Shawna Foundation

INVESTING IN ART THAT SPEAKS TRUTH

Shawna E. Shea Memorial Foundation, Inc.
An arts and educational nonprofit
A tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charitable organization pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code
EIN 47-4742570
www.shawnafoundation.org

About Shawna

On August 11, 1999, our lives changed forever. Shawna Shea, daughter of Skip Shea and twin sister of Erin Porter, died in a car accident on a summer night. All dreams, possibilities and things we'll never know or could imagine left the world that night. She was 16, talented, creative and most of all, fiercely independent. At this very tender age, and even before that, she gravitated to those who lived in the margins of life. And even though she's no longer here, we aim to continue what started with Shawna: honoring creativity and independence and giving people a chance.

In 2000, family friends Jane Mitchell and Jill Vahey established a scholarship for Uxbridge High School graduating seniors and shortly after, Erin and her friends organized a town-wide walk that raised $10,000 in one day. Since then, we have continuously awarded over $45,000 in scholarships to average students, like Shawna, to help them pursue their dreams.

OUR MISSION

We believe the arts and education are essential to creating a vibrant, healthy community and world.

The mission of the Shawna Foundation is to equitably promote and support students through scholarship and showcase artists in filmmaking, performance arts, poetry and other creative endeavors with a focus on underrepresented communities.

HOW THE ARTS IMPACT SOCIETY, THE ECONOMY AND THE WELLBEING OF HUMANITY

Arts improve individual well-being.

Approximately 70 percent of the population believe the arts “lift me up beyond everyday experiences,” 73 percent feel the arts give them “pure pleasure to experience and participate in,” and 81 percent say the arts are a “positive experience in a troubled world.”

Arts strengthen the economy.

The production of all arts and cultural goods in the U.S. adds about $800 billion to the economy, including a $25 billion international trade surplus — a larger share of the nation’s economy than transportation, tourism, and agriculture. The nonprofit arts industry alone generates about $165 billion in economic activity annually which supports 4.6 million jobs.

Arts drive tourism and revenue to local businesses.

Attendees at nonprofit arts events spend about $35 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission on items such as meals, parking, and babysitters — valuable commerce for local businesses. Arts travelers are ideal tourists, staying longer and spending more to seek out authentic cultural experiences.

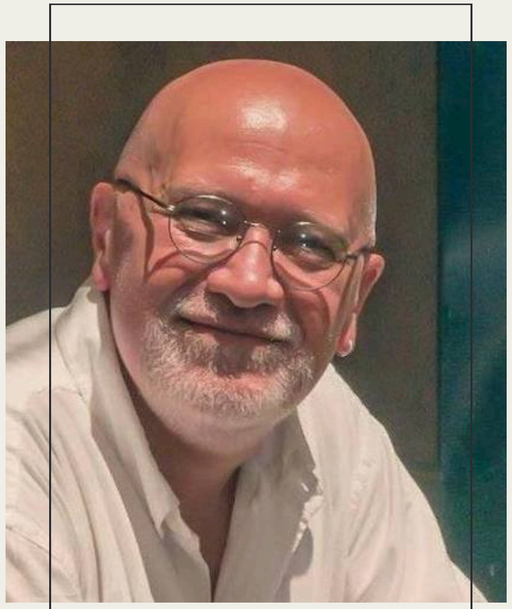
Arts drive the creative industries.

The Creative Industries are arts businesses that range from nonprofit museums, symphonies, and theaters to for-profit film, architecture, and design companies. An analysis of Dun & Bradstreet data counts approximately 673,000 businesses in the U.S. involved in the creation or distribution of the arts — 4.01 percent of all businesses and 2.04 percent of all employees.

Arts spark creativity and innovation.

Creativity is among the top 5 applied skills sought by business leaders, with 72 percent saying creativity is of high importance when hiring. Research on creativity shows that Nobel laureates in the sciences are 17 times more likely to be actively engaged in the arts than other scientists.

MEET THE TEAM



Executive Director
Skip Shea

Board of Directors

Anna Chinappi ~ President

Erin Shea Porter ~ Vice President

Andrew Chinappi ~ Director

Jason Porter ~ Director

Christine Celozzi ~ Director

Demetri Kasperson ~ Director

Gregg Bertonazzi ~ Director

SCHOLARSHIPS THAT CARRY A LEGACY FORWARD

Since 2001, the Shawna E. Shea Memorial Foundation, Inc. proudly awards annual scholarships to high school graduates in Uxbridge and Worcester who embody Shawna's strength, creativity, fierce independence, and compassionate spirit.

These scholarships honor young people who, like Shawna, ride their own wave — individuals with bold voices, independent minds, and a drive to uplift others through their presence in the world.

·**We offer three separate scholarships:**

The Shawna E. Shea Memorial Scholarship — the original scholarship, first established in 2001.
The Shawna E. Shea Scholarship in Memory of Michael Liberty, Shawna's cousin, whose life was also tragically cut short. This scholarship honors the deep bond they shared.
The Shawna E. Shea Nursing Scholarship in Memory of Alana Phoenix, Shawna's sister, who passed away after battling ALS. Alana was a nurse and dedicated caregiver. This scholarship is awarded to a student pursuing a career in nursing or healthcare.

