

# Anderson Museum of Art gets grant for STEAM program

By Kelly Dickey | The Herald Bulletin  
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ANDERSON — The Anderson Museum of Art is one of more than 25 nonprofits to receive grants from Indiana Humanities.

The museum, formerly known as the Anderson Center for the Arts, was awarded a \$3,991 Quantum Leap Grant to develop a K-12 STEAM program curriculum that will include hands-on projects that incorporate art and automata machines, as well as incorporating local history.

The pilot program will be implemented with a small group of Lapel Community Schools students and eventually will be phased out to offer the program countywide.

Executive Director Deborah Stapleton said the center has had a working relationship with Madison County schools over the years, but increased testing and less funding for the arts has made an impact on programming. But she said arts can be incorporated into educators' emphasis on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), with a shift toward STEAM.

Students will learn how to incorporate elements of art into functional things.

"The design principles for things to end up with a product – whether it's a sculpture or whirligig or whatever that is – the design has a lot to do with it," she said.

The museum is working on developing the curriculum, and education coordinator Stephanie Cochran plans on incorporating the area's economic and manufacturing history, hands-on experience and a relationship with Purdue Polytechnic.

“So it's a motivation for students to pursue these things because they have the possibility of actually putting them into their own future,” Cochran said. “It's available here and it's available to them, so their training and technology programs for students in Madison County don't have to go somewhere else. We have it here.”

Some activities will consist of designing and then building their creations, which will bring an artistic flare to STEM lessons.

Not all students gravitate toward STEM classes, and Cochran likened the project's curriculum to baking cookies as a lesson in chemistry, and then having the option to eat the cookies afterward.

“This is kind of offering art as a motivation to learn processes with a reward,” she said.

Stapleton said the project is a major time, financial and resource commitment to the museum, but she feels the outcomes for the students and community will be worth it.

“As an organization, we're very huge believers in the well-rounded individual and opening people to new experiences and new opportunities,” she said.