

COTTLEVILLE ART RETREAT TO CELEBRATE AMERICA 250 JUNE-JULY 2026

A week-long funded art retreat where participants from the county in an immersive experience explore the nuances of art and inspired to bring alive the American Independence history in visual forms of painting, drawing and sculptures.

Cottleville

Cottleville is a historic district nestled in St. Charles county, that embraces human endeavors, appreciation and community enrichment in thoughtful development.

Objective

To promote arts and artistic expressions in the community as well as foster renewed interest and desire to know the legacy of the American freedom. Encourage interest in kids, youth and adults into art and art-based learning that will make Cottleville a platform for more art events.

Art Retreat on Declaration of Independence

Demonstrate the historic legacy and relive the nation's pivotal moments of 1776 with its events and heroes displayed on canvas of light, space and color. Art fosters engagement, creative expression and connecting people's distinct identities into a unifying culture.

Visual Art

1. Painting.
2. Drawing and Sketching.
3. Sculpture

Key Stakeholders

Artistes –Art professionals and students, freelance artistes and anyone who desire to express their creativity through art.

Art Instructors and experts.

Historians, history teachers and enthusiasts.

Audience - School kids, families, art enthusiasts and public.

Theme ideas (will expand or reduce)

Prelude to war

- Boston Tea Party
- Pine Tree Riot

During the battle

- Battles of Lexington and Concord
- Battle of St. Louis /Battle of Fort San Carlos
- First Continental Congress
- Civilian patriots
- Women power
- Everyday life impacted

Declaration of Independence

- Correspondence between Founding Fathers

Structure/Content

1. Historical context using primary resources

- Interpreting the historical relevance, people and events leading to the Declaration of independence
- The document and its impact on the people of United States and the world
- Encourage focus on events in Midwest and St. Louis

Lectures and discussion with academic experts and historians.

Resources - Digital, books, periodicals, excerpts from the declaration, letters and documents of the said period.

2. Creative expression of art through learning

- Education on various artistic mediums, tools and innovation.
- Explore art styles prevalent during the time of independence and modern art.
- Workshops provide exposure on recent art trends, digital aids, copyrights.
- Art to inspire American principles of equality, freedom and pursuit of happiness

Workshop for specialized knowledge in art and its medium.

Classroom instruction, personal guidance, feed-back and mentoring.

3. Activities

- Sessions involving classroom and in person.
- Group sessions for interaction, exchange and collaboration of ideas and knowledge.
- Places for artist to relax and time for reflection.
- Dining with peers to share, support and social.
- Final day exhibition for the public and interaction with artistes.
- Sales, silent auction of created art etc.

4. Logistics

- 7-day free retreat for 20 participants spread in 3 weeks.
- Artistes from the St. Charles County area.
- Art consultants, instructors, historians and history instructors.
- Venue – To be decided (Cottleville).
- Catering - lunch and refreshments.
- Supplies - Paints, brushes, easels, charcoal, coloring pencils, writing pads, sketch books, papers, pens, pencils, erasers, markers and specialized items. Tents, tables, props etc.
- Volunteers

Support team

1. Andy McKean (Chair - America 250 St Charles County Committee)
2. Gloria Ehl, Wentzville
3. Laurel Sirtak (President, Crossroads Arts Council)
4. Jill Tutt (Cultural Arts Leader, St. Peter's)