



Photo: Kelli Uldall

Young Artists Benefit From Pandemic-Era Programs

BY RENEE BRINCKS

Marcia Perry and Meg Biddle are cofounders of YAC (Youth Arts Collective) in Monterey. They have stayed connected to the community with online and outdoor events.

Like many studio and gallery spaces, Monterey's Youth Arts Collective (YAC) temporarily closed last March due to COVID-19. When they should have been celebrating 20 years of their nonprofit, YAC co-founders Marcia Perry and Meg Biddle were outlining new studio, exhibition and mentorship opportunities for local high schoolers.

YAC staffers facilitated social media chats, led online workshops and organized outdoor meet-ups. They also delivered art supplies and scheduled video sessions to connect artists sheltered at home. Many important conversations started with a simple question: How are you doing?

"That was always our first question when students came into YAC. We pay attention to how they are and how we can help," says

Biddle.

The YAC team expanded its website, too, adding pages that feature meet-the-student-artist videos and links to YAC's new online store. Organizers moved the popular annual LiveART and annual holiday art show events online. Virtual events continue this spring.

"We didn't know, when we shut down in March, what would happen to a small arts nonprofit in the height of so much need for essential services. But, what we've found is even stronger support and huge encouragement that the community wants us to survive this," says Perry.

For event updates and to support the Youth Arts Collective, please visit yacstudios.org