50 Years of Creativity, Connection & Community

LUX Impact Report
2025-2026

LUX began nearly 50 years ago...

... as an idea hatched in a University Place café – a place for Nebraska Wesleyan art students to show their work. After moving between two buildings in Uni Place, the organization found a permanent home when Gladys LUX, a longtime Nebraska Wesleyan art professor, purchased the historic former Uni Place City Hall. It became LUX Center for the Arts.

Since then, LUX has grown enormously, always in service of one mission: high-quality arts education. Beyond exhibitions and classes, LUX built a nationally recognized Artist-in-Residence program, sending artists throughout Nebraska and beyond to create and teach. For 16 years, LUX has brought arts instruction to after-school programs at Title I schools, and since 2017, it's provided scholarships for students across Lincoln's 26 Title I schools.

Calling LUX "Lincoln's community arts center" almost undersells it. LUX is a regional leader in arts education for adults and children alike. Generations of Lincoln kids have spent their summers at LUX camps, and adult learners return to its classrooms year after year, drawn as much by the people as the projects. Under its board and leadership, LUX has grown from a small nonprofit into a well-established one, with a wider reach and more opportunities to learn and make art. Our staff are professionals, and our infrastructure is stronger than it's ever been.

At 50 years, we want to mark what LUX has built. Over the next year, you'll see a series of 50th Anniversary events, and we hope you'll join us for as many as you can.

This is also the perfect moment to help shape what comes next. If you've valued what LUX has meant to you, your family, or this community, please consider making a gift this year – it goes directly toward keeping our programs running for the next generation of students and artists.

Come celebrate with us in 2027.

Thank you, as always, for being part of this. Fifty years of art in Lincoln happened because people like you showed up for it.

Joe Shaw,
LUX Executive Director

Arts Education & Community Outreach

In 2025–26, LUX classes, workshops, and camps reached 2,035 students across our four studios – from first-time painters to lifelong makers. Revenue from camps and classes grew, adult class attendance rose, and our continued focus on classroom engagement with artist instructors is resonating deeply with students.

Our nationally selected Artists-in-Residence set the tone for our curriculum, offering the community a wide range of media and techniques through their own artistic practice. More than teachers, they're mentors who model what's possible when art meets dedication.

This year marked sixteen years of after-school arts clubs in Title 1 schools, reaching 161 students at Huntington, Norwood Park, West Lincoln, and Arnold Elementary. Two to three instructors led small groups of about 8 in drawing, painting, ceramics, printmaking, and sculpture – building not just technical skill, but confidence, emotional well-being, and belonging.

Beyond our walls, an 18-year partnership with United Way and Family Literacy programs reached 531 individuals. Scholarships continued opening doors: now in its ninth year, the Art Scholar Program supported more than 50 Title 1 students and community members discovering the joy of art.

A Gift to Lincoln

"I don't think people truly understand what a gift LUX is to the Lincoln community until they come here and participate."

– Nancy Gade,
Studio Member

Tina Reeble & Madison Svendgard

TINA REEBLE

MADISON SVENDGARD

Together, these two have transformed how we plan and organize art classes – creating experiences that truly resonate with our lifelong learning students and our children's classes alike, elevating the classroom experience and growing average class sizes along the way.

Tina Reeble joined us after a long career at Dimensions Foundation. As an early childhood education expert, she brings a depth of insight that's helping ensure our educational programs remain second to none.

Madison Svendgard is a vital part of our Education team. She joined us after serving as an Artist-in-Residence, bringing sharp organizational skills and firsthand knowledge of art education to everything she does.

In their short time with us, they've already increased average class size and built classes students are genuinely excited about.

Full Circle: 2019 Art Scholar Comes Back to Give

In 2019, Melina Marik was one of LUX's Art Scholar recipients – a middle schooler unsure where to start. "I was terrified looking at all the options," she remembers. "What do I want to put my time and work into, as well as these funds that were so generously given to me?"

She chose ceramics, a medium outside her usual pen-and-paper comfort zone, and ended up loving it. A painting class that touched on woodworking planted a seed she wouldn't recognize until years later, in a college printmaking studio, when she picked up a carving tool and knew exactly how to handle it.

Today, Melina is a senior at the Kansas City Art Institute, majoring in Illustration with a minor in Entrepreneurial Studies. She's curated three campus exhibitions, designed posters for student shows, and worked with professional artists on gallery openings. "The fundamentals I learned at LUX lended a lot to my current skills," she says. "It was definitely a foundation to my current ability to produce art."

This year, Melina returned to LUX as a volunteer, hoping to "give back to the place where my journey in the arts began to flourish." Her advice to students who follow her: don't be afraid of the class you wouldn't normally choose – it might become your favorite.

