



Amplify Sugar Land members (from left) Micah Hester, Ben Hester, Sarah Beth Baca, Ashley Banning, Christy Hargrave, and Ryan Hargrave

# Amplifying Local Art

**Amplify Sugar Land spotlights artists' creative work**

*Written by Andrew Soares  
Photos by Barry Sigman*

Sugar Land's rich diversity of cultures, talents, and backgrounds makes for a variety of creative voices waiting to be discovered. Amplify Sugar Land began as a way for artists to share their unique perspectives and gifts with friends and neighbors. The group provides artists with resources and creative outlets free of charge and gives all profits made from art sales directly to the artists themselves. "There is such a huge, growing community of artists here in Sugar Land," says Ben Hester, one of the founding members of Amplify. "While opportunities do exist for local talent to display their abilities, there can always be more avenues to help struggling artists."

## Showcasing Local Talent

Amplify began in 2010, when a group of friends decided to start a grassroots organization that encouraged and nurtured local artists' talents. Amplify spotlights the homegrown talent of artists who aspire to be anything from world-class dancers and filmmakers to influential painters and writers. The group strives to create a relationship with the artists and provide the necessary resources for them to create, perform, and thrive in Sugar Land.

"Our focus has just been slow and steady over the past year or so," shares Ryan Hargrave, one of the group's founding members. "We want to be sure that what we do, we do well." Even though they are still on the rise and looking for new ways to attract and generate the interest of the community, Amplify has already helped showcase the work of several individuals.



A variety of local work is displayed at the organization's public art shows

### A Spectrum of Creativity

Through creative brainstorming and personal artistic development, Amplify has been able to host public shows for local artists. The group hosts its largest event, Spectrum, once a year as a juried show in which submitted pieces are evaluated by a panel of judges.

In 2010, Spectrum received a welcoming, yet unexpected turnout from local artists willing to display their work, as well as Sugar Land art enthusiasts. "We had no idea what kind of feedback to expect, but over 40 artists participated and 60 pieces were selected," says Sara Beth Bacah, a longtime painter and member of Amplify. The group recently hosted its second successful Spectrum show in October.

### Helping Artists of All Kinds

Although painting comprises much of the work Amplify displays, it also helps showcase dancing, singing, wood carving, filmmaking, glass bead making, photography, music, and other creative genres. The group currently holds meetings at Crossbridge Church.

As it continues to grow, Amplify will seek to find more ways to help artists, while also hosting Spectrum and similar exhibits. "It's important that we continue to provide more opportunities for local artists and bring their talents to the forefront of the community," says Hester. Visit Amplify online at [amplifysugarland.com](http://amplifysugarland.com). SLM

*ANDREW SOARES is from Sugar Land and is a communications major at Trinity University.*



Ben Hester and Ryan Hargrave helped found Amplify Sugar Land and are passionate about providing opportunities for local artists

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