

From: [Michael Behrendt](#)
Subject: Dover Road #81 - email from Laura Portalupi
Date: Monday, November 6, 2023 4:53:14 PM

To the Planning Board,
Please see the email from Laura Portalupi below.

Michael Behrendt

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

From: Laura Portalupi <laura@artsinreach.org>
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 2:34 PM
To: Michael Behrendt <mbehrendt@ci.durham.nh.us>
Cc: Jennifer Minicucci <jennifer@artsinreach.org>
Subject: [Letter of support] Conditional use application submitted by Arts In Reach

You don't often get email from laura@artsinreach.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mr. Behrendt,

It's an honor to write this letter of support for the conditional use application submitted by Arts In Reach for the use of 81 Dover Road as a community center. As a relatively new employee at Arts In Reach, I feel I am uniquely positioned to share why I wholeheartedly support this application.

I moved to the New Hampshire Seacoast less than a year ago, to be near my parents, who are 10+ year residents of Newmarket. While neither of my parents is from this area, they chose to retire here, having met at UNH in the 1970s. I have always enjoyed "coming home" to visit, feeling that the Seacoast community is a special place.

Prior to my recent move to Dover, I lived and worked in the San Francisco Bay Area in community building and community management. I have years of experience working in nonprofit organizations and community-based organizations, and I have a Master of Social Work degree with an emphasis on community and organizational leadership.

As I settle into my new community, I feel grateful to have landed at Arts In Reach. Family and teen testimonials demonstrate that the experience of participating in Arts In Reach programs exceeds their expectations in terms of providing teens with a supportive, inclusive, and accessible space, as well as building confidence, healthy

relationships, and an ability to express themselves in a meaningful—and joyful—way.

The Arts In Reach program model thoughtfully developed by my coworker Cara Cabral and skillfully implemented by our program leaders Cara, Haley Searcy, and Liliana Mangan leverages cutting-edge research on what actually works to create positive, long-term changes in young people. Having a stable physical *third space* is a big part of this and serves a critical role in the development of young people's sense of community, connectedness, and well-being. [Dr. Danielle Littman](#) and others have demonstrated this in their research on teens, social marginalization, and third spaces.

I also believe that Arts In Reach establishing a home in Durham will be an excellent complement to UNH. The organization is meeting key prosocial needs of youth in critical developmental stages prior to entering college. It is my hope that the Planning Board approves this application so that Arts In Reach can establish a space in Durham for our young people to flourish.

Below I've included a few testimonials from families. Thank you so much for your time and consideration of this letter of support.

Sincerely,
Laura Portalupi (she/her)

Operations Manager | Arts In Reach
PO Box 236 | Portsmouth, NH 03802 | 603-433-4278 | www.artsinreach.org

Arts In Reach inspires teenage girls and gender-expansive youth to be brave, elevate their voices, and create the lives they imagine.

Arts In Reach Testimonials from Families

“This program is a treasure! My daughter loved every second. She said that she had never been in a group where every member was kind and supportive of every other member.”

“[My teen] has had issues staying connected with friends. AIR was so welcoming and fun that I can already tell [my teen] is willing to step outside and connect with not only people, but also nature and music. Thank you! It was truly a gift for our family.”

“Thank you for all the heart and soul you pour into these amazing programs. This is literally life changing. We can't wait for the next round.”