

I am excited to begin a short column in the MFEA monthly newsletter about various topics surrounding festivals and events! My name is Ashley Rop, I am proud to be representing Chelsea Area Festivals & Events while serving my first year on the MFEA Board of Directors. I recently graduated from the University of Michigan Flint with a Masters in Arts Administration, gaining experience and knowledge in fundraising, marketing, aesthetics, budgeting, and production. As a Board Member, I will use my energy and passion for the arts and our Michigan communities to advocate and broaden opportunities for our members.

This month, we are focusing on **Youth Engagement**. I think it is important to define youth as not only school aged children but also young adults and define engagement as participation in events and educational opportunities, volunteering, and advocating. Michigan is rich in educated youth with 22.4% of the state population being under 18, 88.9% of the state population with a high school diploma, and 25.9% of the state population with a bachelor's degree or higher. Our youth and young adults have a tremendous amount of knowledge and energy to provide to our events, festivals, and communities.

We can reach and engage our youth through **partnering with local youth organizations**, such as Boys & Girls Club, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, school athletic boosters, and church groups, just to name a few. These partnerships can include involving our youth in the activities we provide, volunteer opportunities, or fundraising booths. The youth that get involved can also contribute to boosting your **social media** presence. Encouraging the use of Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter during your events can allow your particular event or mission reach more potential sponsors/donor, attendees, vendors, etc.

Many people are unaware of the programs, such as arts administration, that prepare our young adults for **leadership roles** in festivals and event organizations. The University of Michigan Flint, Michigan State University, Adrian College, Eastern Michigan University, and Western Michigan University, all have higher education programs focusing on arts administration. Communicating with these schools would be extremely helpful in finding an intern or new hire, as the majority of higher education programs require an internship to graduate, as well as providing access to wealth of information related to our work.

More conversation around youth engagement can be found at the MFEA 23rd Annual Convention at Boyne Mountain Resort in Boyne City, MI. **Sean King**, the Director of Marketing & Communications for Youth Education in the Arts (YEA!), will be presenting on Friday, November 6. YEA! is a non-profit organization based in Allentown, Pennsylvania that engages youth through music. His discussions surrounding his experience in marketing and youth engagement will be a strong session at our convention, you will not want to miss it!

Links to Arts Administration Programs

MSU - <http://www.cal.msu.edu/arts-management/>

EMU - http://catalog.emich.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=19&poid=9747

U of M Flint - <https://www.umflint.edu/graduateprograms/arts-administration-ma>

Adrian College - <http://adrian.edu/academics/academic-departments/music/>

WMU - http://catalog.wmich.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=8&poid=1642&returnto=205

Sean King Bio - <http://artsmarketing.org/bio/profile/king-sean>