

**SWEETWATER VALLEY CITIZENS FOR THE ARTS**

Sweetwater, TN 37874 • P.O. Box 261 • (423) 337-5976

President-Elect Obama
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

November 10, 2008

Dear President-Elect Obama,

Congratulations on a well fought and hard won campaign. Through the last several months you have given many speeches and made many promises to the American public. The one I voted on you keeping was the promise to improve the arts education in this great nation.

The Sweetwater Valley Citizens for the Arts is a small non-profit organization dedicated to improving the cultural landscape of a rural community in Tennessee. Over 60% of our students are on free or reduced lunch and over 25% of our population is disabled. We try to bring the arts and all the inspiration to this much underserved community. The SVCA is looking forward to the years of your presidency and the improvements you promised, that we desperately need to see.

The SVCA is trying to improve our community by bringing in arts events and workshops- for students and adults. We try to encourage the students to learn about the many careers available to the artistic minded individual. The average artist, when compared to the average citizen, is better educated and self-employed. And the higher educated the citizens, the more they vote, donate blood, and volunteer their time.

Artist and arts activities have been used to revitalize failing downtowns. Arts co-ops have been used by Save the Children to empower women and encourage entrepreneurialism. Arts and crafts have soothed hurt children and encouraged the elderly. Above all of this, arts and designs have inspired people for thousands of years. The arts are an integral aspect of preserving history and educating the masses. And for too long the arts have been downgraded and degraded in America.

The Sweetwater Valley Citizens for the Arts, along with thousands of other arts organizations and voters are counting on you to improve the arts education that our children are receiving.

Thank you for your time,

Sarah C.W. Payne
Arts Coordinator
Sweetwater Valley Citizens for the Arts

