VISION
Creating a better tomorrow by inspiring and transforming the lives of our youth through the arts.

MISSION
To serve our communities by providing educational opportunities in the arts that promote confidence, self-discovery, and creative problem-solving skills.

STAFF
Amanda Thomas,
  Executive Director
Sharon Peterson,
  Operations Manager
Tori Brown,
  Fundraising Coordinator

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SAT/SUN, MARCH 3-4
ART of Home Tour with Keller Williams Realty
FRI/SAT, JUNE 8-9
EAT: Edible Art Tour

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 12.1.17
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PHOTOS: Available upon request

Amanda Thomas named ARTsmart Executive Director

Board President Connie Axton announced on November 27, 2017, that Amanda Thomas has been appointed to the position of executive director at ARTsmart New Mexico, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit serving the youth of Northern New Mexico.

"The decision came naturally," said Axton. "Amanda has been with ARTsmart since 2013, first as an instructor and starting in 2014, as our program director. When our current executive director, Sharon Peterson, elected to reduce her workload, our candidate of choice was Amanda. We are excited to promote her into this critical position."

Peterson, who has served as executive director for the past two years, will remain with ARTsmart in the part-time position of operations manager.

Amanda (Neiter) Thomas was born and raised in Montana, where she received her BFA and teaching certificate from Montana State University. Before joining ARTsmart, she taught in Montana and in New Mexico charter, public, and private schools. Her experiences with modern teaching practices, interdisciplinary learning, curriculum development, assessments, and serving students with special needs were critical to ARTsmart's decision making.

"While teaching in underserved areas, my eyes were opened to how crucial creative outlets are for children," says Thomas. "As I experienced the transformative impact of the visual arts, I developed a passion for bringing the arts to all youth."

Thomas envisions growing ARTsmart programs within Santa Fe and the state. "Today, ARTsmart reaches more than 9,600 kids in Santa Fe public schools and in nine of the eleven elementary schools in the Espanola School District," she says. "We are developing partnerships with other educational organizations and foundations and, with our new facility, we hope to offer classes for adults. I envision our ARTsmart Community Studio evolving into a space where the community at large comes together to be creative, find inspiration, and experience the benefits of the arts.

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"Children, however, will always be our focus," she continues. "Many of our students experience a multitude of problems, including a lack of consistency, which they actually crave. We have a successful and provable training program for our teachers that ensures consistency. Our students know what is expected of them, which sets up a safe and supportive learning environment where they feel comfortable taking risks in art, as well as sharing and talking about their work with others. Our teachers facilitate a learning experience that encourages students to see clearly, benefit from mistakes, and perceive themselves as unique, capable, articulate, and praiseworthy. It's a formula for success that has made ARTsmart one of the state's top-performing advocates for kids. Our goal continues to be growing the strength, impact, and numbers served by ARTsmart's innovative programming."

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