of photography serves as a core method for carrying out our mission.

“Way ahead of schedule” best describes the status of realizing our dream of developing and implementing an extracurricular photography program for middle schoolers. With the help of Board Members, Laura Stowe and Lori Spruce, Photo Perspectives secured much needed funding early on in its existence. Based on the terms of our grant award, we have not been able to publicly thank the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation for providing the funding necessary for 10 of the students, and the head instructor, to be using brand new Canon Digital SLR Cameras and accessories. The Kings' generosity cements our ability to offer the middle school program at the pilot site for years to come. As it is permissible in an annual report or a local newsletter to identify awards from this Foundation, we wholeheartedly thank Mr. and Mrs. King, the Foundation administrator, Stephanie Leonard, and our very own Laura and Lori who continue to leave me awestruck by their talents and enthusiasm.

Our fiscal year 2022 expenses demonstrated a higher than will be normal outlay of funds. The legal fees associated with incorporating and obtaining 501(c)(3) recognition as a nonprofit by the IRS represent an excellent investment as a one time expense. Similarly, many of the software expenses represent one-time fees as we worked out the best options available to meet our many technology needs. No income generated was used for staff fees as we are an all volunteer organization at this point.



Photo Perspectives
 Income Statement
 for the period of 07/01/2021 to 06/30/2022

Account Number	Account Name	Amount
Income		
4000	General Donations	\$719.24
4010	Corporate Sponsor	\$1,250.00
4050	In-Kind Donation	\$7,333.14
4051	Freeport Middle School Restricted Donation	\$8,015.75
4100	Interest Earned	\$0.02
4200	Greeting Card Sales	\$15.00
4300	Shipping Collected	\$4.34
4400	State Sales Tax Collected	\$0.83
Total Income		\$17,338.32
Expense		
5021	Legal Fees	\$2,588.00
5041	Domain Registration	\$31.34
5042	Website/Webhosting	\$636.46
5043	Accounting Software	\$350.46
5044	Donation Platform	\$374.25
5045	Website Security	\$250.67
5046	Board Collaboration Tools	\$491.87
5047	Digital signature	\$180.00
5048	Buddy Boss	\$681.00
5049	Learn Dash	\$159.00
5050	Online Sales Platform	\$166.71
5060	Intellectual Property Licensing Fees	\$8.00
5100	Bank Fees	\$36.05
5200	Shipping	\$60.31
5600	State	\$35.00
5610	Sales Tax	\$373.45
5700	Exhibition Materials/Printing	\$86.25
5800	COGS Greeting Cards	\$4.50
5805	COGS Greeting Cards Boxes	\$1.03
5810	Cost Greeting Cards Used for Promotional Purposes	\$54.45
5815	Cost Card Boxes Used for Promotional Purposes	\$11.33
Total Expense		\$6,580.13
Net Income (Loss)		\$10,758.19

The Fiscal Year 2022 closing balance sheet shown below documents a year marked by funding start up costs while at the same time positioning ourselves to achieve initial public offerings consistent with our mission in Fiscal Year 2023. The ending balance of our Freeport Middle School Fund includes money earmarked for our primary instructor's stipend as well as the camera equipment assets that have been purchased with the grant from the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation. We continue to seek out corporate and individual donors to fund a permanent photography gallery at the middle school to display student work in an exhibit that can be refreshed throughout the year. Funding assistance to help with costs of making the actual prints of student work will also require ongoing efforts.



Photo Perspectives
Balance Sheet by Fund
as of 06/30/2022

Account Number	Account Name	General Fund	Scholarship	General Education	Freeport Middle School
Assets					
1000	Checking	\$222.70	\$75.00	\$14.95	\$15.00
1005	Grant Funds In Checking	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$213.28
1010	Savings	\$100.02	\$1,250.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
1200	Greeting Cards Inventory	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,293.05	\$0.00
1205	Greeting Card Shipping Boxes	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$90.41	\$0.00
1505	Camera Equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,983.78
Total Assets		\$322.72	\$1,325.00	\$1,398.41	\$7,712.06
Liabilities					
Total Liabilities		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Equity					
3000	General Fund - Fund Balance	\$322.72	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
3003	Scholarship - Fund Balance	\$0.00	\$1,325.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
3007	General Education - Fund Balance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,398.41	\$0.00
3008	Freeport Middle School - Fund Balance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,712.06
Total Equity		\$322.72	\$1,325.00	\$1,398.41	\$7,712.06
Total Liabilities + Total Equity		\$322.72	\$1,325.00	\$1,398.41	\$7,712.06

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

While opportunities for improvement are best addressed during a continuous cycle of implement -> assess -> revise, Photo Perspectives plans to make two interdependent areas a main focus for enhancement in FY 2023.

