

# I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

**One page only.** This page will be shared electronically with Grant Committee Members & Fund Advisors.  
Note: If Philanthropy Network Greater Philadelphia's Common Grant Application is used, the CCCF's Summary Sheet **MUST** accompany application. To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit [www.chescocf.org](http://www.chescocf.org)

**Date: 2/1/2015**

## Contact Information:

Organization Name: Wharton Esherick Museum  
Address: Mailing: P.O. Box 595, Paoli, PA 19301  
Physical: 1520 Horseshoe Trail, Malvern, PA 19355  
Contact E-mail: [director@whartonesherickmuseum.org](mailto:director@whartonesherickmuseum.org)  
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Contact Name: Paul Eisenhauer  
Contact Title: Executive Director/Curator  
Fax: 610-644-2244  
Year Incorporated: 1971

Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation? Yes  No  Not Sure   
Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation? Yes  No  Not Sure   
 Donor Advised Fund(s)  Fund for Chester County  Don't know/Not sure

## Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities  Environment/Animal Welfare  Education  
 Health  Human Services  Religion

## Organization Information:

**Geographic Area Served** (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):

All of Chester County

## **Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served:**

The Wharton Esherick Museum provides guided tours to an average of 5000 visitors annually. The majority of visitors come from the tri-states area, we receive visitors from across the country and many foreign countries. Last year, 10% of tours were for special interest groups including: schools, universities, museums, senior centers, special needs groups, libraries, Questers, and art centers. Additionally, 11 colleges brought a total of 119 students, and twelve K-12 schools brought 260 students.

## **Mission:**

The Wharton Esherick Museum preserves, exhibits, interprets and promotes the artistic creations of Wharton Esherick, including his studio-home, workshop, objects and archives, so that audiences everywhere can appreciate, study and be inspired by Esherick's life and work.

## **Proposal Summary:**

The Museum seeks general operating support for our 2015 season, particularly to support our recent growth and new children's tours. These will be hands-on tours to stimulate children's imagination using Wharton's imaginative approach to functional design.

## **If Capacity Building Proposal:**

Mission, Vision & Strategy  Governance & Leadership  Strategic Relationships  
 Fundraising & Development  Operations  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual Budget** \$\_(2014) 297,000;\_\_(2015) 428,000\_\_\_\_\_

3 (current); hiring one more in 2015\_\_\_\_\_ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

\_\_76\_\_\_\_\_ % of budget for program expenses      \_\_\_\_9\_\_\_\_ # of Board Volunteers

\_\_21\_\_\_\_\_ % of budget for administrative expenses \_\_\_\_25\_\_\_\_ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

\_\_3\_\_\_\_\_ % of budget for fundraising expenses      \_\_\_\_995\_\_\_\_ # of Volunteer Hours

*100 % total*

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Chester County Community Foundation (Wharton Esherick Museum Preservation Fund)

David A and Helen Horn Charitable Trust

Meacham Family Foundation

Salmon foundation

Grant Amount Requested from CCCF: \$\_10,000\_\_\_\_\_

## II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

*Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.*

### 1. Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

Wharton Esherick was a sculptor who believed that anything with a form could be sculpture, and that art should be a part of life, not locked away in museums. His home and studio are a testament to his beliefs -- every part, from the buildings themselves, down through the furniture and furnishings, the door handles, coat pegs and switch-covers were handcrafted by this unique and imaginative artist.

Near the end of Esherick's life, his heirs agreed that this significant collection was much greater than the sum of its parts. Following Wharton Esherick's death in 1970, a group of family and friends decided to preserve his studio/home as it was during his life and make them available for public viewing and for scholarly research. In November, 1971 the Wharton Esherick Museum was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as a non-profit corporation. The doors of the studio opened to the public in September, 1972.

The Museum's goals are clearly stated in our mission: to preserve, exhibit, interpret and promote the artistic creations of Wharton Esherick, so that audiences everywhere can appreciate, study and be inspired by Esherick's life and work. This is accomplished primarily through guided tours of the studio, though Museum staff also travel to community groups to provide programs. In addition to the studio tour, the visitor center gallery allows us to present three exhibitions a year. [website](#)

The Museum has also been actively engaged in a publication program that has resulted in a major biography of Esherick, a studio catalog, two exhibition catalogs, and an award winning reproduction of Esherick's illuminated and illustrated version of Walt Whitman's *Song of the Broad-Axe*. In the spring we will be reprinting Mary Marcy's *Rhymes of Early Jungle Folk*, with 78 woodcut illustrations by Wharton Eshrick.

To encourage and inspire working artists and aspiring artists, the Museum holds two competitions each year: a high school student woodcut print competition and a thematic woodworkers' competition. The high school woodcut competition awards cash prizes to both the winning students and their school art departments. The thematic woodworkers' competition, in its 22<sup>nd</sup> year, attracts applicants from across the country and from around the world. The Museum also presents an annual woodcut award for the best woodcut student at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and an award for excellence in wood at the Philadelphia Museum of Art's annual Contemporary Craft Show.

