

...with a focus on a creative activity.

The school's purpose is to provide a place where "people who love art, regardless of age or ability, can gather to experience creative expression," according to its mission statement. It emphasizes hands-on participation, through art classes and workshops. BAC also sponsors exhibits, artist talks, community creative gatherings, youth programs, and other activities and services.

BAC already operates a gallery shop in Stockbridge, but in Pittsfield the school

has opened a new shop to expand its support of local artists and makers by showcasing and selling their work. The new space features exhibits of area artists. It also carries a variety of locally made items, such as mugs and notecards. Used and discounted art supplies and creative material for local artists and other creators to use in their work are also available.

The space is seen as a vehicle to strengthen existing and new collaborations with other local organizations, including those serving underrepresented

communities. "It's also a resource for other groups," said Castaldo.

On the second Monday of the month, the Pittsfield space hosts meetings of Kaitunemo, a group that was formed by area Hispanic and Portuguese-speaking artists with the purpose of creating community and healing through mutual support and sharing of art.

BAC is also encouraging mutually beneficial partnerships with downtown businesses, such as an arrangement it has with Methuens Bar & Lounge on North Street. People who attend an Arts Night

Out event can receive a 15 percent discount on food at Methuens afterward.

The move to Pittsfield came through an ongoing relationship the art school has had with Giora Witkowski and Linda Mitchell, a couple who are the long-time owners of the Brotherhood Building.

"They have been great supporters of us, and for a number of years they let us use the building's window for exhibits," Castaldo said. "When a space opened up in the building for rent, they let us know it was available. We had already sponsored



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