



## The Wellfleet Residency

AOK is thrilled to announce that in June, 2019 we will expand our programming and launch a new Artist Residency program in Wellfleet, MA for young, emerging DC-area artists from marginalized backgrounds.

Among the many special experiences we provide that help our young artists imagine a future defined by community, success and happiness, one of the most powerful is our annual trip to Cape Cod. We take 20 young people to Wellfleet every summer, and they are blown away by the experience of spending a week in such a beautiful place, far away from the stress and noise of the city, feeling safe and cared for and where they can really sink into conversations and connections with each other. The annual vacation is a life-changing experience for all of us. (You can see a video one of our kids made about our 2018 trip to Cape Cod [here](#).)

After returning from the Cape last summer, we began to think about combining the Cape Cod experience with artist support we already provide at our Art Space downtown DC and the mentoring support we provide to all our artists in order to magnify the value of this work. And so the idea for the Wellfleet Residency was born.

The Wellfleet Residency will build on the success of our current, ongoing programming in the Washington, D.C. area, which creates community to provide a full array of financial, social-emotional and educational supports for artists from marginalized backgrounds between the ages of 18 and 25. It will add to the richness of community and opportunity that AOK already provides and will offer an additional layer of special experience for our DC-based young artists.

**Why an Artist Residency Center?** The Wellfleet Residency will be an innovative and much-needed expansion of AOK's ongoing commitment to young artists. Over the last two decades, the United States has seen a boon in artist residencies, but none offer what we seek to provide: a year-round program that serves young, emerging artists, primarily of color and from marginalized backgrounds.

There are plenty of residency programs for established artists—Yaddo and MacDowell are the cream of that crop. Artist Residencies for young, emerging artists from marginalized backgrounds are exceedingly rare. And yet, such a resource could be pivotal for a young artist's development, not only as a creative person but as a young adult and budding citizen. The Wellfleet Residency will fill this gap and further our commitment to providing transformative experiences and opportunities for our young artists.

Many of our young, emerging artists lack the privileges afforded to their peers from more secure backgrounds. They have grown up without access to financial or social capital – the kind of connections

that help others get into graduate school or find their way into the right gallery, the right publisher, the right theater company, the right residency. The Wellfleet Residency will change that.

All artists in our program will benefit from the same perks offered by the most prestigious residencies in the country: A quiet, private work space, comfortable lodging, gourmet meals and a structured work environment that fosters creativity and community.

At the Wellfleet Residency, we will provide a safe space for all artists. Located near the ocean, in the scenic Cape Cod town of Wellfleet, our residency will be the first such program in a place that has long been a haven for artists. During their stay, artists will be able to surrender to their work, free of the external stressors that define daily life. They will find themselves able to work in complete freedom, deepening their craft, broadening their network, reshaping their self-image and charting their future. They will leave the residency with newfound confidence, a rigorous artistic practice, greater self-esteem, a wider network and a sharpened business savvy—all needed to survive in the creative economy.

**Where will the residencies happen and when?** Our goal is to have a fully-functioning, permanent home for the Wellfleet Residency by the end of 2020. We have already found a property we love: a historic, 2-acre piece of land a half-mile from the center of Wellfleet that has two structures on it that can house 10 people. There is room on the property to build a barn that will house rehearsal/performance and studio/gallery space, for a community garden and for parking. It is surrounded on three sides by conservation land, and it really is a magical place. You can see more pictures of this gorgeous property by clicking [here](#).



We are working with the current owners on a plan and timeline for purchasing the property. Our plan is to launch a capital campaign in May, 2019 to raise \$1.5 million that will allow us to buy the property by the end of 2019 and renovate it and start hosting residencies there in the summer of 2020.

But we're not waiting until 2020 to bring our young artists to Wellfleet. We will host a series of pilot 'pop-up' residencies in the summer of 2019. Kathy and David have bought a house in Wellfleet and are moving there in May. Starting in June, they will host 4-6 artists in their home, where they will be provided work space and other resources in what will be the inaugural AOK artist residencies. This will allow us to work out the kinks, prove the model to funders and other stakeholders and start building relationships and partnerships with artists, mentors and arts organizations on the Outer Cape. These

initial residencies will also serve as a kick off to the above-mentioned capital campaign to raise the funds to purchase and renovate the property in Wellfleet.

**Current Programming.** The Wellfleet Residency emerges out of and will complement our current DC-based programming, which will continue. Most importantly, we will continue the DC Thursday Night Dinner tradition. A cohort of AOK family members will host Thursday Night Dinners in DC on a rotating basis. The Art Space we have created downtown DC will continue to offer space and resources to DC-area young artists. Our mentoring program will continue to grow, facilitating trusting relationships with adults who are committed to their success. We will continue to support them in their educational endeavors (we still have 12 in college!) and help them meet their everyday needs. And we will continue to offer special experiences including birthday and holiday celebrations our annual Cape Cod vacation.

**What will happen during the Wellfleet residencies?** Most importantly, AOK artists-in-residence will have uninterrupted time and space to create. They will be invited to leave the worries, uncertainties, demands, anxieties and self-doubt of everyday life behind them for the duration of their residency. They will be invited to reflect, to dream, to imagine and to really sink into their art in quiet seclusion. They will be provided with everything they need—food, time, supplies, space, solitude, quiet—and will have nothing to worry about except being artists and making art. As artists in residence, they will get very special treatment, and will be invited to think of themselves as deserving of this, because they are artists.

