



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Announces
Houston, TX as Partner City for
Any Given Child
Program Creates a Long-Range Arts Education Plan
for Students Grades K-8**

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts has chosen Houston, Texas as the 19th site for *Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child*, a program that creates a long-range arts education plan for students in grades K-8. The program includes existing resources of the Houston Independent School District, local arts organizations, and the Kennedy Center, and will incorporate support provided by the Arts Access Initiative to carry out a plan for arts education specific to the city of Houston.

Any Given Child seeks to bring access and equity to each student's arts education, using an affordable model. With the assistance of consultation services provided by Kennedy Center staff and Young Audiences of Houston, community leaders implement a long-range plan for arts education that is tailor-made for the school district and community.

"All students deserve access to high-quality arts education," said Kennedy Center Senior Vice President of Education, Mario Rossero. "We are particularly grateful to Mayor Parker and Superintendent Grier for their commitment to this program. Houston has a strong and committed arts community, and we look forward to seeing the students of Houston reap the benefits of this program."

"Just like science, technology and math, arts education can help introduce students to potential career path opportunities," said Houston Mayor Annise Parker. "Through the Arts Access Initiative, the Kennedy Center, local schools, and regional arts organizations are working to ensure that all students have equitable access to an arts education. Whether they are building space rockets or contributing to our creative economy, we want the best and brightest to choose to build their professional lives right here in Houston."

"We are so excited to partner with the Kennedy Center as we continue working to provide all students with equal access to high-quality arts education," said Houston Independent

School District Superintendent Terry Grier. “By providing great arts-related experiences both in and out of the classroom, we help ensure our students develop into more creative, well-rounded scholars and our teachers become inspiring agents of change.”

The program aims to minimize administrative overhead, thus remaining affordable. The Kennedy Center covers the majority of the cost, and also requires sites to contribute \$25,000 toward the program. The first phase of the program is typically the community’s comprehensive audit of existing arts education resources and needs assessment facilitated by Kennedy Center staff and consultants. Houston completed this process on their own, and are the first city to join the program during the second phase. Young Audiences of Houston, the backbone organization for the Arts Access Initiative, completed this process working various stakeholders and local leaders across the community in the arts, education, business, civic, and philanthropic sectors and are the first city to join the program during the second phase.

During phase two, the Arts Access Initiative steering committee members make recommendations to the school district and local arts groups on how to best implement the newly created plan, focusing on increasing arts opportunities for K-8 students. In addition, educators and artists can take advantage of a wealth of resources available from the Kennedy Center, such as supplemental lessons with online interactive learning modules and videos available on the Kennedy Center [website](#), as well as professional development for teachers and teaching artists. The goal of this second phase is to provide a tapestry of arts education, strategically weaving together existing arts resources within the schools with those available from community providers and the Kennedy Center in order to reach every student.

Since the program’s inception, *Any Given Child* sites have reported numerous successes: some school districts have hired additional teachers or added staff positions; new sources of funding for arts education have been established; communities have expanded arts offerings for students; and sites have provided professional learning for classroom teachers, arts specialists, and local arts organizations to build their capacity to deliver high quality arts education to students.

In 2009, the Kennedy Center and Mayor Kevin Johnson announced the first formal *Any Given Child* program in Sacramento, California. The following cities joined subsequently: Springfield, Missouri, February 2010; Portland, Oregon, June 2010; Southern Nevada, December 2010; Tulsa, Oklahoma, May 2011; Sarasota, Florida, June 2011; Austin, Texas, August 2011;

Iowa City, Iowa, August, 2012; Baltimore, Maryland, September 2012; Fresno, California, October 2012; Juneau, Alaska, February 2013; Madison, Wisconsin, July 2013, Missoula, Montana and Jacksonville, Florida August 2013; New Orleans, Louisiana and Harrisonburg, Virginia, August 2014. Additional cities will be announced in September 2015. The Kennedy Center accepts applications between January 1 and March 31 of each year for a program start in the fall of the same year.

In February, the Kennedy Center announced a \$1 million gift from Newman's Own Foundation in honor of A. E. Hotchner and his many contributions to the success of Newman's Own. The grant established an endowment to help underserved communities participate in the Center's *Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child* program.

ABOUT EDUCATION AT THE KENNEDY CENTER

The Kennedy Center retains its commitment as the nation's cultural center to educating and enlightening children and adults in Washington and around the country. The Center's national education programs include: *Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child*, which works with 14 municipalities and their school districts around the country to develop a long-range strategic plan for arts education; ARTSEdge, a website that offers standards-based materials for use in and out of the classroom, Partners in Education, which forges relationships between an arts organization and its neighboring school systems to build effective arts education programs for teachers and teaching artists; Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network, which works with 33 state organizations on arts education policy issues; Explore the Arts, which provide insight into the cultural and historical context of the works presented on stage and sparks dialogue between audiences and the artists who have created the performances through participatory workshops, demonstrations, panels, master classes, and open rehearsals; and the Kennedy Center/ Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Awards, which acknowledge teachers of grades K-12 whose efforts have made a significant impact on their students.

In and around DC, the Kennedy Center's programs include *Changing Education Through the Arts*, a program that works with 15 schools in the area to affect long-term change in school culture through professional learning in arts integration; Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers, which trains Washington-area educators to teach the arts or other subject areas through the arts; and Washington, D.C. Partnership Schools, where the Center provides resources and teaching artist residencies to 20 elementary, junior, and senior high schools in Washington, D.C. The Center also mounts more than 100 events and performances of theater, music, dance, and opera throughout the season for more than 100,000 local school-aged children.

In addition, the Center offers multiple skill development programs for young artists and professionals both locally and nationally, including the National Symphony Orchestra's Youth Fellowship Program, Summer Music Institute, and High School Competition; Washington National Opera's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, Opera Institute, and Kids Create Opera Partnership; the biennial New Visions/ New Voices forum for development of new plays for young people; Exploring Ballet with Suzanne Farrell; Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead; VSA's

Playwright Discovery Program, Young Soloists, and Visual Arts Programs; arts administration internships; and the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, which impacts hundreds of thousands of college-aged theater students across the country and marks its 47th anniversary in 2015.

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