

# Profile of Success

## Anodyne Artists Company

Tucked back behind a row of shops and renovated warehouses in St. Paul sits an inconspicuous garage door that opens to one of the most unique art studios in Minnesota. Numerous tables are surrounded by people painting, drawing, and sculpting. Wander further and you find yourself in a large art gallery filled from floor ceiling with art works. Your ears will pull you to the next room, a large performance space filled with aspiring actors, writers, poets, and musicians.

With the rush of art that fills Anodyne Artists Company, it is not until later that you notice one of the painters is sitting in a wheel chair, the artist at the pottery wheel has a walker by his side, or that the amazing pianist is blind. That's just how Mary Pendergast, Anodyne's executive director, wants you to experience it. "The art is first," she says. "The disability shouldn't even be secondary."

Anodyne was started in 1999 in Pendergast's home. Very quickly, they needed an actual space and found an old garage in St. Paul. A philanthropist helped cover some of the initial costs to clean up and renovate the space. As Anodyne became established, Pendergast realized they were going to be in trouble. Rent and overhead costs were adding up. Money was scheduled to come in from state programs, but the timeline was so far out that Anodyne would not be able to exist long enough to see the income. "It was a frightening thing to be where we were," says Pendergast.



Pendergast recognized that financial know-how and management is extremely important and that Anodyne could make it if they had a way to manage their finances and bridge the financial gap. Pendergast approached Nonprofits Assistance Fund and met with Janet Ogden-Brackett. Ogden-Brackett provided support to Anodyne to help navigate the time of financial uncertainty and by providing them with a line of credit.

"I can't say enough about the ease of Nonprofits Assistance Fund in regards to supporting," states Pendergast. "There was just a release of anxiety when Janet started working with us. I honestly don't know where we'd be without Janet."

Ogden-Brackett's support allowed Anodyne to continually increase the work they provide. The goal is to not only provide a place for artists with disabilities to practice but also provide a place where the artists can improve and learn. There are individual expectations for each artist and they are all encouraged to teach what they know to new artists. Established Anodyne artists have had their work shown throughout the country while new artists are showcased alongside prestigious artists at the Anodyne Gallery. Pendergast and staff continue to increase their financial knowledge.

"Anodyne continues to improve their financial systems and increase staff capacity," says Janet Ogden-Brackett. "The combination adds substance to their financial situation and makes them more capable of providing services."

Because of the support from Nonprofits Assistance Fund, Pendergast and her staff are able to provide more than just services. They are providing an opportunity for artists to explore and share. At Anodyne, the artists refuse to be held back by a disability. They simply create amazing art.