

**Name:** Shannon Kelly

### **Supporting Small Artists: An Initiative of Encouragement**

Art is undeniably crucial to society. When the world grows dark, people turn to the arts as an escape. The arts provide an outlet for those who choose to create it, and it is fulfilling to watch a project grow from start to finish. Art takes a vast variety of different forms, and yet when the arts are presented as a career, the idea is often shot down. The piece of advice “Do what you love and you’ll never work a day in your life”, is commonly thrown around, but when a child or teenager investigates the idea of entering an artistic career, or making a business out of their passion, the support they receive can be underwhelming.

As a high school student looking towards a career in the arts, I believe that young artists deserve more encouragement and support from schools and peers when pursuing their dreams. I want to tear down the idea that art is something that is meant to just be a hobby, and lift up small artists with the platform I have. We as a community should uplift artists who are brave enough to pursue their dreams and create a business out of what they love. By sharing creations, projects, and small local businesses, I can use my platform and my voice to remind young artists of their talent and importance to our community.

One of the best things about supporting these young artists is that a little recognition goes a long way. Social media is a huge game changer, and even just a couple posts promoting an artist’s work can validate them and show them that their passion is worth pursuing. There are so many local small businesses that I believe would love to be approached by a bigger organization such as MAO to potentially become a sponsor. Vermont is a state with a wonderful sense of community, and will show up to support these businesses and artists once informed about their presence.

As Miss Vermont’s Outstanding Teen, I could use the larger platform to truly shine a light on the importance of supporting young artists and helping out small businesses. As a titleholder, I would make visits to schools to speak about the Miss Vermont Scholarship Organization, and to encourage these children to pursue their passions. To generate interest in artistic careers and help artists support their dreams by supporting their small businesses would be fulfilling not only a personal mission of mine, but a community need.

Shannon Kelly 3-17-2022  
Signature/Date