"Your donations are incredibly important – they give students who might not otherwise have the opportunity a chance to explore different fields in the art industry and expand their horizons."

Melina Marik,
2019 LUX Art Scholar

The LUX Ceramics Center: Where Clay Becomes Community

Walk into the LUX Ceramics Center on any given afternoon and you'll find a room in motion. Wheels are turning, kilns are warming, hands are shaping bowls and mugs and sculptures that didn't exist an hour ago. Conversation flows as easily as the clay itself. It's one of the most active spaces at LUX – and one of the most welcoming.

The Center is built on a simple idea: that working with clay is for everyone. Beginners learn the fundamentals of hand-building, throwing, and glazing in classes designed to demystify the process. More experienced makers push into advanced forms and techniques, often alongside the very students they once sat beside as beginners.

"Our ceramics community is an inspiring mix of students, studio members, resident artists, and fellows who learn and create together. Whether you're exploring clay for the first time or deepening a long-held practice, there's a class – and a community – for you."

– Stacy Larson, Ceramics Center Manager

For those who want to go deeper, the Center offers a clear pathway. Studio Members gain access to open studio hours, clays and glazes, and discounts on classes and gallery purchases. Fellows take on an even more committed role, mentoring newer makers and contributing to the creative culture of the space.

"When the gas kiln is unloaded, it's like Christmas morning. You are as excited to see your fellow students' pieces as you are to see your own."

– Nancy Gade, Studio Member

Accessible instruction, a welcoming community, a real path toward growth – it's why the Ceramics Center is one of LUX's most beloved programs, and one of the clearest expressions of what we believe an arts center can be.

STACY LARSON

Exhibitions & Artistic Excellence

Our galleries are vital community resources, providing free access to exceptional art from local, regional, national, and international creators. Curated spaces like our West and East Galleries showcase individual artists' talent and vision, or bring together multiple artists around a shared theme — sparking curiosity and new voices in the conversation. In 2025–26, these galleries featured professional artists Pamela Conyers Hinson, Santiago Cal, and Jaden Estes Carlson, alongside Artists-in-Residence Jewelya Coffey, David Kruk, Madison Svendgard, and Alex Renbarger. Our gallery team created new juried group shows Touché, featuring tactile, touchable installations, and Horror Vacui, celebrating the impulse to fill space with color, pattern, and texture.

Other spaces are dedicated to community storytelling. Our Wake Gallery, in the Ceramics Center, lets Artists-in-Residence develop curatorial skills by organizing their own shows. Our TC Cardwell Community Gallery gives organizations and individuals room to share their stories and work with Lincoln, often with professional gallery experience and their own reception. This year, TC Cardwell Community Gallery featured LPS' Art Mentors Exhibition, UNL graduate students, LPS Arts and Humanities focus students, the Lincoln Artists Guild, artist Bill Opp, the Fiber Works fiber artist group, the Lincoln Modern Quilt Guild, and the LUX Summer Camp Instructor and Intern Show.

We're thrilled to host First Friday gatherings and other exhibition events that build community — welcoming around 170 friends and neighbors on any given First Friday. That momentum reflects both the strength of our exhibitions and the growing pull of Uni Place Creative District First Fridays. Across all programs, events, and exhibitions, total visitors climbed to more than 13,500 people!

Behind the Exhibitions: Maddie Hinrichs & Emily Palmer

This year's exhibitions carried the fingerprints of two people: gallery specialist Maddie Hinrichs, a former Artist-in-Residence with an exacting eye, and exhibition specialist Emily Palmer, whose precision keeps every show on track. Together with the Exhibitions Committee and artist Hannah Demma, they pushed the juried group show into new territory, packing three distinct exhibitions into a single season — including "Under the Influence," an Omaha Entertainment Award nominee exploring artistic inspiration.

Watch this space: Lincoln hasn't seen the last of what Maddie and Emily can dream up.

MADDIE HINRICHS

EMILY PALMER

Coming up at LUX

MALLORY LEMPKE
SEPTEMBER 2026

ECHO COLLECTIVE
SEPTEMBER 2026

NATHAN MURRAY'S STUDENTS SHOW
OCTOBER 2026

LARRY BULLER
OCTOBER 2026

SHONA MACDONALD
NOVEMBER 2026

GIFTED
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026

EVIE HENDRIKS
DECEMBER 2026

LUX FELLOWS CLAY SHOW
DECEMBER/JANUARY 2027

CHRIS ROGERS
JANUARY 2027

SARAH ALFIERI
FEBRUARY 2027

LUX ALUMNI SHOW
MAY 2027

LUXE ART AUCTION & PARTY
APRIL 17, 2027

Gladys Lux Print Gallery

This past year, the Gladys Lux Print Gallery welcomed visitors into three curated exhibitions – All the World is a Stage, LET'S GO!!, and Tête-À-Tête – each built around a distinct theme to create curiosity and fresh ways of seeing. Thanks to our supporters' generosity, the Gallery remains a place where the print collection comes alive through Curator Susan Soriente's thoughtful presentation.