First, enthusiasm and a “let’s jump right in” approach marks the start of any new venture about which one is excited. Bursting at the seams with program ideas, we need to make a concerted effort to focus on one or two and build a successful development and implementation model around those priorities before launching new endeavors full force. Our scholarship offering possesses a good cash award/public recognition theme, but needs to have a cohesive corporate and individual sponsorship solicitation plan if it is to grow. Our Middle School Initiative possesses a more robust long term plan but is a venture into the unknown which will need patience and flexibility. It’s funny how teens and tweens make up their own minds about what is worth their time. Use of our first school-based program location for a multi-year development site puts mission above method as we look to learn from students and school personnel about how to create a better product.



Second, we assembled a unique and talented Board of Directors, yet dramatically underutilized such talent. Less than optimal communication between Board Members paired with a need for better clarity and brevity in messaging to the Board about program goals and development clearly hindered bringing the talents of all involved to bear. As an all volunteer group, we also need to set and feel comfortable expressing realistic goals of Board Member duties against the larger backdrop of family needs, employment, and navigating a worldwide health crisis.

Accordingly, beginning with our annual meeting in July, more focused efforts will be made to:

- Better define Board Member roles and expectations
- Clearly communicate potential program offerings so the Board may direct development authority, timing, and methodology as well as propose their own
- Define and secure commitment to promotion of our organization and match the many different modes of promotional support with individual Board Member’s strengths and interests.
- Respect Board Members service by continually improving brevity and clarity in both written and oral communication with the Board

*The best way to predict the future
is to create it.*
~Abraham Lincoln

The Road Ahead

Although after just acknowledging that we must resist the urge to do everything at once, we also should not fail to recognize that good programming sometimes takes several years of research and design, not to mention fundraising, to bring to fruition. Accordingly, the next few pages of this report suggest some additional concepts to be considered by our board in the months and years ahead. Preliminary brainstorming and discussions about projects to come allow for community contacts to be made, research to be conducted, grants to be written, and corporate sponsors to be solicited.



HOPE

Harvesting Optimism Photographic Exhibit



Out of all the images I have created, I believe this one speaks to me the most. This photograph reflects, and even elicits, otherwise suppressed feelings of solitude, darkness, and despair lurking in the deepest reaches of my soul. Yet, for any who have stood at the edge of the abyss, mindlessly staring out into the darkness, a fundamental truth remains - darkness qualitatively differs from nothingness. Darkness forms one-half of what is probably the most fundamental duality in life.

Darkness cannot exist without light. In fact, it is defined by it. By extension, if photographic imagery can reflect and elicit feelings of darkness, it must possess equal and opposite power to represent and reveal the light. Of course, we all know this to be true.

In a time when the megaphone touted by darkness seems capable of drowning all else out, instead of plugging our ears or burying our heads in the sand, why are we not flooding the world with imagery of light? Photography provides the perfect ability to raise awareness without raising voices, communicate light without engaging the darkness, and capture, display, and distribute hope.

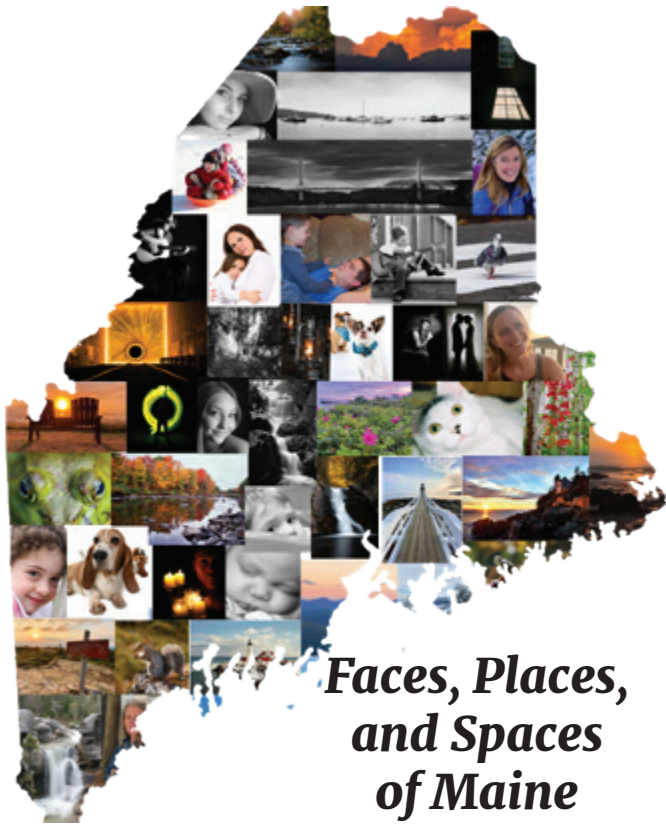
The photograph to the right is one of many outstanding street photographs taken by Board Member, Daniel Scott. Despite this homeless gentleman enduring the harsh cold winter in Vermont without adequate shelter or clothing, the sparkle in his eyes and his subtle smile defy the impact of exposure to the elements and life in general.