And when the sun goes down, our young artists will be invited to a big table, where they will share delicious food and conversation with their fellow residents, which will always include a couple of more established artists, and special guest visiting artists who are part of the AOK family, such as long-time AOK family member David Brooks. They will have the opportunity to share their experiences with one another, ask questions, share and glean new wisdom. They will have the all-too-rare experience of participating in a community of self-identified artists, moored in in the values of creativity, solidarity, respect, reflection, kindness, hard work, humor, trust and of high self-regard.

For the young artists we serve, the Wellfleet Residency will be a foundational experience that shapes their lives. It will invite them to see their life stories unfolding in a positive way, characterized by self-respect and a mutually affirming community. And this new vision of themselves, this new story, will inspire and motivate them when they return to their lives, encouraging them to nurture others the way they were nourished at the table in Wellfleet.

**Who gets to do Wellfleet residencies?** Initially, AOK's focus will be on recruiting emerging DC-area artists from 18-25 years old from marginalized backgrounds, with an additional emphasis on recruiting young artists of color. To find our residents, we will use the extensive connections with the vibrant DC-area young artistic community we've developed through our existing programs. As our program grows and matures in the next 2-5 years, we will expand our geographical reach by recruiting young artists from around the nation.

While the focus will be on young, emerging DC-area artists, we will also select a small number of more established artist to participate. Their presence will ensure an enriched experience for all resident artists, regardless of age or stage of career.

All artists-in-residence will be chosen in a competitive application process by a selection committee assembled by AOK composed of current AOK artists, staff and outside experts. The panel will change every year to ensure vibrancy of selection. Artists will be selected based on the quality of and commitment to their work and their project description.

**How much will residencies cost?** Wellfleet residencies will be offered at no cost to the emerging artists. AOK will offer them a weekly stipend of \$250, since most young artists are typically on fragile financial ground. Travel expenses will be paid and full room and board provided to all participating emerging artists. AOK will provide basic supplies to the emerging artists.

Established artists will be able to apply for financial aid to cover the costs of supplies, travel and to make up for lost work while participating in their residency.

Here are more details about how the Wellfleet Residency will work:

- We will host up to 10 artists at a time.
- Residencies will last from two weeks to two months and will take place year round.
- They will be open to artists of all disciplines, including visual arts, writing (fiction, nonfiction, drama, poetry, etc.), spoken word, architecture, musical composition and performance, theater, dance, culinary arts and interdisciplinary arts.
- We will curate each residency period to include artists practicing a range of disciplines. This mix of residents will stimulate the artists in new ways. For our young artists, exposure to different forms and disciplines is essential to expanding one's cultural literacy and social capital.
- During every residency period, there will be a mix of young, emerging artists and more established artists of any age, with the majority always being the former.
- Regardless of this distinction, all artists will enjoy comparable studio space, time and resources.
- Through social interaction at meal times and during free time, the emerging artists, established artists and visiting guest artists will have the opportunity to benefit and learn from each other's presence.
- Studios will be a mix of private and shared spaces.
- Artists-in-residence will be housed in private bedrooms, with shared bathing facilities.
- A simple, cold breakfast will be offered in our communal kitchen every morning (granola, yogurt, fruit, coffee, tea, juice, etc.). The artists will also be welcome to toast bagels, make eggs or other things. All food is provided by the residency.
- A delicious lunch will be prepared and left in a basket for artists outside their studio spaces, to ensure uninterrupted work time during the day.
- Dinner will be prepared and served family style at 6:30 pm every night. Artists are invited to gather in the main room before and after dinner, as suits their work schedule.
- All artists will manage their own time, apart from supper time.

- For the emerging artists, we will offer weekly workshops focusing on the business side of art, exploring the practical challenges of making a living in the creative economy. Topics will include financial literacy for artists, grant-writing, social marketing, website design, how to gain artist representation, how to price one's work, etc.
- All artists will be invited to participate in voluntary trips to visit galleries, attend performances and other cultural activities, as well as other organized activities like whale watches and going to the beach.
- All artists will have opportunities to connect with the local community, including making school visits, offering public presentations, open rehearsals and local classes and participating in community dinners.
- All artists will be invited to share their work with each other and with the public during and at the end of their residency.
- All artists will be invited to share their work for presentation on AOK's website.
- The emerging artists will be provided access to an extensive library of on-line resources intended to help them manage their careers once their residencies end.
- All artists will be invited to become part of an organized alumnus community, with the ability to communicate with each other through social media platforms and periodic gatherings.

**How you can help.** We are very excited about this next stage of AOK's growth, which will build on our track record of providing young artists from marginalized backgrounds with the opportunities, skills and networks they need to be happy and successful, both as creative individuals and as young adults. It is thanks to you that we are able to take this exciting step as an organization. We are so grateful for your belief in our kids and your support of AOK.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more, or if you are interested in making a gift to or helping us raise money for our capital campaign to make this vision into a reality, please contact David at [david@aokdc.org](mailto:david@aokdc.org) or 413.658.5406.