We're especially grateful to the Lux Family, whose 2025 gift of thirty prints from Gladys Lux's personal collection adds to the Museum's holdings of 500 master prints. Preparing these works for exhibition requires matting and framing, and donor support made it possible to prepare the first three for display: Pablo Picasso's Poster for "Picasso, Oeuvre" at Galerie des Ponshettes, Nice; Salvador Dalí's Comte de Lautréamont; and Raoul Dufy's Gaigneuse. These will be unveiled to the public in the months ahead.

The remaining prints await matting and framing as funding allows.

Public Art, Creative District & Community Development ▶

Last September, three new murals brought fresh energy to University Place, unveiled at EMERGE LNK: Mural + Street Art Festival – the LUX Center's third and most successful celebration yet, drawing over a thousand visitors. Artists Joy Kjer, Matthew Mederer, and Margaret Kops Kuveke each created a piece reflecting the district's Past, Present, and Future. When one wall wasn't quite ready in time, Kuveke surprised the community with a bonus mural on LUX Ceramics Center's east wall, painted live with neighbors' help during the festival – a spirit of collaboration that captured the day.

The festival's art, music, food trucks, and Makers Market reflected the growing momentum behind the Uni Place Creative District's vision: a hub where art creates belonging and community. That growth continues thanks to partners including the City of Lincoln, Visit Lincoln, Lincoln Community Foundation, Union Bank & Trust, Lancaster County Commissioners, Nebraska Wesleyan, and Black Hills Energy.

Impact Story: Kinzee Hillis

Kinzee Hillis grew up wanting a career blending creativity, entrepreneurship, and community. Through Create 48 and the University Place Creative District, that vision is now her daily work.

This year, she invited artist Danny Reneau to paint his first large-scale mural on the Create 48 building – a project that's since led to further commissions for him. Public art like this reaches beyond gallery walls: Huntington Elementary students pass the murals daily, and visitors from as far as Australia have used the Visit Lincoln mural map to explore University Place, even when galleries were closed. Events like First Fridays and the Makers Markets keep neighbors gathering.

None of this happens alone.

Board members, committees, grant writers, and partners – including Nebraska Wesleyan University, MoJava, Leighton District, the City of Lincoln, and LUX Center for the Arts – have helped build the Creative District's foundation, strengthened by the organization's new 501(c)(3) status and grant funding. Purchasing the Create 48 building showed Kinzee how investing in a place inspires others to invest too. As new businesses, housing, and creative projects take root, she's excited to keep building a neighborhood where creativity is visible, celebrated, and accessible to everyone.

Philanthropy: Building the Next 50

The Next 50 Fund & The 1977 Society

In 1977, a small group of Lincoln artists and educators opened the doors of what would become LUX Center for the Arts. Fifty years later, we're asking our supporters to help build the next 50. In 2025, an anonymous donor established the Next 50 Fund with a founding gift of $50,000 – an endowed fund that sustains arts education, artist opportunities, and the long-term future of LUX.

Every donor who documents a legacy gift becomes a founding member of The 1977 Society, with permanent recognition on our Legacy Wall. Membership is based on documented intent, not dollar amount. Our goal: 50 new members by the close of our 50th anniversary year.

To learn more or document your intent, visit luxcenter.org/1977-society or contact Michele Peón Casanova at michele@luxcenter.org.

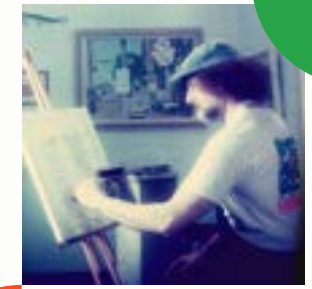
The 1977 Society Legacy Giving:

TOM CARDWELL
SHARON DOLL FUND
JAMES LONGMAN FUND
GLADYS LUX ENDOWED FUND

LUX Next 50 Fund:

RHONDA SEACREST
DOUG AND MARY CAMPBELL
DOUG KRAMER

LUX
1977–2027



T.C. CARDWELL

In Memory of T.C. Cardwell

(1943–2025)

This year, LUX renamed its Community Gallery in honor of Thomas "T.C." Cardwell – Marine veteran, self-taught painter, and friend of LUX for nearly 40 years. After a stroke in the early 1990s, T.C. turned to art for recovery, exhibiting at LUX in 2003 and 2017. His estate gift established a financial reserve for LUX – a safety net to draw on should the organization ever face a significant, unforeseen need – strengthening our stability for generations to come. "His life is an example of how a connection to art can transform and change a life."
– Joe Shaw, Executive Director

The Next Chapter

The stories in this report – the exhibitions that ignited new conversations, the community voices welcomed into our galleries, the artists who found their footing here – are only possible because of donors like you. As LUX marks 50 years, we're asking you to help carry that work forward with a year-end gift of any size.