OUR PROGRAMS

Shawna Shea Film Festival

Established in 2012, the Shawna Shea Film Festival (SSFF) is a fringe independent international film festival. Our goal is to give maximum exposure to films that push artistic boundaries. SSFF brings out the best independent film artists -- locally, nationally and from all over the world and creates a community cultural experience like no other.

Massachusetts Independent Film Festival

A showcase for locally produced films as well as from around the world made by truly independent filmmakers. We screen the best of contemporary independent filmmaking in all genres: drama, experimental, comedy, horror, slow cinema, sci fi, fantasy, animation, documentary, and more.

Creating Dangerously Podcast

With hosts Skip Shea, Patrick Bracken and Andrea Wolanin, we explore artists past and present who are doing their part to “create dangerously” in an attempt to make sense of a world that often makes no sense at all. The title is based on an Albert Camus lecture he gave in 1957. Find it everywhere you listen to podcasts.

Women in Film Fellowship

Since 2015, we have and continue to support first-time female filmmakers in the spirit of independence, creativity and artistry. The Women in Film Fellowship comes with a monetary award and a year-long mentorship from a variety of professionals in the filmmaking and arts community, led by Emmy-nominated and award-winning director and writer Skip Shea.

OUR PROGRAMS

Library Poetry Tour

Libraries are often the cultural hub of communities and what better place to hear live poetry readings and support our libraries. We bring local well-known poets to the people to read and perform their work, expanding the cultural literacy of many who have never heard the spoken word live, in real time. Supported in part by grants from the Milford and Uxbridge Cultural Councils, funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Patreon

The Shawna Foundation on Patreon Our Patreon site is a curated space where we share exclusive creative content that reflects our mission to support independent voices in film, poetry, and the arts. Subscribers gain access to UnderGround Thursdays, a monthly film screening series featuring cult, forgotten, and culturally important films; behind-the-scenes insights & interviews; poetry performances and archival readings from our Library Poetry Tour. It's a place for supporters and creators to connect over shared values of artistic freedom.

Pop-up Art Exhibits & Performance Art

Our pop-up events are designed to create a unique, immersive experience showcasing artwork in a unique way. Think empty storefronts, warehouses, or outdoor spaces curated with art, interactive installations, and multimedia pieces.

Silent Cinema Concerts

We occassionally present classic silent films to audiences with the added layer of live music performed to synchronize with the arc of the movie, and with the musicians' own interpretation of the film, giving filmgoers a one-of-a-kind performance and cinema experience.

WE ARE GLOBAL WITH A FILM FESTIVAL IN ITALY

In 2024, we realized one of our major goals for expansion: The Shawna Foundation established the Scandriglia Film Festival in the beautiful medieval hilltop village of Scandriglia just outside of Rome. There is a story here and the stars aligned to deliver us to this point. And now with three film festivals under the Foundation umbrella, we are a truly international arts organization. The inaugural event took place on Oct. 12, 2024, and will continue biennally.

For more information and details, visit the official film festival site at filmfreeway.com/ScandrigliaFilmFestival

SCANDRIGLIA FILM FESTIVAL

FISCAL SPONSOR PROGRAM

Got a Dream Project? We'll Help You Fund It.

If you are an artist, filmmaker, writer, or cultural organizer with a powerful project — but no nonprofit status, the Shawna Foundation's Fiscal Sponsor Program can help.

We provide the nonprofit umbrella so you can:

- Accept tax-deductible donations
- Apply for grants
- Focus on your creative work — not the paperwork

If your project lifts up underrepresented voices through the arts, we want to hear from you.

Interested parties can email us at **shawnafoundation@gmail.com**

You create. We support. Let's make it happen.

SHAWNA FOUNDATION
For Creatives
FISCAL SPONSORSHIP

OUR NUMBERS

Since 2015
incorporated & operating as a 501(c)3

1,800
email subscribers

1,500
projected podcast downloads year one - 35% from outside the US

12,000
social media reach

3
separate film festivals: SSFF, MassIFF, and our newest in Scandriglia, Italy, just outside Rome

550
*films submitted **annually**, 30% from outside the US.*

PATH TO GROWTH ~ PROGRAMS IN DEVELOPMENT

International Cultural Exchange

Our family in Rome are generational furniture craftsmen and artisans and with the new generation of artists, designers and furniture artisans, we are developing an international art exchange in which artists from Rome collaborate and share their work, techniques, and cultural influences. By engaging in creative dialogue and shared projects, artists gain fresh inspiration and broaden their artistic horizons, fostering a global community of creativity and innovation.

Student Film Showcase

Plans for a student film showcase event is in development. It is a curated film festival where aspiring young filmmakers from various academic institutions present their short films and projects with a diverse array of genres and styles, highlighting the creativity and innovation of student filmmakers. Includes Q&A sessions with the creators. The showcase provides a platform for young talent to gain visibility, receive feedback, and network, fostering the next generation of filmmakers.

Publishing House

Establising a publishing house as an offshoot of the Shawna Foundation is our goal to on amplifying diverse voices and fostering creativity through published works across various genres, including fiction, poetry, and non-fiction, particularly those that align with our mission of promoting independent cultural and artistic expression. By providing resources and support to emerging and underrepresented authors, the publishing house endeavors to enrich the literary landscape while sustaining the non-profit's broader commitment to the arts.

Thank you.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING TOGETHER!

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