The Museum seeks to collaborate with other institutions to present exhibitions that are beyond the scope of our current facilities. The Museum has received awards for its collaborative exhibitions with the University of Pennsylvania and Historic Yellow Springs.

In 1994 the site was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and named a National Historic Landmark for Architecture. Mansfield and Ruth Esherick Bascom, the Museum's founders and stewards, have received several awards for their efforts preserving and presenting Esherick's studio.

In 2009 the Museum began a process of transition, as the property and the Museum collection were transferred from the Esherick family to the Museum. A strategic plan was developed to facilitate the

transfer. In 2012 the Museum completed the purchase of the collection from the family. In 2013, the property was placed under a conservation easement with Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia and deeded to the Museum. In 2014, the Museum began a strategic planning process to plot out the next stages of development, which included building a caretaker's cottage that would include curatorial storage and work area.

Before the planning process was completed, an opportunity arose for the Museum to purchase Wharton Esherick's original farmhouse and barn, situated on property adjacent to the Museum. The buildings would provide the needed expansion without requiring the construction of a new building on the property. In addition, the historical link to Esherick's early life in Chester County would allow the Museum to better fulfill its mission by more fully interpreting Esherick's life and work. The new buildings would also provide space for education and other programs not originally considered in the earlier strategic planning. The Museum is now working to modify and expand its strategic plan to take into account these new opportunities.

## **2. Funding request:**

- **Description of key initiatives**

The request is for general operating support, with particular emphasis on a) helping us meet the costs of our recent expansion while our new strategic and financial plans are developed, and b) to help us implement our new children's tours.

- **Specific needs and issues to be addressed**

a) The purchase of the Esherick farmhouse was an unexpected opportunity. The board felt that it was important to seize the opportunity, as it may not come again. This addition has more than doubled the square footage of our buildings and our acreage. The utilities, maintenance costs and insurance have all increased in proportion. Our current strategic planning will include a new business model that will help us meet these increased costs in the future, but we need help covering the costs while we develop and implement the new plan.

b) As schools have faced tighter budgets, school visits to the Museum have decreased. The Museum believes that children are an important part of our constituency. Children enjoy Esherick's creativity. They connect with his sense of play. The children's tours are an attempt to get more children to the Museum, to allow them to experience Esherick's magic and make up for the decline in school group tours.

- **Organizational impact if initiative is undertaken**

a) The farm house and barn provide a number of opportunities to expand our programming and better serve our community. We will have space that can be used for community meetings, lectures and programs. The space can also be used for educational programs, allowing us to better serve school groups. It will also allow us to have proper climate controlled archival and curatorial storage space to protect our collections. Currently we do not have proper storage space for our collection items that are not on display.

To achieve these goals, proper planning is essential. The operating support will help us to continue providing inspiration, education and enjoyment to our community while we develop the plans that will allow us to have manageable growth and achieve a more sustainable business model.

b) The impact will be that we will have more children visit the Museum, which helps us achieve our mission. Children are also the future of the Museum. Creating positive experiences bring children back and make them lifelong supporters. Visitors regularly report how they came as children, and tell us how their visit has affected their lives. As children, they brought their families back for tours; as adults, they bring their own children back to see the Museum. This type of commitment is essential for the survival of the Museum.

In addition, specialized tours are one way to diversify our audience and provide a greater variety of visitor experiences. The children's tours are the first of several specialized tours to be rolled out in the future. We also hope that the knowledge we gain from the children's tours will help us develop a more robust education program that will help bring back school group tours to their previous levels.

- **Activities to implement the initiative. Please include a description of the expected activities; timeline and costs to implement the initiative. If external consulting services are required, include the anticipated costs and expertise of the consultants to be hired**

a) No special activities are required to implement this initiative. The support will allow us to meet our increased operating costs.

b) The planning for the children's tours was supported in 2014 by the David A. and Helen P. Horn Charitable Trust. The requested operating support will allow us to devote more time and staff energy to the implementation of this new program.

- **Why it is important to fund this now**

As discussed above, the opportunity to expand the Museum by purchasing the Esherick farmhouse and barn were not anticipated or expected, but the benefits of the acquisition were too significant for the board to pass up. We need general operating support to help us meet the increased expenses while we keep providing the services we have provided to the community for the past 42 years, and while we plan for a more active and sustainable future.

### **3. How impact and results will be demonstrated**

The Museum's operations are monitored by the board of directors. Monthly financial statements are examined by the board's finance committee.

The Museum has tracked annual attendance for throughout its operation. The success of our work shows up in our attendance. Because the children's tours are in a fixed time slot, we will be able to measure the demand for the tours by the reservations for that time slot. We use qualitative measures of visitor engagement to judge the success of the tours. Because the tour groups are small, the docents can judge the visitors engagement both during and after the tour.