



PRESS RELEASE

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Meet the Inaugural Artists and Cultural Managers of the Sedona Summer Colony

Sedona Arts Center and Verde Valley School Partner to Establish a New American Residency Program for Artists and Cultural Managers

The Verde Valley School and Sedona Arts Center boards of directors are excited to announce the establishment of a new American [residency program](#) for artists and cultural managers. The inaugural Sedona Summer Colony will begin on June 19, when over 125 creative people begin arriving to will inhabit the campus and become part of our high elevation desert community.

"They are musicians, ceramic artists, choreographers, poets, film-makers, organization directors, and documentarians," said Eric Holowacz, Executive Director of Sedona Arts Center who co-founded the program with the Head of Verde Valley School, Paul Amadio. "Our summer guests come representing significant 21st century cultural production—from as far away as [Hobart, Tasmania](#); [Helsinki, Finland](#); [Auckland, New Zealand](#); and [Manitoba, Canada](#). While here, Sedona will be their host and summertime home."

The idea for Sedona Summer Colony was inspired by the original artist retreats, like [Yaddo](#), [MacDowell](#), [Hambidge Center](#), [Villa Montalvo](#) in California, and the [American Academy in Rome](#). Those organizations—emerging from the early 20th century—were built upon a strong belief in the power of interdisciplinary associations of artists. They built communities based on the regular gathering of cultural visionaries, the provision of creative resources, and the sharing of meals, excursions, spontaneous interaction, and daily life.

"Our goal is to do something similar in Sedona, and build a [21st century model](#) for the most interesting creative people we can find—without imposing or demanding much from them," said Amadio.

While in residence this summer, visiting artists will be provided with opportunities to explore the unique red rock landscapes, connect with Southwest heritage, engage with our active creative community, and become immersed in Sedona's modern-day sense of place.

"At the very heart of the idea is a guest-host relationship providing time and space—and ready support for the creative process—here in our village-like desert environment," said Amadio. "Sedona Summer Colony residents will also have the simple opportunity to get away from their familiar home routines, and find quiet contemplation and solitude in one of the [most beautiful places](#) on Earth."

Sedona arts supporters can get involved by volunteering, providing charitable support, or donating materials and much needed items. Verde Valley School and Sedona Arts Center will host a [Launch Party and Open House](#) on the campus quad on Tuesday, May 31 from 5 to 7pm. The public is invited to attend, learn about the inaugural Sedona Summer Colony and the incoming artists, and celebrate the beginning of this cultural development partnership.

"The [Open House on May 31st](#) will be a chance to learn how artist residencies work, tour the campus,



become a volunteer or local guide, and [contribute to the initiative](#)," said Holowacz

When asked why build a major new residency program for artists and cultural managers in Sedona, Amadio and Holowacz answer in unison: Because artists and producers are active ingredients in 21st century American culture—they reveal who and what we are, in endlessly magical and challenging ways. What they do, in essence, is advance our humanity. And because Sedona deserves an entity and legacy like the [MacDowell Colony](#) in New Hampshire, [Aspen Institute](#), [Yaddo](#) in Upstate New York, [Hambidge Center](#) in Georgia, and [Chautauqua](#). Those legacies can be cultivated here

The seed for the Sedona Summer Colony was first planted in November 2015 with the first meeting between Holowacz and Amadio. Both had arrived in Sedona a few months before, taking over well-established, but staid organizations. Both came with a vision for change and community-building—and both had boards and trustees that were ready for big ideas.

[Holowacz](#), with a background in [festival production](#), [arts facilities](#), and [cultural engineering](#), proposed the idea of using the vacant summer campus to invite and house creative people from all over the world. [Amadio](#), who also had experience with summer residency programs and an earlier career as a stage performer, saw a ready partnership that would enhance local identity and build new relationships.

"By playing generous host, we saw the opportunity to offer our Sedona Summer Colony residents a life-long relationship with our community and its unique environment," said Holowacz. "If we get it right, they'll go home with new discoveries, unimagined inspiration, and a deeper knowledge of the Verde Valley's undeniable sense of place. That is the underlying spiritual goal and the basis for this partnership."

In early 2016, the two local organizations continued working on the model for the inaugural program, adding volunteers, like local performing arts impresario Winnie Muench and arts management interns, Claire Pearson, Amber Engelmann, and Talya Reynolds. Project manager Carol Holyoake was recruited to join the leadership team in late May, and will oversee campus and residency logistics this summer. Creative people and potential residents were researched, invited and selected from all corners of North America and a few from abroad. And finally, resources and grant funding were put in place this spring to support start-up operations, excursions, and program needs.

"This is a major step for both our organizations, and for the way that the world looks at Sedona," said Holowacz. "We [invite our local creative community to join us](#), contribute in some way, and help Sedona Summer Colony become the next great American artist residency program."

The [Sedona Summer Colony Launch Party](#) is planned for Tuesday, May 31 from 5 to 7pm, on the [campus of Verde Valley School](#). The public is invited, and can RSVP to (928) 282-3809.

To learn more about this Sedona Arts Center and Verde Valley School partnership, become a volunteer, donate housing or services, or support Sedona Summer Colony in any way, [contact Eric Holowacz](#) at (928) 487-0887.

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