Since our founding in 1977, a small group of artists and educators believed Lincoln deserved a place where creativity could thrive. Thanks to generations of support, that belief became LUX. Now it's our turn to build the next 50 – and we hope you'll help to insure a bright future for the LUX. There's so much more we can do.

Please use the enclosed envelope to make your gift today, or visit luxcenter.org.

SCAN THE QR CODE

The LUXe Society

As LUX celebrates 50 years of creativity, connection, and community, The LUXe Society offers a direct way to shape what comes next. Annual gifts of $1,000 or more sustain art education, artist residencies, exhibitions, and public art across Lincoln. Since its launch, 28 gifts have supported the Society, each donor recognized with special benefits and a limited-edition, artist-made gift created exclusively for them. Join us as we build the next 50 years of art in our community.

2026 LUXe Society Members:

JOLINE ADAMS
JAMES & AMY ANDERSON
DOUG & MARY CAMPBELL
KEN AND PAT CHELOHA
JENNIFER & BRIAN CINTANI
GEOFF & KRISTEN CLINE
BRENT COMSTOCK
JULIE DIEGEL
MARG & KEN DONLAN
KAREN & ROBERT DUNCAN
MATT & CLOVER FREDERICK
PATTI FRENCH
CANDY & TOM HENNING
ROBERT HILLESTAD
YVONNE NORTON LEUNG
PAMELA MANSKE
PHIL & ROSEANN PERRY
TODD & SUSAN RIVERS
ALEX & MICHAEL ROTH
RHONDA SEACREST
JULIE SEEVER
EMILY SHELSTAD
LAUREL SHOEMAKER
LARRY SMALL
LEE & DEBBIE STUART
TOM & SUE TALLMAN
TANYA STARR & JAY WILKINSON
ART & CHRIS ZYGIELBAUM

LUX Business & Foundation Partners:

ABEL FOUNDATION
ACKLIE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
ALLO FIBER
AMERITAS
ASSURITY
AYARS & AYARS/ARCHI+ETC
BISON INC.
BLACK HILLS ENERGY
BOLD NEBRASKA
CHARLIE PROPER
CIP COMMUNITIES
CLINE WILLIAMS
COOPER FOUNDATION
DA DAVIDSON
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DONLAN FOUNDATION
DF DILLON FOUNDATION
DUTEAU CHEVROLET-SUBARU
GASTROENTEROLOGY SPECIALTIES PC
HBE LLC
HERBERT AND MARIAN WESTON FOUNDATION
LINCOLN INDUSTRIES
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NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDATION
OLSSON FAMILY FOUNDATION
PACE WOODS FOUNDATION
PEARLE FRANCIS FINIGAN FOUNDATION
RIVERS METAL PRODUCTS
ROGERS FOUNDATION
SAMPSON CONSTRUCTION
SHERWOOD FOUNDATION
UNANIMOUS
UNION BANK & TRUST CO.
UNITED WAY
WINDGATE FOUNDATION
WOITA HOMES

LUX Board of Directors:

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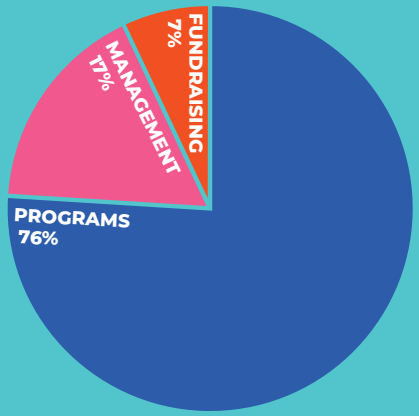
ADAM MORFELD
JORDAN LAMBRECHT
JOHN LEFEVRE
ROBERT WAMSLEY
PEDRO AGUERO
ERIC SAVAIANO

2025-2026 Fiscal Year Total Expenses:

$1,200,000



2025-2026 impact:

GALLERY VISITORS: **8,626**
FIRST FRIDAY AVERAGE ATTENDANCE: **170**
STUDENTS (ADULT AND CHILDREN): **2,035**
UNITED WAY/FAMILY LITERACY OUTREACH: **531**
EVENTS: **2,518**
TOTAL VISITORS: **13,880**

LUX
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

NEBRASKA ARTS COUNCIL

NEBRASKA CULTURAL ENDOWMENT
Arts + Humanities
LIVELIHOOD