



Weavers  
Guild of  
Minnesota

## WGM 2020: Five Year Strategic Plan



*Approved October 29, 2015 by Weavers Guild of Minnesota Board of Directors*

# Executive Summary

## *Purpose*

The Strategic Plan outlines the vision, values, and goals of the organization. It is a multi-year plan that will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Directors.

The goals are instructive, yet broad, so that any given make-up of Guild Board members and staff can take ownership of the plan. The goals reflect the mission, vision, and values stated in the Executive Summary. The strategies can be adapted to reflect the climate of the Guild and the resources at hand. The people working to achieve the goals can be creative in their problem solving and energized by the possibilities.

## *Mission*

WGM – Preserving and advancing the arts of weaving, spinning, and dyeing.

## *Vision*

WGM will have a national reputation as a vibrant arts organization in Minnesota and the region with innovative and high quality programming for weavers, spinners, and dyers of all skill levels.

## *Values*

WGM celebrates and respects all individuals from beginners to seasoned artists and craftspersons.

As a grassroots organization, we value the active participation of our volunteers, staff, and members.

We value traditional fiber techniques and culture as well as innovative, art-based uses of fiber.

We value a rich, positive environment that inspires lifelong learning in a non-competitive environment, nurturing a multi-generational and diverse community.

## *Areas of Focus*

Education

Space

Individual Engagement

Community Engagement

# Education

The role of WGM education is to build upon our strong curriculum to support the mission of advancing the art of weaving, spinning and dyeing.

WGM classes are designed to provide lessons on various types of weaving and spinning equipment.

The Education Committee and Education Coordinator will collaborate to maintain a strong cross-section of course offerings and workshops. The curriculum will provide classes at all skill levels to support beginners to advanced fiber artists. Innovative specialty classes will be offered to supplement the basic traditional technique based courses.

## *Goals & Objectives*

WGM will spread our strong core curriculum to new venues and audiences.

Support students in developing their skills.

Build a strong foundation of instructors, in order to sustain our education.

Continue to support the member interest groups with the Guild.

Continue to subsidize Education with funding beyond program revenue, so that tuition rates stay relatively low, while permitting the Guild to fairly and competitively compensate its contracted teaching artists.

## *Strategies & Tactics*

Consider partner affiliations and off-site locations to increase access to the Guild's education program.

Provide more intermediate/advanced classes to support the students advancing their skills.

Consider providing continuing education for instructors and develop a mentoring program for weavers, spinners and dyers who want to become instructors.

Increase collaboration with interest groups to identify the educational needs of their members and develop classes to support their needs.

Continue to seek funding opportunities for Education, through grants, individual donations, and earned revenue from other Guild programs, such as Fiber Source.

# Space

WGM has a symbiotic and positive relationship with Textile Center. Its current collocation with Textile Center is a great advantage to its continued existence, allowing for classes, exhibit, office and retail space within its designated space and benefiting from the Textile Center library, the store, and the gallery without the overhead an independent operation would entail.

The Guild will continue its alliance with the Textile Center but vigilance as to developments in the surrounding area and market pressures on the Textile Center organization. Part of the Guild's 75-year success is due to adapting to current circumstances.

## *Goals & Objectives*

Maintain current square footage within Textile Center.

Stay abreast of building and neighborhood developments, including improvements, changes, and any activities that could impact the Guild's operations and programs.

Ensure that the Guild space appropriately accommodates regular programs and services, as well as its participants.

## *Strategies & Tactics*

Weavers Guild representatives will attend Guild-wide meetings sponsored by Textile Center.

Assign a Guild liaison to serve on Textile Center board.

Schedule check-in meetings with organizations' presidents and staff leadership.

Maintain a connection with the neighborhood.

Employ the ad-hoc space committee to investigate the Guild's space utilization and cost per square foot, in order to determine actual space needs.

# Individual Engagement

Donors, volunteers, the majority of program participants and shop patrons are members. Their involvement sustains the Guild, and they are involved in large part because of the passion for the work and mission. Members see their role with the Guild (in rank order) as:

1. having access to classes
2. taking advantage of the benefits of membership
3. contributing financially because of passion for the work of the Guild
4. being an ambassador in the community

Members make long-term commitments to the Guild through consuming programs and services and by advocating for the Guild in the community. The majority of members volunteer for the Guild through short-term or one-time commitments.

## *Goals & Objectives*

Connect members to participation opportunities (classes, study groups, events, volunteer activities, fundraising campaigns, etc.), thereby fostering loyalty to the Guild and its mission.

Support and sustain the community of Guild members through recruitment and retention strategies.

Offer a variety of activities and opportunities that permit members, from diverse backgrounds and ages, to develop and realize their passion for the Guild.

## *Strategies & Tactics*

Utilize participation trends, surveys, and focus groups to understand our members' interests and abilities in connecting with the Guild and to determine the effectiveness and relevance of member benefits.

Employ the website and weekly emailed newsletter to communicate participation opportunities. Solicit, curate, and format content for members to easily access and share with others. These efforts may necessitate a website redesign.

Use a variety of dues options (annual membership, 30-and-under reduced rate, sustaining membership, etc.) to increase retention and to recruit.



# Community Engagement

The Guild's community engagement activities attempt to reach potential members, as well as nontraditional and underrepresented participants, in order to preserve and advance the art forms of weaving, spinning, and dyeing. For example, Guild members demonstrate at Minnesota State Fair, in order to reach individuals who are not aware of the art forms and/or the programs and services offered by the Guild. The Guild demonstrates at Shepherd's Harvest, in order to reach people already interested in the art forms, but who are not aware of the Guild's programs and services. A Guild member assists a group of Karen women with their weaving projects, and this group of weavers was previously not represented at the Guild. The activities range from one-time events to perennial commitments with partner organizations.

## *Goals & Objectives*

Coordinate and facilitate outreach activities that convert new audiences to Guild participants (members, students, volunteers, donors, etc.).

Coordinate and facilitate outreach activities that reach nontraditional and underrepresented participants, while advancing the Guild's mission.

Coordinate community engagement activities that are financially supported, yet not burdensome to other aspects of the organization.

## *Strategies & Tactics*

Develop and implement a formalized planning process for outreach activities, and one that documents goals and outcomes.

Identify and engage with nontraditional and underrepresented participants. Then form, maintain, and leverage our relationships with partner organizations.

Identify funding sources to deliver outreach programs, whether they are subsidized by existing Guild revenue sources, reimbursed by partner organization, or supported by grant dollars, so as to remain financially neutral.