

From: [Michael Behrendt](#)
Subject: Dover Road #81 - email from Gemma Soldati
Date: Monday, November 6, 2023 10:50:28 AM

To the Planning Board,
Please see the email below.

Michael Behrendt

Durham Town Planner
8 Newmarket Road
Durham, NH 03824
(603) 868-8064

From: Gemma Soldati <gemma.soldati@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 6:42 PM
To: Michael Behrendt <mbehrendt@ci.durham.nh.us>
Cc: jennifer@artsinreach.org
Subject: Letter of Support - Arts in Reach

You don't often get email from gemma.soldati@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mr. Behrendt,

This email is intended as a letter of support for Arts in Reach as they pursue a space in Durham for their organization.

I live on the seacoast and grew up in Strafford County (Somersworth). When I was a kid I knew I wanted to be a performer, but there were very few resources available to me at that time. I certainly didn't see any adults living the life I dreamed of. With the support of my parents, I left the state to pursue these dreams in New York and Los Angeles for many years. I was able to find many resources in these cities and even more opportunities to become what I had always hoped was possible. During the pandemic I moved home to Somersworth and soon thereafter was hired by Arts in Reach to teach performing and comedy. What I saw in those rooms were teens just like me.

Individuals who are full of creativity and hungry for connection. It has been a privilege to both work with these teens and to stand as an example for them in their own community of a professional artist who is supported by and contributing to the seacoast arts and culture.

The work AIR does goes beyond arts programming. It is raising the future leaders of our state, and teaching them that collaboration, imagination and accessibility are paramount to our community and its success. Many do not realize this, but they're also one of the biggest employers of statewide creative talent as their roster of teaching artists over the years paints an incredible portrait of what New Hampshire has to offer the arts.

I've seen the extra workload the AIR staff must shoulder to offer these programs without a physical home, and I believe that if they were to finally have their own space, the impact of this incredible organization would be even greater for its next 26 years. Moreover, the real winner in all this is Durham. You would be so lucky to have Arts in Reach in your community, as everything they touch is all the better for it.

Sincerely,
Gemma Soldati