Community enhancement through exhibition exists as a potent way to facilitate an understanding of our world and its inhabitants. We have a web page, a Facebook page, an Instagram feed, a Twitter account, and many other opportunities for mass distribution – do we not also have an opportunity – or even an obligation – to inundate the world with positive imagery and inspiring stories? We could solicit imagery with donated, non-exclusive, non-transferable usage rights, from Maine photographers and residents that reflect hope and optimism. We could ask photography teachers across the state to consider it as a possible assignment to students. Whether to display stand alone imagery or imagery with stories, or both, could be considered as part of the larger planning phase.

We are not able to offer donors payment. Also, the IRS ruled that donated artwork that one produces is only deductible to a limit of the materials used to produce it (e.g., frame and printing costs). IRS rules do allow, however, acknowledgment of the artist's donation and a link to their business page (without endorsement). We could also acknowledge the donation on a permanent gallery page dedicated to the image on our website or a placard hung as part of any physical display. In fact, both artists and donors covering framing costs could be acknowledged on a placard attached to the professionally framed print which could then be donated for permanent display in a publicly accessible space in communities across Maine. We might even have a little photo-tour Maine Map on our website where the images can be seen.



©2010 Daniel Scott



The concept behind Faces, Places, and Spaces of Maine involves an always running project to photographically capture Maine and its people. Submissions could be accepted from both individual photographers as well as groups, such as the Girl Scouts, interested in documenting their community. Photo education paired with a specific project could also be implemented (e.g., learning nature and wildlife photography while photographing Mount Hope Cemetery). Online collaboration, training, and submission could occur through The Table Round. The project would produce a perpetually growing exhibit of all things Maine.

Photo Narratives

Learning to produce first person photo narratives of one's life provides a valuable tool that can be used to raise awareness of an observer on the observer's own terms. Raising awareness without raising voices. Photo narrative workshops would provide a several week seminar to groups wishing to document whatever common characteristic members of the group share. The process of documenting one's own life gives space for reflection and greater self-awareness as well as providing an opportunity to exhibit work through which others may learn. Potential topics or groups involve:

- Veterans
- Challenging the stigma of mental illness
- Helping refugee youth and families document their communities and share their life experiences
- LGBTQ+
- Maine's Native American Population
- Pediatric Cancer Patients
- The Challenges of Adolescence
- Homeschooling

An Annual Photo Festival

Conducting an annual photo festival may be an excellent way to unify all other Photo Perspectives' activities. As part of an annual event, we could invite photographer's from around the State to display their work and share their experiences to all who attend. "Booth space rentals" could provide an excellent source of fundraising while doing something positive in our local community. Additionally, an annual festival seems quite marketable to bring corporate sponsors on board. I envision something similar yet different than the Bangor Sidewalk Arts festival. Specifically, our photo festival could include a more educational and experiential component. "TED-type" talks could be given in addition to extensive exhibitions of our visiting artists works as well as providing a comprehensive history of work done within our programs. Vinyl banner printing would provide durable displays that could be hung outside and then stored away for the following year. They could then be displayed the following year along side that year's work.

Given it's proximity to our headquarters, I thought the Brewer Community School would be an excellent event venue. Parking is available. The track provides a fenced in venue safe for all to examine outdoor exhibits. Visiting photographers could rent exhibition space in the gym and performing arts center wing that would protect their work and insure the festival's weather resistance. The community theater provides an excellent opportunity to present talks and narrated exhibits to members of the public.

Attempts to ascertain the cost of renting the theater and gym (if allowed) were unsuccessful. The theater is marketed as rentable to community groups but the only response I could get was that the venue was booked through Fall. I received no response to my clarification follow-up that I was not looking for use this year but wanted to discuss the general cost with our Board at its annual meeting. Given multiple Board Members' strong ties to the Brewer School system, the necessary information should be accessible through one or more of said Members.

A Place to Call Home

Renovating a local building to provide a photo gallery/training facility to the community is a goal best considered after firmly establishing our organization. Any such effort, however, will obviously require a major capital campaign that can be brainstormed about on an ongoing basis.

THE FINAL FRAME



***Rain is wet
wherever
you live.***