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Contact: Lisa Fritsch: 410-837-7577 or lisa@yamd.org

**National Endowment for the Arts Awards More than \$27.6 Million across Nation
Includes \$50,000 awarded to Young Audiences/Arts for Learning of Maryland**

Baltimore, Md. — In its first 50 years, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) awarded more than \$5 billion in grants to recipients in every state and U.S. jurisdiction, the only arts funder in the nation to do so. Today, the NEA announced awards totaling more than \$27.6 million in its first funding round of fiscal year 2016, including an Art Works award of \$50,000 to Young Audiences/Arts for Learning of Maryland (YA) to support the Northern Anne Arundel County (NAAC) Equity Initiative through a collective impact project which aims to ensure that over 6,000 NAAC students – from Pre-K through Grade 12 – receive the artistic and educational opportunities needed to improve academic outcomes, increase parent involvement, and improve teacher retention.

The Art Works category supports the creation of work and presentation of both new and existing work, lifelong learning in the arts, and public engagement with the arts through 13 arts disciplines or fields.

NEA Chairman Jane Chu said, “The arts are part of our everyday lives – no matter who you are or where you live – they have the power to transform individuals, spark economic vibrancy in communities, and transcend the boundaries across diverse sectors of society. Supporting projects like the one from Young Audiences offers more opportunities to engage in the arts every day.”

In addition to the NEA objective of lifelong learning in the arts, the NAAC Equity Initiative will improve learning in other subject areas – particularly STEM subjects – through the use of arts integration. Young Audiences will increase youth access to the arts, beyond the geographic scope of the NAAC Equity Initiative, by conducting research and gathering evidence to demonstrate the positive impact the fine arts and arts integration have on the children, teachers, and parents of a school community.

“Young Audiences envisions a day when every child has the opportunity to imagine, create and realize their full potential through the arts,” said Stacie Evans, Executive Director, Young Audiences. “It is only through deep and broad collaboration that we will ever realize this vision for every child.

“This planning grant gives the partners an incredible opportunity to bring together many of the people and organizations in Northern Anne Arundel County that care deeply about the education of our children. Together, we can identify how the arts can address the greatest needs in our school communities, and begin to coordinate the amazing arts and cultural resources that are already available in the community in order to benefit every student. By integrating the arts into instruction in meaningful ways, we can provide the best circumstances for learning for all children.”

The NAAC Equity Initiative is the culmination of the work of many groups and individuals seeking to build a movement for increased equity through the arts in their community, including Young Audiences, Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS), Chesapeake Arts Center (CAC), Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance (AEMS), and University of Maryland – Baltimore County (UMBC). Over the course of the next year, these partners will bring together concerned citizens, businesses, and organizations in the community to develop a plan for ensuring the area’s twelve schools have equitable access to the following key elements:

- **Sustainable partnerships with teaching artists and arts organizations** that inspire children and use the creative process to make meaningful, real-world connections to the curriculum
- **Increased access to out-of-school-time arts programs**, shared with families through schools and parent/teacher associations
- **Professional development for teachers in arts integration** to boost student engagement and reach different kinds of learners throughout the school day

“We have seen positive student achievement results firsthand in our county when the arts and arts integration strategies are brought to life in our classrooms,” said Dr. Maureen McMahon, Director, Advanced Studies and Programs, Anne Arundel County



Young
Audiences
Arts for
Learning
Maryland

Young Audiences/Arts for Learning
2600 North Howard Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-837-7577 | yamd.org

Public Schools. “This NEA grant will allow us to support the growth of Arts Integration as a meaningful vehicle for teaching and learning in our northern Anne Arundel County schools.”

To join the Twitter conversation about this announcement, please use **#NEAFall15**. For more information on projects included in the NEA grant announcement, go to arts.gov

About Young Audiences/Arts for Learning

Young Audiences, the nation’s largest arts-in-education network, began in Baltimore in 1950. As the Maryland affiliate, we are a nonprofit organization devoted to enriching the lives and education of Maryland’s youth through educational and culturally diverse arts programs. We partner professional artists from all disciplines with schools throughout Maryland for hands-on arts learning experiences. We envision a Maryland where the arts are valued for their capacity to transform lives, and where every student is immersed in opportunities to imagine, to create, and to realize their full potential through the arts. For more information, contact Young Audiences at [410-837-7577](tel:410-837-7577) or visit yamd.org.

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